



Pierrette Desrosiers  
PSYCOACHING

Cultivate  
the best  
in people  
and harvest  
success  
in business



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## TOOL - HOW TO ACCEPT FEEDBACK OR CRITICISM

We all want to be better and to improve. It seems that there are only two ways to do so: by introspection, which involves self-evaluation, analysis and questioning, and to question our actions and results; or through constructive criticism, which involves receiving an evaluation of a behavior or a situation, with the aim of helping us to be better. Regrettably, in several cases, the constructive criticism becomes destructive.

Without the constructive criticism of others, our possibilities of progress and development are limited. This, however, results in a paradox because, as human beings, we try to improve and, at the same time, we try to protect what we value most dearly, namely our ego. This explains the common hesitation experienced when facing constructive criticism from our peers. Often, this experience produces negativity and suffering.

### TO EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK, IT IS NECESSARY TO:

#### Listen to and remain open minded:

- Concentrate on what is said and on the way it is being said.
- Have open and receptive attitude.
- Avoid making a hasty judgment: Give the other person a chance to finish what he has to say and to express his idea completely.

#### Make sure that you have well understood what was said:

- Verify the correctness of your understanding.
- If necessary, ask for clarifications.
- Make sure that the message of the presenter is well received and that the modifications, the improvements and the required procedures to be undertaken are well understood.

#### Avoid self-justification:

- Add certain details or elements, if necessary, but nothing more, even if there is discord with the received feedback.
- Avoid a dialogue where who is right and who is wrong is questioned. Each person has his own perception of the situation and is entitled to his opinion.

#### Validate with the others:

- If necessary, or in case of doubt, verify if the other members share the received opinion.



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## IN BRIEF, WHEN WE RECEIVE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM OR FEEDBACK:

1. Breathe slowly
2. Listen attentively
3. Ask for clarification
4. Reflect on the message
5. Recognize justified elements
6. Take time to discern what was heard and understood
7. **Examine the following elements:**
  - a) **Expertise or competence:** does the person possess the required competence relative to the feedback?
  - b) **Conflict of interests:** is the person in conflict of interest?
  - c) **Precision or generality:** is the person providing you with feedback that is precise or is he speaking only in general terms?
  - d) **Consensus:** is there consensus among the others in the group regarding the feedback being received? Make the effort to verify this with the others.
  - e) **Friend or enemy:** Is the person really doing this for your benefit or is it being done out of envy because of your presence?

*\*The words "feedback" and "criticism" are inter-changeable.*