



How to Give Your Boss Feedback Without Sounding Like a Jerk

The process of giving upward feedback- giving feedback to your manager or boss can be extremely nerve-racking. You want to provide input so that they can improve, but the power dynamics between you and your boss/manager can make giving feedback very difficult because of the strange feeling of giving feedback to someone who is above you in the workplace.

Why You Should Give Your Boss Feedback

- First before giving feedback, take a moment to evaluate what you want to say, how best to say it, and how receptive your boss will be to it
- If you have negative feedback, think about pinpointing why you feel that way

When And How to Give Your Boss Feedback

- Remember that tact is key
 - Time and place are vital
 - Context and tone can be misread in many of the ways we communicate
- Giving feedback in person is ideal, but if that is not possible, call them on the phone rather than texting, emailing, or chatting them

Places Where It Is Not Okay to Give Your Boss Feedback

- During a company-wide or team meeting
- When your boss is explaining something new to you and your team members
- When in a meeting with a client or contractor

Places Where It Is Okay to Give Your Boss Feedback

- During a one-on-one
- During a check-in session before or after a meeting
- During a performance review

Tips for Giving Feedback to Your Boss

- Think about your tone- it is very important to stay calm and neutral
- Talk in person
- Address it as soon as possible
- Focus on work- give feedback on the impact your boss's habits or actions have and do not make it about them personally
- Give feedback on one thing at a time
- Be solutions oriented

- Give positive feedback too

Scripts for Upward Feedback: There are a number of topics about which you may need to give your boss feedback. Some of the most popular include: your workload, (mis)communication, project management, and managing expectations. Below are scripts you can use depending on what issue you need to discuss with your boss/manager.

- Your workload:
 - o “I can take this on, but only if we extend the deadline of [x].”
 - o “I can’t take this on with how time sensitive project [y] is. Can you help me prioritize?”
 - o “This project is more complex than I expected. How do you recommend I structure it?”
- Miscommunication:
 - o “Can we discuss [x] in more detail? I want to make sure we’re on the same page.”
 - o “I was surprised to hear you speak that way about [x]. Can we discuss that?”
- Project management:
 - o “I’m having some trouble with [x] -- could you walk through the program with me?”
 - o “This project is a bit more than I expected. How were you thinking to structure it?”
 - o “I’m feeling a little overwhelmed by [x]. Do you have any best practices for managing this that I might be able to test out?”
- Managing expectations:
 - o “What does success look like for [x]? I want to make sure I understand your expectations for [project y].”
 - o “It seems like you want me to do [x], but I had I previously thought this was about [y]. Is that correct?”
 - o “Can we go over [x] again?”

Giving feedback to your boss can be stressful, but it is providing them valuable information that will benefit them as well as you. They will do better with their work, and you will be better able to address your needs as their direct report. If you follow these simple guidelines, you will not need to worry about how you come across when giving feedback.

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<https://lattice.com/library/how-to-not-sound-like-a-jerk-when-giving-your-boss>.

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