

## Feedback: Some people can't handle the truth

Are you the type of individual who values sincere feedback and welcomes constructive criticism from customers, associates, and family members? Sometimes getting feedback can be an unpleasant experience, especially when it hasn't been requested! Without timely feedback, it's utterly impossible for a person to accurately identify his or her shortcomings, correct bad habits and profit from mistakes.

 By [John Boe](#) 27 Feb 2012

I can't think of any professional athlete or top-producing sales rep who have become successful by avoiding critical feedback. In fact, even the greatest professional golfer in the world, Tiger Woods, understands the value of seeking out advice on club selection from his caddy before taking a swing at the ball. Unsuccessful people often reject feedback and avoid taking personal responsibility for their actions. They have difficulty admitting weaknesses and when confronted, they'll frequently respond to feedback by lashing out in anger, deflect blame or deny responsibility.

Unfortunately, far too many people are "thin skinned" when it comes to receiving feedback and as a result, they often misinterpret sincere criticism as a form of personal attack. It's fairly typical and somewhat understandable for people to become overly defensive and a bit argumentative whenever their personal flaws and shortcomings are held up to the glaring spotlight of criticism.

Obviously, not all feedback is accurate, sincere or of equal importance. Nor does every input automatically require action to be taken. However, the key to long-term business success and personal achievement is determined largely not by hard work alone, but by one's ability to glean the kernels of wisdom from the chaos of feedback.

It's important not to put up a wall to avoid feedback, because the same walls that shield us from criticism also block our potential. When is the last time you recall asking your boss, associates or close friends for their honest feedback? Here are several important tips to help you gain the most benefit from your next feedback session:

1. Don't shoot the messenger. Be polite and keep your focus on the message.
2. Don't become upset, judgmental or defensive. Be willing to consider every input.
3. Don't argue or interrupt. Listen like a homicide detective and stay open-minded.
4. Don't rationalise your way out of accepting responsibility for your actions.
5. Ask open-ended questions to gain understanding. It's a good idea to frequently summarise and clarify the feedback in your own words. Always ask for specific examples.
6. Take time to reflect on the feedback and look for opportunities to continuously incorporate useful suggestions to improve your effectiveness.
7. Thank the people who take the time to give you honest feedback, because without them you'll never attain your full potential.

*It's a rare person who wants to hear what he doesn't want to hear. - Dick Cavett*

### ABOUT JOHN BOE

American John Boe presents a wide variety of motivational and sales-oriented keynotes and seminar programs for sales meetings and conventions. John is a recognised sales trainer, business motivational speaker with an impeccable track record in the meeting industry. For more information, go to [www.johnboe.com](http://www.johnboe.com). Free newsletter available on website.

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