How to Respond to Feedback – Train the Trainer



While receiving critical feedback can be uncomfortable, try take the feedback you receive into serious consideration. It may help you improve your performance and collaborate more efficiently with your colleagues.

There are a few fundamental principles of responding to constructive feedback that can help you grow both professionally and personally.

1. **Listen Actively**

When somebody is giving you feedback, it's important to listen carefully to what they're saying. Explaining your actions might be your first instinct, but such efforts aren't necessary and likely won't prove helpful in the long run. Colleagues often give feedback to help you improve your performance, so try to let them explain their perspectives completely by avoiding interrupting them or interjecting with your own opinions. Understanding the intention behind their feedback and what concrete recommendations they're making for growth will help you form your response more effectively.

2. **Breathe – Wait to React**

Once you're done listening to your colleague give you feedback, you should give yourself some time to react to what they've said. Instead of diving right into a conversation about the feedback and how you can implement it, you should take a few moments to thank your colleague for their comments.

From here, you can internally practice mindfulness and self-affirming techniques. You might take a minute before processing and reacting to remind yourself that you are valued by your organization and devoted to your role.

3. **Information/Knowledge is Key**

Once you've taken stock of your colleague's feedback, consider asking them for more information and clarifying exactly what they said. Regardless of what information you'd like to clarify, getting more data on feedback can help you truly understand your colleague's perspective and figure out how you might grow from learning such information.

4. **Ask For Time**

It’s a good idea to ask your colleague for some time to think about their feedback. Requesting time to process your colleague’s thoughts can be very beneficial in the long term. It gives you more time to form a proper response to the feedback you’ve received. Asking for more time can help show your colleague that you’re taking their feedback seriously and considering what they’ve said carefully.

5. **Create an Action Plan with Visible Change**

While you take time to consider your colleague’s feedback, you should start working on your actual response in the form of an action plan. Even if you don’t agree with everything they’ve said at first, try to visualize the situation from their perspective and locate at least a few things they identified in their feedback that you’re willing to work on. From here, you can create an action plan on how you’ll implement their feedback into your day-to-day duties.

Your action plan should start with implementations that result in visible change. This can help your colleague see your improvement tangibly while you commit to other, less visible professional development processes.

6. **Consult a Friend**

Often, receiving constructive feedback and going through implementation processes can be challenging to do in isolation. Therefore, you should find a confidant—a friend or colleague you can trust—that you can talk to honestly and openly about the feedback you just received.

Your buddy may be able to give you additional ideas about how you can take action and implement the feedback in your daily work.

7. **Long Term Follow-Up**

It’s important to understand that receiving and responding to constructive feedback effectively is a long-term process. Change doesn’t happen overnight, so give yourself time to implement change and schedule intervals to follow up with your colleague on a semi-regular basis, such as 30 or 60 days after receiving the feedback. Following up can help you keep yourself accountable to growth and show your colleague that you’ve considered their feedback carefully.

TAKEAWAY

Remember – while feedback can be difficult to receive at times, it’s a vital part of your professional development.