Guidelines for Effective Feedback

1. Feedback should either be solicited or given with agreement.

2. Feedback is MY perception and MY truth; it is not fact just because I believe it.

3. Feedback refers to specific, observable behavior.

4. Feedback should not relate to behavior or circumstances the receiver cannot control.

5. Feedback is most effective when it is timely.

6. Feedback relates to positive or negative perceptions of the receiver’s behavior.

7. Feedback is non-judgmental.

8. Feedback is not advice.

9. Feedback is a gift - it becomes the property of the receiver.

The I-Statement

This simply suggests a means to preface your sharing of perceptions with the word “I.” That means that you’re sharing your stuff. Note the difference between the following two groups of statements. First, “You never listen to a word I say! You don’t care if I’m even in this group!” Second, “I sometimes think you don’t listen to me. It seems that you don’t remember what I say. Is that true? I feel invisible to you, and I don’t want to be.” The first group places blame on the other person, while the second group, the “I” statements, express what the speaker is feeling.

Three Finger Feedback

Imagine pointing to the person you are giving feedback to, extending your index finger toward them. Now look at your hand, observing the direction your lower three fingers are pointing, back at you. This is a way to realize that we might think three times before giving feedback to another because it’s more likely that the feedback is about you. If the perception you want to share passes this test, it is probably authentic feedback that will be easier to receive.