

# Receive the feedback

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Do you believe that feedback is a gift? I do.

But wow, it is a gift that's hard to receive sometimes, isn't it?

I recently received feedback that was really difficult to hear. From two different people. In two very different situations. They helped me see I had been being selfish. And rude. Ouch. Certainly not my intent. Yet even though they didn't use those exact words, I could tell that's how I was coming across.

In both cases, when I received the feedback I felt as if I had been punched in the gut. My stomach hurt. My heart rate increased. I started to sweat. In one case, I cried. I felt like a terrible person. And I wanted to defend myself. Explain myself. Excuse myself. But I forced myself to listen, listen, listen (or in the case of the emailed feedback, read and read again). I waited for my blood pressure to get back to normal. And then I apologized. And then the learning began.

Feedback is a gift because it gives you the opportunity to do better and to fix the situation. If your customer complains about an unappetizing meal, you have the opportunity to correct the situation while the customer is still onsite. If a friend tells you she's fed up with all the political talk, you have an opportunity to change the conversations you have with her before she unfriends you. The feedback I received from one person reminded me that unsolicited advice is not welcome; the feedback from the other reminded me that when I am out of balance, I am difficult to deal with. Now it's up to me to make a change.

Surely, not all feedback is warranted or helpful. Other feedback may not be packaged particularly neatly. But other times, feedback is truly a gift we need to be willing to receive. And then it's up to us to do better.