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How do you give feedback?

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How do you approach giving someone feedback?

Did you know that the way you approach this task says more about you than you might know? We each have our own unique communication style that influences and drives how we interact with others. Some of us are task focused and some are more people focused. Some are more outgoing and others are more reserved. I am making it very simple here of course as humans we complicate things so much more – but I like SIMPLE!

Giving feedback is essential in our communication. It is how we interact on a different level, how we show our impact, how we let someone know the impact they have had on us or on our expectations of them.

In a business environment feedback is essential. All of us have had feedback sessions with mentors or managers, some great and empowering while others would be filed in the “Traumatic” drawer we prefer not to look in all that often.

So how do you approach it?

Are you an avoider?

Do you launch in boots and all?

Do you take it slowly and gently?

Do you worry about how they will take it, get all messed up and then it becomes all about you?

Or, do you think about it from their perspective, get into their shoes and deal with it with warmth and respect?

Which approach do you think will work out best in the end? Lets go through these options and see where they may take us.

Are you an avoider? – This approach rarely works in the long run. People who avoid issues need to have an amazing tolerance for mediocrity because, best-case scenario that's what you will end up with. Avoiding the issue of giving feedback will only ever hinder the process of growth and development for both you and the person who is to receive the feedback.

Do you launch in boots and all? – This can also be problematic if you are not fully prepared and able to think before you speak. The best thing about this approach is that you are doing it. The most problematic issue may be that if you go in too hard and fast you risk offending the receiver of the feedback. Particularly, if the feedback may be confronting to the receiver. Feedback alone is a confrontational process to go through so we need to be aware of this and ensure our approach is not confrontational as well.

Do you take a gently does it approach?

This can come across as more caring and certainly not confrontational however you also need to ensure you are clear. You don't want to confuse the poor person. I heard Oprah speaking about the first time she fired a staff member. She said that she explained it so slowly and kindly that at the end of the meeting (2 hours later...) the person was not aware that they had been fired. Uh oh!

Do you worry about how they will take it, get all messed up and then it becomes all about you?

This can be traumatic for the person providing the feedback as you are racked with assumption, assuming the worst before you have even started a conversation. Particularly if the feedback is not positive, if you need to address a problem, or something very challenging like terminate some ones employment. In any conversation the moment we begin assuming, and filling in the gaps we are headed for trouble. The other problem here is how we respond in situations when we are highly emotional. Our brains virtually switch off and we can behave erratically or irrationally. It is important that as soon as you notice you are assuming the worst you need to stop yourself. This will only heighten your stress levels and anxiety. Besides, an important note, this is not about you. Effective communication should always be aimed at the receiver – how would they best receive this message. So calm down and stop assuming!

Do you think about it from their perspective, get into their shoes and deal with it with warmth and respect? In my experience I have found this to be the most effective way of approaching feedback. The moment you approach feedback from the receivers perspective you are on the right track. You are then able to ensure your communication is tailored for them. It is also important to be respectful and not confrontational. Despite how serious the breach has been or the issue is at hand, there is no need to disrespect. When you approach difficult conversations with clarity, warmth and respect you are creating the best possible environment for effective communication.

If you need a better solution to giving feedback contact us at www.teamology.com.au to discuss how we can assist you.