

BITS & PIECES

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FOUR WAYS TO UTILIZE FEEDBACK TO BALANCE THE SCALES

By Marjorie Mauldin

Whether it's positive or negative, there is always something to gain from feedback. Here are four ways to reap the benefits:

- 1. Be gracious and proactive.** When you receive positive information about your performance, thank your boss for sharing these insights with you. Make sure to ask to be included on similar projects or teams, in the future, when those opportunities arise.
- 2. Take it all in.** Listen to challenging feedback with a curious attitude. Don't shut down emotionally. Think of it this way: If you were lost you would ask for directions to reach your destination. Or, if you were in a competition and someone offered tips on how to improve your performance, you would listen and ask questions about implementation.
- 3. Seek clarity.** Ask for specifics regarding the information you receive. The best way to change or improve your approach or process is to know what to change. For example, if your boss feels that you could be a better team player, ask what that means and if

this perspective is general or a singular one. Perhaps your colleagues don't feel that you volunteer to help others succeed or that you don't always share information in a timely fashion. These are important characteristics of a high performer and pretty easy to put into practice.

- 4. Be ready to improve.** The most important thing you can do when receiving feedback is to stay focused, calm and listen with an open mind for ways to improve yourself on your job, and as a person. Even if you don't agree with the feedback you are given, you will gain valuable insights about perceptions surrounding your performance. This information will allow you to target and strengthen certain skills and competencies that will serve you throughout your career.

Marjorie M. Mauldin is founder and president of Executive Forum and the author of *Feedback Revolution*. She provides leadership and feedback training leadership for Fortune100 companies, government agencies and municipalities. To learn more, visit: ExecutiveForum.net, ilovefeedback.com or twitter.com/ExecForumCO.