



How to Give Feedback - SBI

In CCL's work, we have found that giving effective feedback to others is one of the most important skills for any leader to master. It is also often **one of the most difficult skills** to apply consistently and well (many executives have told us they would rather receive feedback about themselves than give feedback to someone else.) Giving effective feedback is a core skill required of anyone engaged in the development of individuals. "Situation, Behavior, Impact" (known also as SBI) is a primary tool of leadership for helping others grow, for dealing with conflict, and for learning about self and others as a part of the developmental process. Feedback is a GIFT. CCL also has an 80/20 rule. Eighty percent of feedback is about maintaining desirable behaviors – strengths-based feedback. The twenty percent of feedback is reserved for behaviors that have a negative impact and are impeding growth and hindering work and/or relationships.

To help you improve your effectiveness in giving feedback to others, we have developed a three-step process that we teach and practice at CCL: the **Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI)** model. The model provides a structure that helps keep your feedback focused and relevant, and increases the likelihood it will be received in a clear, non-defensive manner by the recipient.

Describe the **situation** where the observed behavior occurred. The more specific you can be about the where and when, the better your overall feedback process will be. Helping the individual understand exactly the situation you were in and what was happening will help to provide context for the feedback.

Focus on the **behavior**. Think of playing a video, only using words to describe what you saw and heard. Simply describe the person's behavior: "When I was talking, you pushed your chair away from the table and gazed out the window." Avoid interpretations and judgments here, such as, "You weren't listening to me." This is not a personal attack, rather a discussion of a particular behavior.

Share with the individual the **impact** of the behavior on you. Impact is what you experienced; you're now making that internal experience known to the individual.

When you give SBI feedback, the impact statement is about how you felt.

Here are some good examples of SBI:

“Chris, at the end of the meeting this morning [situation], you gave a summary of the key action steps we had discussed [behavior]. I was really glad you did that [impact on me], and it seemed to bring a good sense of closure to the meeting [impact on others].” (Instead of, “Chris, you were really effective in the team meeting today – thanks!”)

“Pat, during our session yesterday afternoon [situation], I noticed that you interrupted me on several occasions [behavior]. I felt frustrated at times [impact on me] as I wasn’t able to complete my thoughts. (Instead of, “Pat, you were really rude yesterday.”)

Examples of feedback without “Impact”:

“I noticed that you were friendly.” [Interpretation or judgment. What behavior constitutes friendly? How did it make you feel?]

“I experienced you as intimidating.” [Interpretation or judgment. What behavior constitutes intimidation? Did that make you feel intimidated, angry, disappointed, etc.?)

“I felt like you knew a lot about the subject.” [Interpretation or judgment. What behavior suggests that someone knows a lot about a subject? How did you feel being around someone who knew a lot?]

When Giving Feedback

- Be as specific as possible
- Focus on the changeable
- Speak for yourself
- Speak directly to the person; look at them
- Provide balanced feedback
- Be honest; be kind
- Avoid prescriptions and “should’s” or “must’s”
- Practice Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI)



When Receiving Feedback

- Listen and look at the person who is giving feedback
- Treat feedback as a gift
- It's okay to ask questions for clarification
- Understanding does not equal agreement; people are sharing their perceptions
- Be alert for themes and patterns
- Do not defend, justify, or explain away
- Say thank you
- Give yourself time to reflect and process

Examples of Behavioral Terms

Here are some examples of behavioral descriptions that are not impressions, abstractions, evaluative, or judgments. They are simply statements of possible behaviors you may observe from your colleagues.

- Proposing a process to the group
- Acting as a recorder for the group
- Soliciting and asking for input from individuals
- Speaking when someone else is talking
- Interrupting those who are speaking
- Asking questions
- Leaning forward in one's chair during a conversation
- Leaning backward in one's chair during a dialogue
- Physically helping to open doors
- Pacing back and forth
- Finishing other people's sentences
- Arriving late to meetings
- Arriving early to meetings
- Not speaking in a group
- Telling a joke during a serious discussion
- Joining a joke-telling session
- Avoiding conflict, i.e., by disengaging in a heated or controversial discussion
- Speaking loudly
- Speaking softly
- Frequent use of the telephone
- Asking others how they are doing
- Saying thank you



Possible Impact Words

Positive Impact Words

Affectionate	Confident	Generous	Mesmerized
Agreeable	Content	Glad	Mellow
Alert	Delighted	Gratified	Nice
Amiable	Determined	Happy	Peaceful
Amused	Eager	Helpful	Pleased
Appreciated	Ecstatic	Honored	Powerful
Befriended	Enchanted	Hopeful	Proud
Bold	Enhanced	Important	Refreshed
Calm	Engaged	Infatuated	Relaxed
Capable	Energetic	Impressed	Relieved
Caring	Enjoyed	Inspired	Rewarded
Challenged	Enthusied	Intrigued	Safe
Charmed	Excited	Jovial	Satisfied
Cheerful	Fascinated	Joyful	Settled
Cherished	Fearless	Kind	Tender
Clever	Free	Liked	Warm
Comforted	Friendly	Lively	Welcome
Congenial	Fulfilled	Loved	Wonderful

Negative Impact Words

Abandoned	Exhausted	Nervous	Stressed
Agitated	Fearful	Odd	Stupid
Ambivalent	Flustered	Overwhelmed	Suspicious
Angry	Foolish	Pain	Tense
Anxious	Frantic	Panicked	Threatened
Betrayed	Frustrated	Persecuted	Tired
Bitter	Frightened	Pity	Trapped
Bored	Grief	Pressured	Troubled
Cheated	Guilty	Quarrelsome	Uneasy
Confused	Irritated	Rejected	Uncertain
Defeated	Isolated	Remorse	Vulnerable
Diminished	Jealous	Restless	Weak
Discontented	Judged	Rushed	Worried
Distracted	Left Out	Sad	
Disturbed	Lonely	Scared	
Empty	Longing	Shocked	
Envious	Low	Skeptical	
Exasperated	Melancholy	Startled	