

How to Give Positive and Constructive Feedback

<p><i>Be descriptive.</i> State objectively what you saw or heard. Give specific, recent examples from your own observations, if possible.</p>	<p><i>Avoid labels.</i> Words like <i>unprofessional</i>, <i>irresponsible</i>, and <i>lazy</i> are labels that we attach to behaviors. Instead, describe the behaviors and drop the labels.</p>	<p><i>Don't exaggerate.</i> Be exact. To say, "You never finish work on time" is probably untrue and unfair.</p>	<p><i>Speak for yourself.</i> Don't refer to absent, anonymous people ("A lot of people here don't like it when you . . .").</p>	<p><i>Use "I" statements.</i> Instead of saying, "You often submit work late," say, "I get annoyed when you submit work late because it holds up the rest of the team." "I" statements create an adult/peer relationship.</p>
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Using “I” Statements When Giving Feedback

Sentence	Explanation
“When you . . .”	Start with a “When you . . .” statement that describes the behavior without judgment, exaggeration, labeling, attribution, or motives. Just state the facts as specifically as possible.
“I feel . . .”	Tell how the behavior affects you. If you need more than a word or two to describe the feeling, it’s probably just some variation of joy, sorrow, anger, or fear.
“Because I . . .”	Now say why you are affected that way. Describe the connection between the facts you observed and the feelings they provoke in you.
(Pause for discussion)	Let the other person respond.
“I would like . . .”	Describe the change you want the other person to consider . . .
“Because . . .”	. . . and why you think the change will help alleviate the problem.
“What do you think?”	Listen to the other person’s response. Be prepared to discuss options and compromise on a solution.
<p>How the feedback will work: “When you [do this], I feel [this way], because [of such and such].” (Pause for discussion.) “What I would like you to consider is [doing X], because I think it will accomplish [Y]. What do you think?”</p> <p>Example: “When you submit work late, I get angry because it delays the rest of the project. We needed your research today in order to start the report outline.” (Pause for discussion.) “I’d like you to consider finding some way to finish work on time, so we can be more productive and meet our tight deadlines. What do you think?”</p>	