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PSYCOACHING

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## TOOL- THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FEEDBACK OR EFFECTIVE CRITIQUE

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

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.

### FOR A CRITICISM TO BE EFFECTIVE, IT MUST:

- Be given with courtesy and with respect for the individual.
- Be specific rather than general.
- Be directed to the solutions and not to the causes.
- Be given in respect of the situation, and not to the personalities involved.
- Be clear and precise.
- Be descriptive and/or refer to the experience rather than to the inferences.
- Avoid any form of judgment.
- Be given at a convenient time, but as soon as possible after the event.
- Be verified in terms of understanding by all involved.
- Refer to an action over which the receiver has some power and which he can change.

The "feedback" constitutes an essential tool in the improvement of skills. "Feedback" allows an individual to become more aware of the impact of his behavior.

### HERE ARE THE STEPS INVOLVED IN PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM:

- Describe the situation and or the observable behavior
- Do not label, exaggerate or judge
- Speak only for yourself
- Outline the consequences
- Limit the criticism to those aspects of the situation about which you are certain
- Present a clearly understood remedy or ask someone else to propose a solution
- Verify the understanding of the other proposal

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- Make sure that the criticism is being given for the right reasons

**Note:** Having met with the employee, it is recommended to provide the employee with a written copy of the nature of the criticism, especially where such criticism involves a problem of behaviour or significant outcome. This way, if there is no improvement in the situation, a written document can support an initiative involving either a penalty or, if necessary, dismissal.