An essential part of building an effective relationship with others is to open up and maintain effective lines of communication. Communication is of course two- way: transmit and receive. The art of feedback is the ability to transmit and receive in the most effective way in order to achieve the dual purpose of feedback which is motivation and development. Feedback is a process that helps people reflect and focus on what they are achieving, why they need to achieve this and how they are going about achieving it. Feedback may be defined as "information about past behaviour and actions, delivered in the present, which may influence any future behaviour and actions." The word feedback can have negative connotations for some people. Just think how you feel if someone says “do you mind if I give you some feedback.” You are probably waiting to hear the list of things that you are doing wrong or waiting to defend yourself against the incorrect perceptions of the other person. Feedback will need to be both balanced and constructive if it is to really address the aims of being motivational and developmental

Feedback that is:

* based on observable or observed behaviour or actions
* specific to a given situation
* balanced in identifying what has been successful what as been less successful

To improve the accuracy and clarity of a message during a feedback conversation, use clarifying feedback statements such as the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| “Let me be sure I understand what you have said.” | “Let's see if I can review the key points we've discussed.” |
| “So what you are saying is…” | As I understand it, your major objectives for next year are….” |
| “I think I hear you saying that your central concern is…” |  |

Clarifying feedback statements can also end with the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| “Did I understand you properly?” | “Were those your major concerns?” |
| “Did I hear you correctly?” | “Can you add anything to my summary?” |
| “Was this in line with what you meant?” |  |

Feedback should be FAST:

* Frequent: don’t wait until the next formal SRDS meeting. Do it as a matter of routine.
* Accurate: descriptive of observed or verifiable behaviour and facts; not evaluative of the person based on assumptions, interpretations, generalisations and judgements.
* Specific: related to a specific, observable or verifiable behaviour, action, event or result.
* Timely: close to the event.