



## Giving and Receiving Feedback

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The Monday Night Group works via feedback so we can get a sense of how other people see our work. To get the most out of this process, here are a few guidelines for giving and receiving it.

### Giving Feedback

- The purpose of feedback is to **help** your fellow writer. If you're not doing it with that motive, think about whether you should be doing it at all.
- It's OK to have nothing to say.
- Feedback at the group, **directly** to the writer involved. Try to avoid them hearing your views second-hand via the grapevine.
- Be **specific**. Avoid vague generalisations like "good", "bad", etc unless you follow-up with more detail. **The more specific you are, the more useful the feedback is likely to be.** Saying, "I really hated that" isn't helpful - saying exactly what didn't work for you and why is useful.
- **Ask questions** to check your understanding of what the writer intended. Some background to the work might help you give more specific and helpful feedback.
- **Avoid value-laden, flowery and exaggerated language.** Put it simply and straightforwardly
- Try using a "**three part message**" - describe **what** you liked/didn't like, the reason **why**, and suggest **alternatives**. However, try to avoid the temptation to turn their work into yours.
- Be balanced. **Don't forget to praise!** It's very demotivating just to hear bad news - tell them what you liked, as well as what you didn't like. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. How would you feel if this was being said to you?
- Focus on the **work**, not the person.
- Focus on things that can be **changed** by the writer.
- **Watch the reaction.** How is the other person taking what you are saying? Some people can take more feedback than others. **Don't overdo it.**

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- Be willing to **discuss it**. Remember that your purpose is to help. Go into more detail/explain as necessary. If you've thought it out this should be no problem.
- **Don't push!** Feedback should be offered, not imposed. It's up to the other person whether they accept it or not. They might need to think about it. They might need to take notes.
- **Own your feedback**. Use "I. . ." statements, eg "When you used the rhyme 'car/tar' I felt that. . ."

### Receiving Feedback

- **Listen**.
- **Breathe!**
- **Try not to get defensive**. The person giving you feedback is trying to be helpful. Avoid the "fight or flight" response!
- You have the right **not** to take the feedback on board, but be polite about rejecting it.
- You have the right to **go away and think about it**.
- You have the right to **ask for clarification/explanation**. Feel free to ask questions. **Summarise** or **paraphrase** what the other person has said to ensure understanding.
- Ask for **suggestions/alternatives**.
- One model for receiving feedback is the "AAA" model: (a) **Acknowledge** the feedback; (b) **Ask** for more - clarity, information, etc; (c) **Add** your own comments and feelings.
- **Do think about it**. You may not be comfortable with what's been said, but it might bear consideration. Try not to reject other people's views out of hand.
- You have the right to say **"Stop!" when you've had enough** to be going on with.
- Remember that there are people in the group with a great deal of experience and whose views are worth considering, even though you may end up deciding not to act on what they have said.