



Giving Corrective Feedback

"Tact is the knack of making a point without making an enemy!"

- Sir Isaac Newton



Giving corrective feedback to others can be a tricky affair, and something that many people avoid doing. Unfortunately, avoiding or delaying giving such feedback benefits nobody, not least the person involved, as if they don't know that they need to improve, how can you blame them for not doing so?

This solution focuses upon the trickier skill of giving 'corrective feedback', though of course people need to receive positive feedback too – so don't forget to do both.

Outcome - What are you hoping to achieve by giving a person some feedback?

Why? - Consider why the person might be behaving in the way that they are

Environment - A bar, a plane or train may not be the right environment

Timing - Try to give feedback as soon after the event as possible

Prepare Them - Ask if the person's willing to receive some feedback from you

Evidence - Base feedback on observed behaviour not on perceived attitudes

Be Direct - Be polite, but not so much that the person doesn't get the message

Phraseology - Think as carefully about *how* you say something as you would about *what* you say; careless phrasing can do more harm than good

Changes - Focus on behaviour that can be changed, otherwise there's no point

Ask, Don't Tell – Ask the other person *"How else could you have reacted?"* rather than stating, *"You should have..."*

Balance - Comment on what they did well, as well as areas for improvement

Action - Help them to put together and commit to a plan of action that works for them; note, it's important that they come up with solutions not just rely on you

Follow-up - Both parties should review the situation at an appropriate date

It's important that the individual feels empowered by the process if they are to work positively on improving their performance. If the experience of receiving feedback leaves them feeling inadequate or humiliated, it will have been counterproductive.