


Feedback *quickness* reference

Feedback best practices reminders



Feedback is *hard*. But it doesn't have to be.



There are science-based principles that you can lean on to steer a feedback conversation to a positive outcome.

This quick reference will help you get into the right mindset and give you all the tools you need to guide you through the conversation.

Preparing for a feedback conversation

- Should I give feedback?
- Do I have the right mindset?
- Does the other person have the right mindset?
- Am I ready for the conversation?
- Am I ready to close and help with follow through?

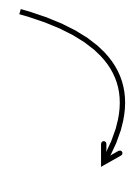
Should I even give feedback at all?

Is it serious?

Is feedback needed to prevent the person from:

- Delivering sub-standard products/services
- Damaging important relationships
- Making others unsafe
- Violating company codes of conduct

Yes



Reinforce or redirect?

Is it about reinforcing positive behaviors or redirecting sub-optimal ones?

Yes

Is it helpful?

Could the feedback enable the person to:

- Get better at their work in a meaningful way
- Help with his/her career growth
- Achieve a goal he/she cares about achieving
- Grow and improve as a professional

Reinforcing

Redirecting

Yes

Go ahead and give feedback

No

Piling on?

Has the person gotten a lot of redirecting feedback lately?

Yes

No

Reconsider whether to give feedback

No

No

Do *I* have the right mindset?



The way that you think about feedback – what you think the purpose is, your intention for the discussion, your understanding of your responsibility in the matter at hand – can have a big impact on how the conversation plays out. It is very important to enter into the conversation with a productive mindset that adapts to the basic psychological and practical realities that both people face. To do this, think through these four important dimensions of your own mindset.

Make sure you are in the right emotional state

Emotion can stand in the way of a productive conversation. Try entering the conversation in a calm state of mind and stay that way for the duration.

- Do not enter the conversation with strong emotions related to the issue
- If you are not confident you can remain calm, consider alternate approaches to feedback
- Have a plan for managing your emotions during the conversation

Make sure you have the right intentions

The way you think about the purpose of the conversation can have a big impact on what you say and how the discussion unfolds.

- Don't be intent on changing the person in some way, whether changing a view or behavior
- Have the intention of merely providing information that may be useful to the person
- Enter with the intention of sharing a perspective that may not otherwise be available to them
- Always give feedback with the goal of helping the other person

Make sure you are thinking the right way about the truth

Debates over truth can stall feedback discussions and are often beside the point. Getting the facts out can help but they should be taken for what they are: partial views of the truth.

- Do not assume that you are in sole possession of the whole truth
- Do accept that the other person may also be in possession of many aspects of the truth
- Accept that objective truth is unknowable and, as such, is not needed to make progress

Make sure you are thinking the right way about control

Each person has the authority to make their own choices. You are not responsible for their actions, nor do you have the right or ability to make decisions for them.

- Accept that the other person ultimately gets to decide whether or not to accept your feedback
- Accept that pressure and authority produce resistance, even if they create temporary compliance
- Hold the attitude that the other person gets to decide whether to accept the information you offer

Does the *other* person have the right mindset?



In the ideal feedback conversation, the other person has a calm, open, and rational mindset. While you ultimately cannot control their mindset, there are things you can do that can either impede or enable the other person's ability to create and maintain this state of mind. The overall idea is to avoid making them feel threatened, allow them to feel in control, and help them feel that they will benefit from the discussion.

Whether to give feedback

If a person isn't open to feedback, then giving it is a waste of time. There are occasions when feedback is needed even if the person is not open to it. But these moments should be infrequent. Forcing feedback creates an oppositional mindset that can be difficult to overcome.

- Let the person to decide whether to get feedback
- Do not pressure the person to receive feedback

Feedback framing

When someone believes feedback will help them do something they care about doing - attain a goal, save time, make life easier, etc. they will be far more open to it. They may even seek it out. It's usually possible to frame feedback in the positive.

- Frame the request such that you are providing information that may be helpful to them
- Make the connection between feedback and a positive outcome they want to achieve

When to give feedback

While it is important to give feedback in close proximity to the behaviors in question, it is far more important for the person to be in the right frame of mind. When you give feedback to someone who isn't ready for it, their mind may shut down to any inputs.

- Let the person to decide when to receive feedback

Where to give feedback

Where feedback is given can dramatically influence its impact. The wrong location can cause someone to feel threatened, whereas the right one can help a person feel at ease.

- Let the person to decide where to get feedback
- Give positive feedback publicly if you want to boost the person's status and/or communicate to others what positive performance looks like
- Give positive feedback privately to emphasize the sincerity and/or personal impact
- Give redirecting feedback privately

Am I ready to navigate the conversation?

Every feedback conversation winds its way through various stages. Each stage requires specific skills and approaches. It is important to be ready to navigate through the entire discussion, wherever it may lead.

1

Open/frame the conversation

If someone believes feedback will help them attain a goal, save time, make life easier, or help them get better at something, they will be far more open to it – maybe even eagerly seek it out. It’s usually possible to frame feedback as something you’re gaining not fixing.

- State that you have information that may be helpful
- Mention that it could help achieve a positive outcome
- See if you can avoid using the word “feedback”
- Ask again if its ok to share

2

Provide feedback

The goal is to be specific and objective, to avoid overgeneralizing beyond the behaviors in focus, and to prevent getting bogged down in disagreements over truth.

- Describe the circumstances
- Describe the behavior objectively
- Describe the impact it had on you personally
- Describe the impact it had on someone else
- Describe the impact it had on the organization
- Avoid over generalizing

3

Navigate reaction

Give the person space to understand and absorb the information and basically turn control over to them. Follow their lead, see how they react, and respond in kind.

- Confirm understanding
- Wait or ask for the person’s reaction
- Answer any questions they have
- Listen actively and with an open mind

Provide advice

People confuse feedback and advice – but they’re different. Feedback is the observation and outcome. Advice is a suggestion for what someone might do about it.

- When possible, skip the feedback and move right to the advice
- Never offer unsolicited advice – wait to be asked or get permission
- Remember that not all advice works for everyone
- Avoid phrases like “you should” or “you need to” or “I would”

Manage emotions

Sometimes feedback makes people emotional. When this happens, the goal is to try and deescalate. The best way to accomplish this is to provide space for the emotions to be expressed.

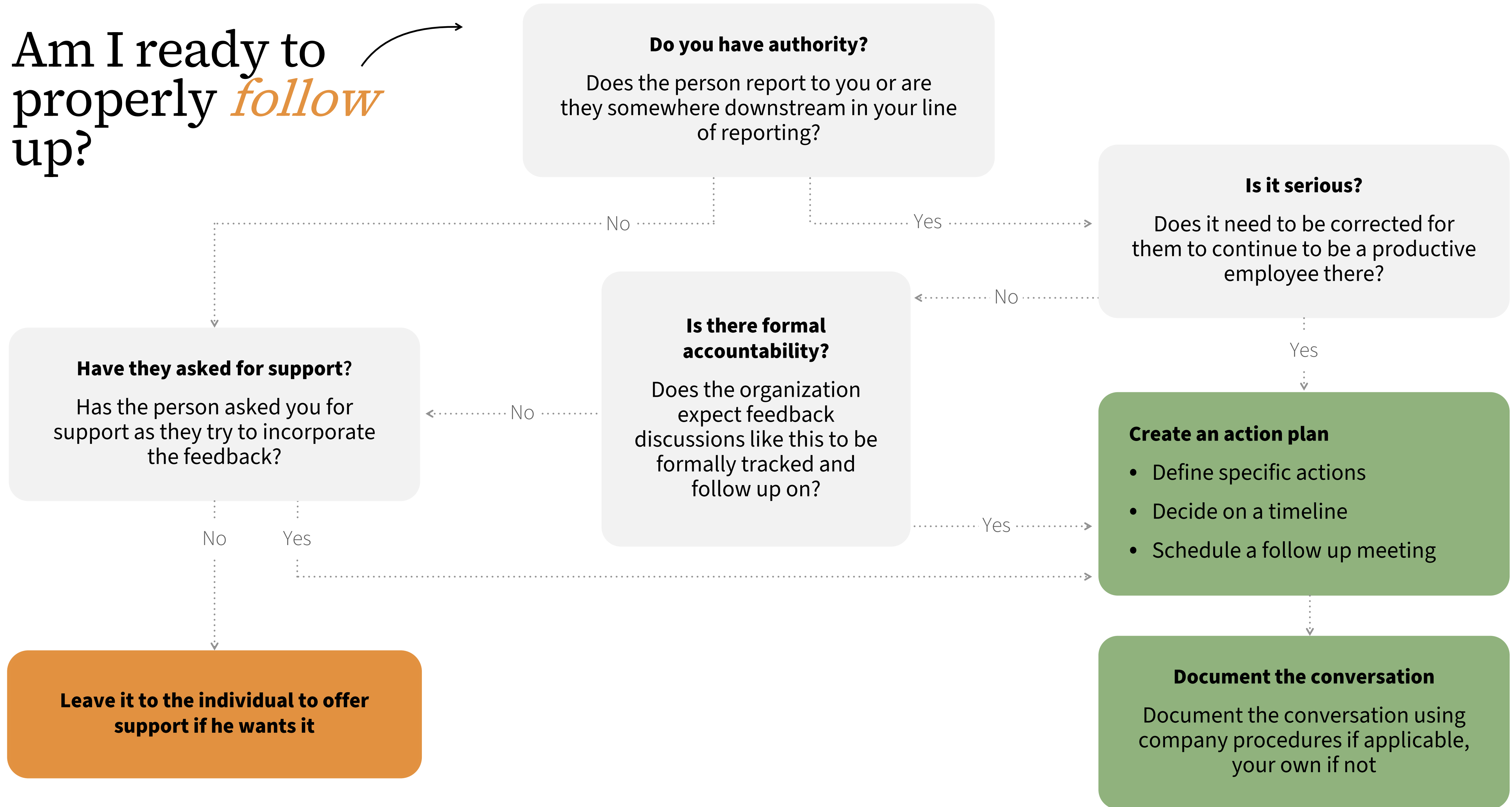
- Label the emotion he appears to be feeling
- Demonstrate that you understand
- Say that you understand why they might feel that way
- Empathize with their feelings
- Make sure they get it all out

Manage objections

The person may not agree and/or may feel as though only part of the story has been presented. To the greatest extent possible, you do not want to object to their objections.

- Mirror what they say to demonstrate that you understand
- Validate and empathize with their point of view
- Acknowledge that there may be various points of view
- State that it is their choice what to do with the information
- Avoid debates over the truth

Am I ready to properly *follow* up?



What's *next*?

This quick reference has a companion planning tool that can help you plan out what to say, anticipate your reactions, and generally think through the conversation. It's completely free. Interested? Follow this [link](#).

Want to customize this quick reference?

So that it better aligns with your organization's practices and culture? Maybe you want to add your branding? No problem. Give us a shout and we can help you get this done. Email us at nathan@bcltraining.com