Tips for Giving Feedback

1. **Make the feedback specific and related to behavior.**

   No: “James, you’re late again and you have a poor attitude.”
   Yes: “James you have been 15 minutes late for the past three mornings. Will you help me understand why?”

2. **Consider the timing. Give feedback either before the event in the form of advice or immediately after as positive or corrective feedback.**

   No: (criticism) “Jane, because you’ve done such a poor job in the past, I need to preview the speech you’re planning to give next week.”
   Yes: (advice) “Jane I’d like to review the content of your presentation with you before your meeting next week so we can be sure you are successful.”

   No: (positive, but not specific) “Jane, good speech last week. Keep up the good work!”
   Yes: (positive) “Jane, you did an outstanding job in your presentation. The speech was well research and interesting. I saw many members of the audience taking copious notes while you presented!”

3. **Give the feedback in calm and unemotional language.**

   No: “James, isn’t it about time you improved your production with this machine?”
   Yes: “James, I’m sure your progress will be much faster now that you better understand how to use the new machine.”

4. **Check to make sure clear communication has occurred.**

   No: “So, John, you’ve got it now, right?”
   Yes: “John, do you understand the new protocol now? Will you explain it to me so I’m sure that I explained it correctly?”

5. **Focus on behavior the employee can change.**

   No: “John, why don’t you like to talk to other people?”
   Yes: “John, part of your role is to keep the team informed about the status of the project.”

6. **Use “I” statements rather than “you” statements.**

   No: “John, you are so inconsiderate of others when you leave your radio on!”
   Yes: “John, I lose my concentration when I am able to hear your radio in the work area. Please turn the volume down during working hours.”

7. **Define the impact on you, the team, the unit, the university.**

   No: “Janet, can’t you ever get your reports to me on time?”
Yes: “Janet, when I don’t get your reports on time, I can’t get my reports to my manager on time. This slows up decisions about resources our department needs for the upcoming month.”

8. **Solicit feedback rather than impose it.**

No: “John, I saw how you handled Mrs. Smith during this crisis, and it was not good at all.”
Yes: “John, it is important that you learn to handle your difficult customers more effectively. I’m happy to share some things that have worked for me and talk with you about what you can do more effectively. Would that help?”