Receiving Feedback: 6-steps to success

The following information is intended to assist employees with developing an open and non-defensive posture to coaching and feedback. This information should help employees receive and respond to feedback in an appropriate and professional manner.

1. **Set goals for yourself.**
   Before you even receive feedback you should think about what goals you would like to set for yourself. Being motivated to achieve may make it easier to receive constructive criticism. Creating goals will give you a target to orient your efforts towards. These could be long or short-term goals just make sure they are challenging yet achievable.

2. **Be approachable.**
   People avoid giving feedback to people who are not approachable. Ask for feedback. Let others know you are interested in hearing what they think. Your openness to feedback is obvious through your body language, facial expressions, and welcoming manner.

3. **Ask questions.**
   This helps clarify the difference between perception and behavior. Focus on questions that help you understand what behaviors you may need to change. Ask for examples and stories that illustrate the feedback, so you know you share meaning with the person providing the feedback. Check with others to determine the reliability of the feedback. If only one person believes it about you, it may be just him or her, not you.

4. **Manage your emotions.**
   If you start to feel yourself becoming emotional it’s perfectly acceptable to ask the person providing the feedback if you can have some time to process the information and schedule another meeting. When your fight or flight mode kicks in and emotions start to run high it’s difficult to concentrate on what the other person is saying. Taking time out to calm your nerves will allow you to process your feedback as calmly and objectively as possible.

5. **Analyze the feedback and develop a strategy to overcome obstacles and achieve your goals.**
   Remember to look for facts as opposed to opinions in the feedback. Try to recall some of the constructive feedback you have received in the past. If you see any patterns or feel you might recognize some of the behaviors they are describing write them down. Think about how these behaviors/issues could become barriers to the goals you came up with in step one. Plan what steps you could take to address these points.

6. **Share your plan and ask for advice and support.**
   This shows that you’re taking steps to remedy the issues pointed out. They may also have suggestions that you may not have considered. Finally, ask your manager or colleague for support in making these changes. If they see that you genuinely want to put their advice into action, they’ll be sure to offer you encouragement along the way and be more receptive when you give them feedback in return.