

GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK IN MENTORING

Giving feedback is not easy. It requires generosity, listening skills, analysis and assertiveness to provide both positive and negative feedback without offending the other person. In any mentoring situation, everyone involved must be open to offering and receiving feedback. Objective feedback from others will help to highlight behaviours that individuals may not recognize.

I. Keep in mind the following points to make feedback constructive

- ✓ Start with highlighting positive actions and achievements
- ✓ Continue with the possibilities of what can be improved
- ✓ Always refer to a specific fact or situation, giving precise details and avoiding opinions. Confirm that what you saw or heard is correct
- ✓ Ask your mentee what the goal of her actions was
- ✓ Ask your mentee if she understands the consequences of the feedbacked behaviour
- ✓ Always refer the feedback to the situation, not to the person
- ✓ Acknowledge that feedback is a personal opinion, not necessarily the truth
- ✓ Invite your mentee to accept the feedback, but only if it makes sense for her
- ✓ If the feedback is positive, try to commit to the replication of the commented fact
- ✓ If the feedback is negative, try to agree how to avoid repetition
- ✓ Try to avoid words with a negative connotation : no, not, cannot, never, etc. (e.g., “you cannot implement that”)
- ✓ Avoid using the word “but”. The word “but” or “nevertheless” makes the mentee think about the past. Instead, some other expressions can be used such as: however, even better if, have you thought of...?, if you change this it would improve even more, etc.
- ✓ Checklist of open questions you can ask your mentee to enhance your feedback

II. 40 questions to be used

In the course of your feedback, and in order to pursue discussions with your mentee in more detail, the following methodology may be useful, with its 40 questions. A lot of questions but read them all and try some of them. Don't forget to read them regularly! You can also use them in your day-to-day practices.

1. I think that what could help you is...
2. What worked for me is/was...
3. In my experience which was...
4. What you say makes me think that...
5. My reaction to your situation is...
6. If I understand you correctly...
7. I am curious to know if...
8. I wonder if...
9. Have you thought of...
10. What you say encourages me to think that...
11. What does that mean / mean to you / what else does it mean to you?
12. What importance do you attach to this belief?

13. What is your frame of reference for this?
14. What other context could you apply?
15. What do you think of that?
16. When you realise that, what does it make you think / feel?
17. And now that you know, what do you want to do?
18. And what if you let yourself think, react differently?
19. What do you appreciate about this? About yourself in this experience?
20. How important is this to you?
21. How is this important / valuable to you?
22. What decisions motivate this?
23. So what do you want to do?
24. What would you like to do?
25. What do you tell yourself when you choose or decide?
26. Why is this important to you?
27. How would you like this to end?
28. What are you expecting?
29. What makes you think that? Feel that? Live in that way? Act like that?
30. Who says that you should do that? What rule governs that?
31. What would be a consequence of that?
32. What are you going to win or lose by that?
33. And what is that going to do to...?
34. What does this word / term mean to you?
35. How do you define that?
36. What is the principle that guides you in this experience?
37. What would happen if you did / said, etc....?
38. What would you do if you knew what to do? Imagine you know what to do / say, what would you do / say?
39. What makes you say that...?
40. What prevents / would prevent you from...?

Continue to provide regular feedback throughout the mentoring programme to maintain the effectiveness of your discussions with your mentee. This will also optimise preparation of your meetings.

III. Prepare your mentoring conversation

Question the results and benefits of the situation:

How is the situation satisfactory? What are the benefits of the situation as it stands that should be retained? What are the elements to be preserved in your present situation?

Question the drawbacks of the situation:

What are the drawbacks of the situation? How are these drawbacks a problem for you? Could there be difficulties in changing the present situation? For you? For your immediate circle? If there is a difficulty, what might this be?

Try to express yourself in a non-prescriptive, neutral and objective way:

Ask open, non-prescriptive questions:

What do you think? What are you expecting? What makes you say that...? Who did that...? What is your objective? How do you feel? What happened? How did you react? How do you hope to...?

Do not answer questions immediately, ask for more information:

Who said to you that...? Do you think you have enough information to analyse the situation? To whom have you spoken about the situation? What do you need to complete your analysis? If necessary, repeat Quintilian's questioning process and apply it to the elements of your discussion.

Do not imply criticism and do not show annoyance:

Why did you decide that...? What were your criteria? Why were you so aggressive? What is concealed behind your reaction? Why don't you try...? Tell me what you would like to do? Do you not believe me? You seem sceptical when I say...

Be specific about your perceptions:

It seems to me... That makes me think that... This resonates with me this way... Is it correct?

Encourage new ideas, a new, alternative point of view:

How do you analyse the situation from this point of view? How does the situation seem to you, considering that...? Could there be another view of the situation? What might be the link between... and...? What other ways might you deal with the situation? Make a list of possible options and solutions...What could you say about the options you envisage today? Have you thought of other approaches? Have you imagined any options and intermediate solutions? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each of your options? Which of your options would give the best result? What else could you say? What off-beat, even way-out ideas could you come up with on this subject?

Challenge!

What else now? What are the next steps?

Encourage reflection:

What have you learned from this situation? From these facts? What could be the effects and consequences of...?

Apply positive influence by questioning: seek to guide without imposing your own point of view:

You can use development questions that lead to a more thought-out response: In what case? For example? That means? In what sense? At what level?

Suggest an opinion, a direction:

You could think about...Explain why: ...My final argument is....

Ask what the person thinks:

What do you think? What does that evoke for you?

Avoid the temptation to say, as your first response:

If I were you...In your place, I would do...

WOMEN MENTORING PROGRAMME

Kind Reminder for Mentors

