



Giving and getting feedback: Some tips

Working on environmental solutions nearly always involves some type of group work. In the best efforts, groups continually learn from one another as well as from the team as a whole. And, learning involves sharing information. How are you sharing information with each other?

Here are some tips to maximize the effectiveness of your sharing:

Giving feedback

- Check to see if the receiver is willing to listen
- Describe what you observed or noticed.¹ (“I noticed you mentioned X during our conversation”).
 - Use verbs to provide behavioural based suggestions – something that receiver is able to change
 - Use “I” statements to describe what you experienced (“When you paraphrased back to the group, I felt that you had understood what I was saying.”)
 - Be specific and give examples
- Avoid “absolute” language such as “always” or “never”
- Offer at least 3 positive observations for every behaviour you think might be different. Praise effort, not intelligence.
- Focus on the future since the past has already occurred
- Separate understanding from agreement
- Thank the receiver for listening

Receiving feedback

- Listen with an open mind even if it hurts – the other person is trying to be helpful
- Find the kernel of truth
- Ask for clarification or elaboration when you do not understand (“Could you say more?”; “Could you give me an example?”)
- Say what you’ll do
- Thank the giver

¹By approaching feedback this way, you are giving the other person non-judgmental information that they can decide what to do with, what it means for them, and how they feel about it.