

Top 10 Feedback Mistakes

1. "You were too abrasive," or "You need to be a better team player," you send a strong message about what you think is "right" or "wrong." Puts people on the defensive. use of generalized, cliché catch
2. Don't use phrases like "You are a good leader," "You did a great job on the presentation," or "You have a lot of common sense. If you want to encourage someone to repeat productive behavior, you have to let them know what they did so they can keep doing it
3. "Sheila said that you seem confused about your new assignment," or "People are telling me that they feel like you are micromanaging them," isn't effective feedback. Create suspicion of coworkers and will lead to resentment
4. It's tempting to first say some-thing positive, then deliver a negative statement, then soothe the situation with another positive message (a good-bad-good sandwich). Instead, the recipient will soon figure out what you're doing, filter out the two positive ends, and focus on the negative message in the middle
5. Another key mistake is using language like "always" or "never." Hearing these words, people naturally get defensive as they can remember plenty of times when they did not do what you claim they did
6. Telling someone that you know they are behaving a certain way because of an impending divorce, jealousy over a co-worker's advancement, or burnout is ineffective because what you think you know about someone's intents and motives is probably dead wrong. Feedback that goes to motive is likely to cause resentment
7. Don't give advice, describe personal experiences, and try to solve the other person's problem. People receiving feedback need time to digest and assimilate the information they have just received
8. "Do you want to be successful in this organization?") doesn't reinforce good behavior or illustrate bad behavior. It only creates animosity
9. If giving feedback is uncomfortable to you, or if you sometimes speak before thinking, you might use sarcasm as a substitute for feedback. But saying "good afternoon" to a colleague who is ten minutes late for a morning meeting doesn't tell that person how that behavior affected you or provide reasons to change that behavior.
10. Saying "Do you think you can pay closer attention during our next meeting?" is too indirect to be effective. It may also be interpreted as sarcastic, to which the recipient may respond defensively, or rhetorical.

From the Center for Creative Leadership

<http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/publications/tenCommon.pdf>