The Feedback Manifesto

Or: make the gift of feedback quick and easy

Feedback is a gift.

The giver should aim to give something useful to the receiver. The receiver is free to keep it or throw it away.

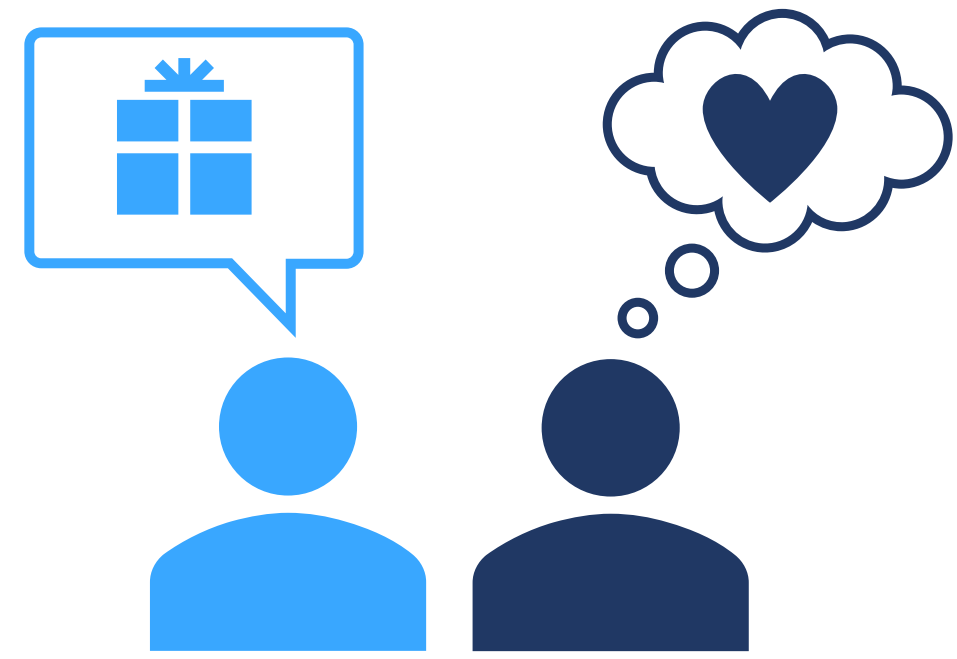
FOLLOW THIS TEMPLATE, BOTH FOR POSITIVE AND "NEGATIVE" FEEDBACK. ALL FEEDBACK SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE.

"When you did X, I experienced it as Y."*

Optionally adding a suggestion going forward:
"Next time, I believe Z would be better for me."

If it takes more than 15 seconds, you're doing it wrong.

***** Why this template: it is specific, keeps you from guessing their intent, judging them as a person, or speaking for others. Feedback isn't "the truth", it's your perception, and yours to give.



Giving - rules

1. **All feedback should be constructive.** The intent should be to help the other person or relationship develop, if that's not your goal, remain silent.
2. **Give it timely.** Sooner is better than later.
3. **Use a relaxed tone of voice.** This is feedback to help, not a speech.
4. **Only one piece of feedback at a time.** Really, stay with one and if there's more, save it for next time you meet / separate communication.
5. **Give positive feedback often.** It builds trust and makes the "negative" feel less painful. Aim for **3 to 5 positives** for every 1 "negative". Note that the feedback should still be constructive and go beyond appreciation. E.g. *"thanks for scheduling the meeting"* is not feedback, but *"I noticed you scheduled the meeting directly after we talked and that made me feel like you're treating it with urgency and taking ownership"* is.

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That's it. Go practice!

Receiving - rules

1. **Shut up and listen.** You're only allowed to ask clarifying questions. You may not explain or defend.*
2. **When they're done, say *"thank you"***

***** If you still want to respond, wait until the next day and see if you still have the urge. If you do, ask for a follow-up.

Further reading

- Situation-Behavior-Impact, Center for Creative Leadership
- Gottman, 5:1 ratio in relationships
- Zenger & Folkman, HBR 2013, high-performing teams received far more positive than corrective feedback
- Stone & Heen, Thanks for the Feedback (summary)

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