

Feed Me Feedback

Ariving in several ways, feedback enters our world by words spoken, the behavior of others, opportunities, internal messages from our mind, the performance of our bodies, data, and so on. When we can listen to the feedback received and put it to effective use, we can significantly change our lives.

Asking for feedback takes initiative and courage. To ask for feedback, try this great suggestion by Jack Canfield. Ask, “On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate our (product, service, relationship etc.)?” If the answer is anything less than 10, the next question could be, “What would it take to bring the rating back up to a 10?”

Specifically in the dental office, you may ask a patient, “How are we doing with your dental health care services? Is our staff courteous and friendly?” You may also ask your staff, “On a scale of one to ten, how am I doing as your leader? Or what do you like most and least about our team environment?”

The comments that you receive are simply information. There is nothing to be afraid of. For example, at the end of my seminars and workshops, I circulate an evaluation form to participants. Although it thrills me to see the positive fruits of my labor, the constructive advice is also very helpful. I must admit, earlier on in my career I did perceive some of the constructive comments to be negative, as I was defensively reading the remarks. Over time, I have learned that taking the information as “constructive advice” is very productive. When I noticed a pattern of similar comments, I could make changes to improve my programs. You may find, as I have, that not all feedback is accurate or useful; however, putting the useful feedback into action will help you to create some positive changes.

Receiving feedback effectively takes initiative and courage as well. How we respond to what we hear, see or feel is our choice. We can choose to react negatively, or we can use the feedback as an opportunity to reflect, and determine if we could improve by making a change. “This is fertile ground for improvement,” I once heard someone say.

People don’t frequently ask for feedback or give it because they would prefer to avoid the potential conflict that it may cause. If someone steps out of his or her comfort

zone to give you advice, take the attitude of gratitude and thank him or her for caring enough about you to share their opinion. You will be demonstrating your desire and commitment for continued growth and improvement, and you will encourage them to continue to help you become your personal best. Be grateful for feedback, and make it safe for the sender. In other words, don’t shoot the messenger. You can’t fix what you don’t know is broken or needs correcting,

Feedback is a gift that helps us become more effective, and asking for it is becoming quite common. In the April 2008 edition of *dentaltown* magazine, the Editorial Director asks for feedback with a series of questions for each of the magazine’s components, including its message boards, multimedia, website and awards. This concept is popular. Catch the wave!

Best wishes for putting feedback to use in your life.

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