



Relationships

The Adlerian Team

Feedback:

direct and indirect

By Marion Balla

Do you ever hesitate when sharing your ideas or stating an opinion? Do you fear other people's reactions to your input? Do you admire people who are direct and clear in communication? Indirect feedback is very common because people are not only concerned with the ideas they are expressing but also the effect they will have on others. There is often concern about being wrong, being criticized, appearing stupid or silly and/or imposing on or hurting others.

Barriers to providing feedback

Assumptions based on personal beliefs play a large role in preventing people from sharing their input spontaneously.

- A belief that what you have to say is not important or someone else will say it better can make you hesitant to take the risk to be involved totally in your daily interactions.
- A belief that you know how someone else will think, react and/or feel without checking it out leads to many misunderstandings. People prefer to guess rather than ask for clarification.
- A belief that others should know what you think and feel especially if you have a close relationship, for example children, partners, friends. The closer the relationship, the more assumptions seem to be made and the more misunderstandings occur.
- A belief that feedback is a waste of time because nothing will change or you won't be listened to.
- A belief that giving up and/or giving in are helpful strategies in interactions.
- A belief that you will be criticized and made to feel inadequate.

Enhancers to providing feedback

Starting from the concept of "I" rather than "you" in our interactions can increase other people's openness to hear your opinions, ideas and/or suggestions: "I wanted to share

with you..." "I believe that..." "I'd like to discuss..." Pinpointing issues in a respectful and tentative manner can lead to constructive problem solving: "I am hearing you say that..." "I'm, concerned about ... and will need your help."

Acknowledging other people by including them, checking out their opinions, encouraging their input and recognizing their talents and skills: "I admire your patience in this situation. It benefits all of us." "I appreciate your attention to detail." "I'd like to hear your ideas." "I'm glad you are a member of our team."

Sharing what you will and won't do is important to assisting others to know your boundaries. Being clear about your ability to participate and what you can offer helps others to know what to expect and where they can fit in or help out.

On a larger scale you all need to consider feedback in newspaper editors, politicians, church and school groups, and community associations to ensure that you are shaping your surroundings. If you don't offer response to the requests for input or feedback, decisions will be made which affect you and which you may not like.

Give someone feedback this week and ask for some from your child, friend, work colleague, partner, etc. It's a great and important learning experience.

Model for others that freedom of speech is an important right to exercise. Model for the youth of today that having an active voice is your responsibility as a citizen.

Recommended Reading

That's Not What I Meant and You Just Don't Understand, Deborah Tanner Ph.D, Ballantine Books, New York

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