

Steps of the feedback process

- Ask** Peter Drucker said that in organizations of the past, the role of the leader was to tell. In organizations today and of the future, the role of the leader is to ask for feedback. This is easy to say, but difficult to do. It takes courage. Ask your peers and employees, customers, and suppliers, “How am I doing?” People need to feel it is safe to be honest- that there will be no reprisals for their candidness. Choose an appropriate time and place to ask for feedback. Research tells us that people tend not to give candid personal feedback in a group situation. In order to give feedback, they also must be able to trust their leader.
- Listen** Listen to what people are telling you. Attempt to listen without judging what the person is saying. Listen without expressing your opinion or responding. Inquire further to ascertain that you have an accurate view of what the person shared. Consider taking notes – writing down what the person says will help you reflect on the information later on.
- Think** Before you respond be aware of your reaction – the thoughts you’ve begun formulating. Most of us want to jump right in with our rationalizations, excuses, perspectives, or ideas. Consider and reflect upon the person’s perceptions of your leadership behavior. Work on developing your understanding of how others perceive your behavior and its impact – the intended and the unintended consequences on that person, other employees, and the work environment. Above all, do not “debate” the suggestions or comment on their merit!
- Thank** This is a vitally important and often overlooked step in the feedback process. It’s critical to thank people for taking the time and giving their effort to provide you with feedback. Thanking people helps to validate the efforts and demonstrates your seriousness to the process.
- Respond** In your response, be brief, concise and positive. Do not critique the feedback and always ask for suggestions to improve. Use open-ended questions.
- Involve** Ask for suggestions from others about what you can do differently. By soliciting suggestions from others you are demonstrating that their involvement in your change process is critical.
- Change** People can and do change. Choose one or two behaviors to focus on in developing your action plan. Identify concrete, observable actions to do differently. Monitor how well you are doing by keeping track of what you committed to change.
- Follow-Up** This step is the most critical one. Follow-up demonstrates that you are truly committed to changing your behavior. Marshall suggests that you say to people, “You know that I am working on being a better listener. How am I doing? If you had any suggestions for me, what would they be?”

Do's and Don'ts for Encouraging Development

DO NOT	DO
Step 1: ASK	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait for a “better time” to ask • Come across as skeptical or doubtful • Put yourself down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be concise • Be specific and clear • Be positive
Step 2: LISTEN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “No,” “But,” or “However” • Make excuses • Exhibit impatience or anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay undivided attention • Capture what is being said • Clarify what you have heard
Step 3: THINK	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in “delusional” thinking • Prove the feedback wrong • Validate “this is just the way I am” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the benefits of changing • Assess costs of the current behavior • Decide if it is worth it to change
Step 4: THANK	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a dejected tone • Act artificial • Be insincere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say “Thank You” quickly • Use their first name • Be genuine
Step 5: RESPOND	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique the feedback/suggestion • Respond to too many things • Over-commit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be brief and focused • Be positive • FeedForward (ask for suggestions)
Step 6: INVOLVE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick with your fan club • Expect instant help • Take up too much of their time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include as many as you can • Keep the process upbeat • Vary involvement as needed
Step 7: CHANGE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procrastinate • Give into “feeling like a phony” • Expect instant success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break the elastic limit • Maintain momentum • Make change visible
Step 8: FOLLOW-UP	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwell on the past • Brag, gloat, or show off • Become complacent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your ego at the door • Politely push for specifics • Reinforce the positive

Activity: Individually, answer the following questions:

How often do you sincerely ask for feedback? When, who and what did you ask?

When have you recently NOT listened to a friend or colleague's feedback? What may have been lost by not listening?

When and how often do you critique people's feedback to you?

How can you use this feedback process with your team?
