



## *Supervision in Higher Education*

# 10 Keys to Giving Constructive Feedback

*Constructive feedback is an incredibly important tool for keeping people engaged and motivated, while also developing the capacity of your direct reports.*

### **1. Use feedback as a tool to enhance and grow the relationship between the you and your supervisee.**

Before giving a piece of feedback stop and ask yourself, “how is providing this feedback going to develop and grow the supervisory relationship / the direct report.”

### **2. Know why you are giving feedback.**

Ask yourself, “what is my intention in sharing this feedback? Is it to help my report?”

### **3. When giving feedback be specific and not interpretive.**

Consider the difference between, “I’m concerned your not the team player you used to be” with “In the last 6 months you’ve been late to most of our meetings and ended up arguing with people over minor issues, and you have been struggling with deadlines.”

### **4. Use candor when delivering feedback but do so cautiously.**

Being frank and honest can improve the value of your feedback, but be careful to still be considerate.

### **5. Make sure the recipient understands your feedback.**

If they don’t understand it they can’t act on it.

### **6. Deliver feedback in a timely manner.**

While its best to react in the moment, this won’t always be possible. For example, it would be inappropriate to deliver feedback to someone for something said in a meeting while still in front of others, but having the conversation while the incident is still fresh will have the biggest impact.

### **7. Don’t respond to defensiveness.**

It is natural for people to react to constructive feedback defensively, so just let them. They may need time to process, and responding in kind will just muddy the waters and increase the tension.

### **8. Listen carefully when your supervisees respond to your feedback.**

Don’t just assume you have good listening skills, actively work on them. As Ronald Heifetz tells us, “most leaders die with their mouths open.”

### **9. Don’t make judgmental statements when delivering feedback.**

This often results in people feeling defensive and sets up a situation where they feel they are in opposition to you rather than working with you. Examples of judgmental statements include “you’re too ambitious” and “you’re too introverted.”

### **10. Remember that feedback is not a one-way street.**

If you are unwilling to receive feedback on your abilities as a supervisor you risk limiting your relationship with your supervisees.