



# receiving feedback

**to hear and accept that the other person has a particular opinion that may be very different from your own**

The research proves what we already know: feedback can be valuable and offer an amazing learning opportunity. According to Gallup, managers who offer frequent and continuous feedback influence their employees to be 3.2 times more likely *to strongly agree they are motivated to do outstanding work*, and 2.7 times more likely *to be engaged at work*.

There is a lot of emphasis on giving feedback in the workplace, but the most underrated skill may be actually **receiving it**. That's because the power lies in the receiver's ability to process and integrate the information in a way that ultimately makes you more effective.

It's important to note that many times we intellectually 'get' that feedback is necessary. But in the moments we're actually receiving it we often (me included) respond with resistance. That might be experienced as internal resistance or active external resistance – rebuttal or defensiveness.

*The reality is, being great at receiving actionable advice is just as important as being great at giving it.*

## **Tips To Not Be Defensive When Receiving Feedback**

When we are criticized about how we do things or how we behave, it can feel like a personal attack even if that isn't the intention. It's easy to feel defensive. Let's be honest, it's hard to hear criticism. Nobody wants to hear seemingly negative things about themselves – especially if they might be accurate.

*But even if you think there's no way what they are saying is true, listen anyway.* Because being able to accept negative feedback means you can make positive changes and translate that into changes in your behavior and your actions to help you find new levels of performance.

**Listen actively** Use deep active listening skills and give the conversation your full attention without making any assumptions about the giver's intentions. Focus on absorbing what is being said rather than waiting for your turn to make a rebuttal.

**Ask Questions** You might be tempted to just listen, say thank you, and go on about your day. But if you can be truly open to what you are hearing and ask questions to help you understand more deeply the criticism, you are more likely to fully digest it and put it to positive use. Saying "Tell me more about that" is a great way to open up the feedback to understand the other person's perception and feedback.

**Take notes** Most of us are not that great at remembering everything we've heard – especially when what we're hearing makes us uncomfortable. We've all been there where we've received some negative feedback and then all you hear in your head is your own critic or a defensive voice listing all the reasons the other person is wrong. So when you're receiving feedback, make sure you can remember and respond to the feedback you receive.

**Be aware of your mindset and emotional state** Remind yourself that feedback is not a reason to get upset. Remember that it's an opportunity to help you improve performance and get better at what you do.

**Consider the other person's point of view** If receiving critical feedback feels awkward for you, it's likely the same for the other person, too. Being mindful that the conversation is uncomfortable for both of you can help reduce your own feelings of defensiveness.