



## Career series: Feedback is a gift

It's not always easy to agree that feedback is a gift. It sometimes comes unexpectedly, isn't explained very well, is misinformed or not well-thought-through, or is presented in the [no-longer-recommended 'sandwich'](#) (sometimes called a compliment sandwich or feedback sandwich). Giving and receiving feedback is hard, and there's a never-ending series of books, articles, podcasts, and TED talks suggesting ways to do it ([this two-minute video](#) from Simon Sinek is a useful summary of what most experts recommend).

When you've accepted your initial reaction to the feedback, look for what it is telling you about how your behaviour or your work affects others or the organisation. This will help you to build a picture of your own strengths and development areas, including how you communicate your thinking and intentions. It grows your self-awareness, which is arguably the most important element of any improvement or development: very few people change the way they go about doing something (a task or a behaviour) without first deciding to do so!

Being [given feedback](#) can be like having a mirror held up to you – it helps you to see what you didn't before. It can also point out things that were in your [blind spot](#) previously – including what you didn't realise you do well, or behaviour that is really effective – and help you to get a full view of your own performance and behaviour. You can then consider your own view of your strengths and development areas to help you decide on what your next career step is. For example, if you now know that you have strengths in communication and demonstrating empathy and you're not so strong in detailed, deep-focus tasks, this might influence you to look for a role working with people rather than multimillion dollar tax returns. [This article](#) provides 33 examples of where feedback situations may help with your career. They won't all apply to you, though you'll see patterns of where a feedback moments can be found and learned from.

If you're not receiving feedback at work, have a constructive conversation with your manager about this [and your direct reports if you're a leader](#) (their feedback is critical to showing you how you're doing as a leader: the leadership blind spot can be very significant). The insight from other people is a gift for you as you think about the next step in your career.