



Feedback that Feeds

Connecting What We Think and What We Say

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- How can we accept and deliver criticism in ways that intend to “do no harm?”
- When we know how to offer “feedback that feeds,” we choose comments that help a child, parent, administrator, or co-worker grow rather than wither.
- When we understand how to speak with peaceful yet powerful messages, we offer our selves and others healthy ways to build social integrity and personal authenticity.

A Teacher's Creed

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|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Nonmaleficence | Do no harm |
| 2. Beneficence | Do good |
| 3. Autonomy | Promote self-determination |
| 4. Justice | Promote just, fair treatment |

5 Ways to Offer Feedback That Feeds

1. Be willing to reframe how we see others' behaviors
2. Become a beneficent observer
3. Shift feedback to observations and conversational comments, rather than compliments or criticisms
4. Be impeccable with our words
5. Speak assertively with peacefulness and powerfulness

5 Levels of Verbal Assertiveness

Level 1: We say something nice or complimentary, but we don't really mean it. We offer the socially courteous, publicly generous response, but we are inauthentic, subjugating our own self.

Level 2: Level 2 has us being genuinely understanding, conciliatory, apologetic, and contrite. In this level, we are both peaceful and powerful. There is no need for assertiveness because the conflict is easily and quickly resolved.

Levels 3 and 4: We become as assertive as we need to be, using our words to help rather than harm. Calm, strong responses convey information rather than criticism. Level 3 is matter-of-fact, straight-forward. Level 4 is more insistent. The differences between Level 3 and 4 can be tone of voice, facial expression, and general intensity rather than the words themselves.

Level 5: We deliver our message with extreme anger, oppression, rage, sarcasm, and/or aggression. We are harsh, abrasive, and harmful with our words. (Bennett, 2011, *Speak for Your Self: Being Your Best in Difficult Situations*)



8 Strategies for Feedback about Voices

Prepare children for feedback by providing a welcoming classroom environment, preliminary assessment of vocal habits, and shared understandings about singing. "Feedback that feeds provides the nourishment that children need to grow as musicians." (Solan, 2014, p. 14-17)

1. **Questioning:** "What did you notice about our performance? What are words to describe what you heard?"
2. **Think-Aloud Observations:** "Here is what I noticed."
3. **Corrections:** "I think we have a misunderstanding."
4. **Guidance:** "Let's make a different voice choice."
5. **Self-Correction:** "Check in with yourself"
6. **Invitation to Participate:** "I wonder who?"
7. **Invitation:** "How about you take a Listening and Watching Turn?"
8. **Show Genuine Appreciation and Pleasure:** "That was a musical moment!"

Favorite Thoughts on This Topic

- Facing conflict or confrontation, aim for understanding rather than agreement. (Rusk, 1993)
- Be impeccable with your word and do not take anything personally. *The Four Agreements* (Ruiz, 1997)
- Behave from a place of compassion and wondering. *The Art of Happiness* (Dalai Lama, 1998)
- Realize that our ego may be asserting itself. (Tolle, 2007)
- Know the perils as well as the profits of praise. (Bennett, 1988)
- Praise can be like candy, offering immediate, easy, superficial, instant "lifts," while dulling our taste for more nutritious fare. (Harmin, 1994)

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