5 Reasons Why Feedback Is Important

[**By Karen Naumann**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/author/karen-naumann)

It’s the end of the year, which means feedback and year-end conversations are coming up for many of us. Do you actually remember the last time somebody gave you feedback on something you’ve done outside of a scheduled feedback session?

If you have to think for longer than 10 seconds, then it’s most likely been too long ago. Although feedback is unfortunately avoided or even feared in many societies, it is probably one of the greatest gifts you can give and also receive from someone. It can sometimes be the last push you need to build up the courage to do something outside of your comfort zone or to do what you have believed you couldn’t do.

As seen in many examples of great leaders before: leadership means supporting and encouraging talents, because a real leader understands that a company or team is only as successful and great as the people it is made of. Feedback is like the water for flowers, without it, they won’t bloom.

Here are 5 reasons why and how feedback is of great importance in our professional and private lives:

**1. It can keep us going**
Feedback comes in different forms, positive and negative, however, no matter what, it should always be constructive. Sure it is mostly subjective, but especially as a counselor, I am “amazed” to see how many people use absolute terms and words during feedback sessions. Thus, when that one time of not being prepared or not delivering the greatest presentation on earth, turns into “you are never prepared!” or “you are not a good presenter.”

Exactly those final and absolute statements are lethal to our self-esteem, motivation, self-development, and probably mostly to our happiness. Furthermore, those absolute statements can start a chain reaction, going from self-fulfilling prophecy to depression, psychosomatic symptoms and sick-leaves at the end.

So, before we give someone feedback, we really need to check our own motives and current mood -whether we feel stressed, annoyed, jealous, afraid, or simply have antipathy towards the other person. And then it is on us to really look at the performance of the other person professionally and kindly, with the goal of helping them unlock their greatest potential.

As Sam Walton put it so brilliantly:

*“Outstanding leaders go out of the way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it’s amazing what they can accomplish.”*

**2. It gives us a feeling of belonging and purpose**

*“The deepest principle of human nature is the craving to be appreciated.”William James*

Even from early on, many schools of thought in psychology acknowledged the importance of the feeling of belonging and appreciation. Our biggest core values as human beings are to feel needed, appreciated and to be part of a community or team.

Moreover, the knowledge that what we do is meaningful and contributes to someone or something in a useful way for others, gives us a sense of purpose, which is just as essential, and becomes of greater importance in current generations, especially for Millennials. It “pays back” in a different, in my opinion, more fulfilling way, than a monetary bonus or an award of some kind could ever do.

**3. It increases growth and happiness for both sides**

So really, do you remember the last time someone gave you feedback? Complimented you on your work or simply mentioned something about you that you haven’t heard before?

That’s what feedback does: it enables you to look at situations and yourself differently, it unlocks self-reflection and growth, and opens the gate to change. Same goes for giving feedback. We see situations and people through a mirror covered with our own experiences, feelings and perceptions. That’s why giving is just as beneficial as receiving feedback, because it makes us think, reflect, and consider other views as well.

On the flip side however, that’s also exactly why giving and receiving feedback is not easy for any of us, whether it is positive or “negative” nature. It really does require a great amount of one of our most difficult lifelong tasks called self-reflection, as well as humbleness and openness to different opinions and thoughts on the giver’s and receiver’s end.

Thus, next time you hit a point where you feel discouraged and like you could really use some kind of feedback again from your boss, colleagues or a friend, then please take a moment and look at it from that perspective as well.

**4. It unlocks change and innovation**

Think of an organization and its customers, for example a hotel and its guests. There are plenty of online feedback platforms now for a reason. Innovation and growth is vital for a business no matter what industry or sector they belong to. How else could a company move forward and be innovative, if its leaders and employees stay at the same point?

There would be no change or improvement if customers did not provide them with (constructive!) feedback, and this is true for businesses and relationships.

So, if you don’t like something and you want it to change, then say or do something about it, because like Ken Blanchard noted: *“Feedback is the breakfast of champions.”* We all need it to perform at our best.

**5. It prevents us from being stuck and discouraged**

Feedback truly is something we all need, no matter if we’re intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to do something. It shows us what we do correctly already and where we need to develop to get better and more successful in helping others and achieving our goals.

It is like your parents holding you when you first learn to ride a bike. They supported and encouraged you, gave you guidance and constant feedback on how you were doing. They believed in you and had patience, until that one moment, when they let you go and you rode the bike by yourself.

Sure, some of us didn’t need a lot of time and some of us did. There’s no “normal” or “un-normal.” We are all unique creatures but constant learners who do their best and take one step at a time.

Or as Edmund Lee stated before:

*“Surround yourself with the dreamers and the doers, the believers and thinkers, but most of all, surround yourself with those who see the greatness within you, even when you don’t see it yourself.”*

And exactly those believers can make all the difference for someone else. So, let’s be one