

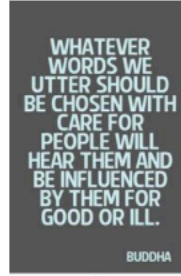
"Honesty is a very expensive gift; just don't expect it from cheap people" - Warren Buffet

It's really easy to get on the back foot and act defensively when someone gives you feedback, particularly when it isn't what we wanted to hear. You might think that the person doesn't like you or is against you in some way, but in fact it's the opposite. If a person is willing to offer you honest feedback it means that they really value you.

I mean really think about it – why would anyone waste their valuable time offering you what might sound like harsh feedback if they didn't value you, your contribution and your value to the team? In order to encourage and value feedback think about the following:

- Always say – YES please, when someone asks to give you feedback. Don't miss the opportunity to collect feedback on your actions and behaviours.
- Listen intently – if someone is willing to give you feedback, don't interrupt them. Really listen to what they have to say.
- If you don't understand the feedback, be brave enough to ask questions until you truly understand. This is about seeking to understand. Don't nod your head if you don't understand!
- Be open – Have an open attitude – no matter how harsh the feedback might seem in your mind – it's like pure gold – it's a valuable piece of information.
- Always thank the person for giving you feedback – even though at that point in time you may want to punch them in the nose! When you treat feedback like a gift, and thank whoever gives it to you.

It's really important to train or allow your leaders at your club on how to give constructive feedback to their team mates, and even coaching staff. Individual leaders are in the best position to influence and develop talent or to shut it down completely. Unfortunately as a coach we can't run out onto the ground with them, therefore we must entrust our leaders/players to give feedback. This feedback will only work in a team that genuinely trusts and respects one another.



It's also vital in the feedback process no matter who is involved the importance of delivery and what language we use. The words you use make a difference. If you want to change the player you need to change the way you speak yourself. Move your language patterns to a more positive dialogue, this is poignant in today's society given the landscape of players that our NAB league clubs are dealing with.

So what I have learnt (and it's taken a while) is that if someone had a magic way for you to become a better person or professional would you be interested? I would hope so! Feedback is that magic way to become a better person and professional.

Feedback – wrapped with a bow on top, as a gift is the best way for you to improve. Yes it can be extremely confronting – however accepting it the right way can be life changing.