



Feedback | Seeking and Responding to Feedback

We created this handy Q&A feedback guide with common questions.

1. How often should I seek feedback?

- There's no set rule, and it depends on who you seek feedback from. If it's your manager, you could make it part of your 1:1 meetings. It might sound like this: *"I'm focused on 3 priorities for the next quarter, and I want to get feedback during our 1:1's regarding my progress. What am I doing well, and what can I do to make even more progress? Can we spend 5 minutes in our 1:1s to do that?"*
-
- The goal is to make it a habit and part of how you work.

2. What if they say "No."

- Someone may say 'no,' but it's unlikely. Most people will give feedback when they're asked. If that happens, you can say, *"Okay. I value your opinion and think I could benefit from your perspective. If you change your mind, let me know."*

3. What if they say, "I don't have any feedback for you right now."

- This might happen if someone has only worked with you briefly or needs time to focus on the areas you want feedback on. You can say, *"Okay. Can I check in with you in a few weeks? Specifically, I would like your input on X and Y."* Chances are they will say 'yes.' If they say 'no,' respect their decision.

4. What if they say, "Now's not a good time."

- This might happen. Like the last question, you can say, *"Okay. It sounds like a busy time. I value your opinion and think I could benefit from your perspective. Can I check in with you in a few weeks?"* They will probably say 'yes' or suggest a different time frame. If they say 'no,' respect their decision.

5. What if they want to give me feedback on something beyond what I asked?

- Usually, if you ask for specific feedback, people stick to what you asked them. If they go beyond that, you can decide if you're open to hearing it. If yes – listen to understand, not to defend. If not, you can say, *"I value your perspective, but I'm focused on X, Y, and Z for the next few weeks. Can we hit 'pause' on the points you're raising and discuss it in a few weeks?"*

6. By seeking specific feedback, aren't I leading them to feedback I want to hear?

- Yes, and that is perfectly okay. You are helping them understand what feedback is important to you. Without specificity, you're putting the onus on them to guess what feedback would be valuable to you. If they guess incorrectly, you will likely be disappointed with the conversation.

7. What if I'm missing other important feedback they could give me by focusing my request on something specific?

- If you're worried about missing important feedback beyond your specific request, you can say, *"Do you have any other thoughts you want to share with me that we haven't discussed yet and that can help me grow?"* It's a good catchall for most situations.

8. Can I ask for positive feedback?

- Yes!! Positive and negative feedback are both valuable. Some research says positive feedback is more important because the receiver is more motivated.
- If you're giving feedback, a good rule of thumb is to catch someone doing something right!

9. Why do I react a certain way when I receive feedback? What are the psychological factors?

- Because you're in the throws of an Amygdala Hijack! Simply put, the emotional part of your brain is taking over the rational part of your brain. This is a well-documented human condition. When we feel under threat, our reaction is generally "fight or flight" - i.e., I've to get out of here OR I'm going to fight back and prove I'm right.
- Your reaction is what the three Triggers help explain.
 - o If you're experiencing the "What" trigger, you think the feedback is unfair or wrong.
 - o If it's the "We" trigger, you don't care what THAT person has to say and can't even hear the feedback.
 - o If it's the "Me" trigger, the feedback challenges your identity and sense of self.
- You're human, so you know you will get triggered again. The key is how quickly you can regain control of your emotions.

10. How do I separate myself from the feedback and not take it as a personal attack?

- Start by identifying which trigger is at play – What, We or Me. This will give you insight into what's going on with you. A good way to know you're triggered is if you're silently blaming the person giving you feedback instead of considering the potential validity of the feedback.

- Next, use these strategies to help you. For example:
 - o Take a break and get centered. You may need 10 minutes or a few days. The feedback will land differently when you're centered. At a minimum, take a bio break and do some deep breathing exercises to reactivate your prefrontal cortex.
 - o Practice a growth mindset. What can you learn from this feedback? Some people adopt the mindset of "feedback is a gift." Even if you don't like it or agree with all of it, a growth mindset can help you manage yourself.
 - o Get other POVs from trusted friends or colleagues. Is there a pattern? If so, consider the feedback might be true. If not, you might choose to disregard the feedback.
 - o Assume good intent. Unless the person has given you reason to believe otherwise, most people try to do the right thing when they go to work every day. They may not be skillful when delivering feedback, but most don't have bad intentions.
 - o Size the feedback and keep things in perspective. For example, feedback on X doesn't mean you're failing at everything and will never be promoted. It just means you need to improve on X.
 - o What do you want? If you want to learn, grow, and advance, feedback will help you do that.
 - o Remember: we all have blind spots and things we're working on. You're not alone.

<https://equiptwomen.com/>