

## Giving Effective Feedback

There are different ways to categorize feedback — e.g., formal vs. informal, manager-to-report vs. peer-to-peer. Here, we'll focus on constructive, meaningful, manager-to-report feedback that helps build and coach engaged, high performing teams. The recommended types of employee feedback for forward-thinking teams are:

- Reinforcing feedback (or positive feedback)
- Redirecting feedback (or constructive feedback)

Let's find out more about each of these — with several examples for each type of employee feedback:

### Reinforcing Feedback

Giving feedback that is positive activates the receiver's parasympathetic nervous system, making them feel relaxed. It makes the person feel more at ease, motivated to continue delivering results (hence the term reinforcing), and receptive to other types of feedback. Examples include:

- Showing appreciation for individual or team performance.
- Acknowledging efforts or results.
- Thanking someone for going the extra mile.
- Recognizing performance improvement or effort.
- Acknowledging contributions to the company culture.
- Highlighting what you would like to see more of.

## Redirecting Feedback

Redirecting feedback is input that points to problems or areas for improvement. constructively. It's a better way to approach "negative feedback." You'll want to use it in a broad range of situations: from refining processes that are already going well to addressing severe issues and mistakes. Keep your feedback private, confidential, and manage your tone to ensure a successful conversation.

Consider using the *Fierce Conversations job aid* to hold a private one: one conversation about a problem or challenge. Share meaningful, actionable feedback. Examples include:

- "I suggest that you try [action], as this will help you achieve (intended result.)"
- "Consider asking me or your teammates for clarification when you encounter something you don't understand."
- "I would offer that If you don't feel comfortable contributing your ideas in a meeting, please write them down and email them to me after, so we can benefit from your perspective."

**Basic Tips: Ensure That Feedback is:**

1. Offered with a request: “May I give you feedback,” or, “When you are ready I have some feedback.”
2. Relevant and Specific: Whether giving or receiving feedback, focus on specific behaviors and actions, not broad generalizations. When discussing feedback for improvement, consider sharing and exploring alternative actions. Link feedback to goals and context.
3. Timely: Deliver or request feedback as close as possible to the moment a behavior or outcome occurs.
4. Delivered with Empathy: Deliver and receive feedback with sensitivity and empathy.
5. Sincere: While it is tempting to surround feedback for improvement with lots of positives, don’t drown out key messages with white noise.
6. Treated as a Gift: If you’re not ready to ask for feedback, you may not be ready to credibly deliver it.

**Key Take-Away’s:**

- Ensure that the positive feedback you give is not in short supply. Some leaders put reminders on their calendars to ensure they practice it regularly.
- Deliver redirecting feedback without the “emotional load” that destroys your good intentions. You have nothing to fear if your feedback is intended to help the other person.