



December News

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Welcome to December's News and the final article in our three-part series entitled **STRAIGHT TALK: Communication Tools for Success**.

The goal of this series has been to review simple, well-known communication tools to assist you in enhancing your relationships.

Last month we shared *The Art of Giving Effective Feedback* and presented you with a 30-day Challenge. If you took the challenge, did you notice any improvement in how you provide feedback to others? This month we are talking about ***Receiving Feedback: A Pathway to Personal Growth***.

Read on to find tips on how to ask for effective feedback and what to do with that feedback once you get it!



PART III: Receiving Feedback: A Pathway to Personal Growth

Throughout our lives we are constantly receiving feedback. Sometimes it is direct, sometimes indirect. Sometimes the feedback is positive, and sometimes negative. If we are fortunate, the feedback helps us learn something about ourselves. When we are less fortunate, the feedback we receive creates negative feelings and does little to improve our performance.

If we find we are not receiving effective feedback from the key persons in our lives, we need to take responsibility for this and provide them with some feedback of our own. By giving some direction regarding the kind of feedback we need, we have a greater chance of maximally benefiting from our experiences and ensuring our personal growth.

To master asking for and receiving effective feedback, we suggest you review the four simple steps outlined below:



1. **Ask the Sender to be specific.** It is not usually very helpful to be told that you are being emotional or apathetic, irrational or cold, touchy or insensitive; these characterizations are just too broad and therefore of no direct or practical use. Instead, ask the Sender to tell you exactly how they are experiencing the situation or alternatively, how your behaviour is making them feel e.g. *I understand that you think I am insensitive. Can I please ask you to be a bit more specific about how you see this situation?*

2. **Ask the Sender to direct the feedback toward behaviour that you can do something about.** Sometimes when being given feedback the content of that feedback does not provide enough clues for us to make a behaviour change. Ask for feedback that provides a specific request for modification of behaviour and that gives information as to the desired direction of change e.g. *What is it that you would have preferred me to do? What would you like to see happen in situations like this in the future?*
3. **Mirror the Sender's feedback and request for behaviour change.** To avoid miscommunication, once the feedback has been provided always mirror back (or paraphrase) what you have heard the Sender say e.g. *Just so that I am understanding your concerns correctly, what you are saying is ... As a result, you would like me to... Did I get that right?*
4. **Don't argue; instead thank the Sender for providing the feedback.** No matter what the person says, do not disagree or defend. It will destroy the feedback you need and may prevent them from providing further feedback in the future. Remember, feedback is a gift that is to be appreciated.

Finally, a few things about feedback to think about:

- Feedback may have more to do with the person offering it than with the person receiving it
- Feedback is most effectively canvassed from neutral people (i.e. persons who are not emotionally involved with you)
- Feedback should be sought from three or more sources to help you learn why others see things differently
- Feedback should be received lightly i.e. 'try it on for size' to see if it fits or holds any value for you before embracing it
- Remember what you do with feedback is ultimately your choice ... you may choose to use the feedback for your own betterment, to store it away for later, or to disregard it all together.

Side 'Barr': In intimate partnerships, most of the feedback provided by your partner (which is often experienced as criticism) has some basis in reality and can be a key to unlocking the answers to some of your relationship problems. You may wish to take this feedback to heart and spend some time openly exploring it. Your relationship will benefit immensely.

Well, this brings us to the end of our series on communication and to the end of the 2009. I would like to take the opportunity to personally thank all of you for your ongoing support of Hina Coaching & Seminars and to send you wishes for all the very best in your relationships in the coming year. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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