

Receiving Feedback

Everyone finds himself or herself on the receiving end of criticism from time to time. When this happens, the most important thing is to remain calm and fight the natural instinct to become paranoid or defensive. Here are five tips that can help you to handle criticism and turn it into a positive learning experience.

1. **Listen.** Keep an open mind. Everyone makes mistakes, and we can all use improvement in some areas. Resist the temptation to argue or make excuses.
2. **Consider the source.** Does the speaker have the authority, knowledge, and expertise to give you this feedback? Does he or she have an ulterior motive? (Be careful not to invent one, though, just to make yourself feel better.)
3. **Ask for specific examples.** Don't accept generalities such as "poor," "disappointing," or "lousy." Politely ask the speaker to tell you exactly what is wrong. Questions like, "Exactly what was wrong with the presentation" or a request such as, "Help me to understand what you mean by 'poor'" should help you to get some useful information.
4. **Evaluate the criticism.** If it is valid, accept it gracefully and with a positive attitude. Tell the speaker you appreciate his or her comments and be enthusiastic about your willingness and ability to use the suggestions to improve your performance.
5. **Keep the useful information, but let go of the negative feelings.** Don't dwell on the embarrassment of being criticized. Hold your head up high and move on.

Tips

1. **Look at the person and use their name.**
2. **Say "Okay." Agree, even if you disagree at the time,**
3. **Don't Argue. "When their mind is made up, don't confuse them with facts."**
4. **Think about the other person's point of view.**
5. **Restate what they said in a positive manner. "I will try to do it better from now on."**
6. **Thank the person for talking with you. "Thanks for talking with me and letting me know."**