



*critique*  
**CRASH**  
*course*

**WORKBOOK**

career contessa

# Are You Ready to Begin?

Before you really dive into Critique Crash Course, make sure...

- you're in a comfortable location with high-quality Internet access
- you downloaded the course files
- you downloaded Adobe Reader (below)

## DOWNLOADING ADOBE READER

This document is interactive! That means whenever you see a fill-in-the-blank, you should be able to fill it in, and when you see a check box, you should be able to check it off.

The best way to view these interactive PDFs is with **Adobe Reader**. To ensure the best possible experience, please visit [get.adobe.com/reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader) and **install this software** to use the Course Workbook.

You are also welcome to print this book out and use it old-school-style, of course—but in case you don't have printer access, we wanted to make sure you could fill these out on-screen.

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# Feedback Preparation Worksheet

**What is the purpose of this feedback?**

**List what you liked about the person's work. Remember to keep it data-driven, not emotional. Include examples if you have them.**

**List questions you have or suggestions for improvement. Remember to keep it data-driven, not emotional. Include examples if you have them.**

# Feedback Summary Worksheet

**Who was the feedback from?**

**What type of feedback was it and how was it delivered?**

**What made you feel good about the feedback? What were some things you did well?**

**What do you feel uneasy or upset about?**

**How can you implement the feedback going forward?**

# Real-Life Feedback Scenarios

Below, you'll find the scenarios we'll go over in the videos as well as fields to type your answers. During the break, type your answers here and we'll go over them together in the video.

## PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

**Scenario One** You have to give a tough performance review. Your colleague is falling behind on hitting the target goals you set together and you have to remind her of those goals and come up with a plan for how to get there.

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to write a plan for delivering the feedback.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in a 1:1 meeting]*

*[Skip step two since this is for practice purposes only]*

**Step Three: What You Liked**

**Step Four: Questions**

**Step Five: Opportunities for Improvement**

**Step Six: How Will You Follow Up?**

**Scenario Two** You get a tough performance review. Your boss says the feedback from the team is that you're difficult to collaborate with. This is tough feedback to hear, and it's hard to keep it cool while you listen.

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to make a plan for responding.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in a 1:1 meeting]*

**Step Two: How You'll Say Thank You**

**Step Three: How You'll Stay Neutral**

**Step Four: What You'll Say to Respond (Remember to think of the work as separate from you!)**

**Step Six: How did it make you feel? How will you vent about it?**

**Bonus: How will you implement the feedback?**

**Scenario Three** Your performance review from your peers and managers is pretty vanilla and gives you zero signs of what you can improve or how to get to the next level of your career.

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to make a plan for responding.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in a 1:1 meeting]*

**Step Two: How You'll Say Thank You**

**Step Three: How You'll Stay Neutral**

**Step Four: What You'll Say to Respond (Remember to think of the work as separate from you!)**

**Step Six: How did it make you feel? How will you vent about it?**

**Bonus: How will you implement the feedback?**

## Scenario Three Possible Answers

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to make a plan for responding.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in a 1:1 meeting]*

### **Step Two: How You'll Say Thank You**

"Thanks for taking the time to give me feedback. I'm always open to knowing what you think—even if you think my work could be improved."

"Thanks so much for this feedback. It's amazing to know my work is appreciated here."

### **Step Three: How You'll Stay Neutral**

"This seems like a lot of good stuff. Are there any areas where you think I could improve?"

### **Step Four: What You'll Say to Respond (Remember to think of the work as separate from you!)**

"This seems like a lot of good stuff. Are there any areas where you think I could improve? I feel really confident about the things you mentioned, like **[list them]**, but I would love to know what you think about my work on **[project name]**."

"I'm so happy to hear you think **[project name]** went well. What do you think about the **[specific aspect of a project you worked on recently]**?"

### **Step Six: How did it make you feel? How will you vent about it?**

Frustrated, stuck, annoyed, bored.

Try venting to a friend, reaching out to another career mentor outside your office for different feedback.

### **Bonus: How will you implement the feedback?**

If you can't get any further feedback, consider doing some professional development on your own, or see if there are any other potential career mentors in your organization. If you're still having trouble, reflect on whether this is a role you can grow in.

## **TASK-BASED FEEDBACK**

**Scenario Four** You have to tell your employee that the research she did for a presentation wasn't thorough enough. The presentation is due soon, and there's still a lot of work to be done.

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to write a plan for delivering the feedback.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in the moment]*

*[Skip step two since this is for practice purposes only]*

**Step Three: What You Liked**

**Step Four: Questions**

**Step Five: Opportunities for Improvement**

**Step Six: How Will You Follow Up?**

**Scenario Five** The company accountant comes to your desk and publicly announces that you're always falling behind on deadlines. Your plate is super full and you know things are slipping.

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to make a plan for responding.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in the moment]*

**Step Two: How You'll Say Thank You**

**Step Three: How You'll Stay Neutral**

**Step Four: What You'll Say to Respond (Remember to think of the work as separate from you!)**

**Step Six: How did it make you feel? How will you vent about it?**

**Bonus: How will you implement the feedback?**

**Scenario Six** Someone points out that you didn't take an important piece of information into account when you were compiling a report. You have to both respond to this and also come up with a plan to fix the mistake.

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to make a plan for responding.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in the moment]*

**Step Two: How You'll Say Thank You**

**Step Three: How You'll Stay Neutral**

**Step Four: What You'll Say to Respond (Remember to think of the work as separate from you!)**

**Step Six: How did it make you feel? How will you vent about it?**

**Bonus: How will you implement the feedback?**

## Scenario Six Possible Answers

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to make a plan for responding.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in the moment]*

### **Step Two: How You'll Say Thank You**

"Thank you for pointing this out. It can be hard to be thorough when checking your own work, and I'm glad to have another set of eyes on it, despite my embarrassment about the error."

### **Step Three: How You'll Stay Neutral**

Take responsibility, but don't grovel for forgiveness. Don't forget to see your work as a patient you must save!

### **Step Four: What You'll Say to Respond (Remember to think of the work as separate from you!)**

"I apologize for leaving that piece of information out. I think it happened because I didn't reference the monthly numbers. I'll be sure to always do that going forward, and even make a checklist for myself that has what to include and reference when compiling reports like this."

### **Step Six: How did it make you feel? How will you vent about it?**

Ashamed, embarrassed, annoyed, sheepish. Try doing something nice for yourself or giving yourself a pump-up speech. Remember: you are not your mistake.

### **Bonus: How will you implement the feedback?**

Come up with a system of checks and balances for yourself, make sure to ask someone else to review your work in the future, and then forget about it. Just apologize to the appropriate people and do better next time.

## **SOCIAL FEEDBACK**

**Scenario Seven** Your coworker won't stop sending you chat messages about non-work-related things. You don't want to hurt her feelings or alienate her, but you have to get your work done. You've tried sending subtle hints; it hasn't worked.

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to write a plan for delivering the feedback.**

**Step One: How You'll Deliver the Feedback (you could ask the person what they prefer, or, you can think about how YOU'D like to hear something like this)**

*[Skip step two since you've already identified it]*

**Step Two: What You Liked**

*[Skip step four since it isn't relevant here]*

**Step Five: Opportunities for Improvement**

**Step Six: How Will You Follow Up?**

**Scenario Eight** Your boss loses her cool a little, saying that you've been unprofessional in front of higher-ups, and that she's been noticing this for a long time and needs you to fix it. This is crisis mode. How do you respond to this well but also make a plan to take the feedback into account?

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to make a plan for responding.**

*[Skip step one since the feedback will be delivered in the moment]*

**Step Two: How You'll Say Thank You**

**Step Three: How You'll Stay Neutral**

**Step Four: What You'll Say to Respond (Remember to think of the work as separate from you!)**

**Step Six: How did it make you feel? How will you vent about it?**

**Bonus: How will you implement the feedback?**

**Scenario Nine** You notice your employee has hour-long chats with another colleague every afternoon and you're worried it's affecting not only morale but the amount of work she's accomplishing.

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to write a plan for delivering the feedback.**

**Step One: How You'll Deliver the Feedback (you could ask the person what they prefer, or, you can think about how YOU'D like to hear something like this)**

*[Skip step two since you've already identified it]*

**Step Two: What You Liked**

*[Skip step four since it isn't relevant here]*

**Step Five: Opportunities for Improvement**

**Step Six: How Will You Follow Up?**

## Scenario Nine Possible Answers

**Use the steps outlined in Lesson 1 to write a plan for delivering the feedback.**

**Step One: How You'll Deliver the Feedback (you could ask the person what they prefer, or, you can think about how YOU'D like to hear something like this)**

Have a one-on-one meeting so that you can make sure your message is delivered in a diplomatic way. This also conveys the serious tone of the message.

*[Skip step two since you've already identified it]*

**Step Two: What You Liked**

"I'm glad you're bonding with the rest of the team..."

"It's great that you're connecting with your colleagues and I want to foster an environment of teamwork and friendship..."

*[Skip step four since it isn't relevant here]*

**Step Five: Opportunities for Improvement**

"...but it's also important to make sure everyone stays on task so the work gets done."

"...but if you're chatting for an hour, that means for an hour, your work isn't getting done."

**Step Six: How Will You Follow Up?**

Send an email reiterating the feedback.

If you see it again, don't let it slide. Be consistent in your feedback.

Demonstrate appropriate behavior by chatting with your team when it's appropriate, and keeping your head down when it's not.

# Scripts for Requesting Feedback

## PERFORMANCE REVIEW

"Since I've been here **[amount of time]** now, I'd love to sit down and have a performance review with you so we can discuss **[choose one or more: my performance; my evolving role; my compensation; the project I just finished; a project I have coming up]**. If that's something you'd be open to, I'd be happy to reserve a conference room and set up a calendar invite."

## TASK-BASED FEEDBACK

"Hey, do you have a second to look over **[name of project]**? I'm about **[status of project]** and I'd love to get a second pair of eyes on it before I continue."

"What did you think of the **[name of project]** I sent over? Looking forward to hearing your thoughts."

## SOCIAL FEEDBACK

"Did you think it was okay that I **[thing you did]**? I'm not sure if that's considered weird or unprofessional in this office."

"Is it okay if I **[thing you want to do]**? Just want to make sure that won't bother you since we sit so close together."

# New Manager Review Preparation Worksheet

**How often will you give your employees performance reviews?**

- Monthly    Quarterly    Yearly    Other:

**What options will you give your employees for receiving feedback?**

- Meetings on-site
- Meetings off-site
- Email
- More frequent check-ins
- Other:

**What are you required to report in terms of employee performance?**

**What is most important to you to track in terms of employee performance?**

**Will you use a numerical or grade-based ratings system? Describe.**

**How will you ask your employees to track their progress?**

# Additional Feedback FAQs

## What's "The Compliment Sandwich?"

Some of the most common advice around feedback involves "The Compliment Sandwich." The Compliment Sandwich is when the person "sandwiches" their negative feedback between two positive pieces of feedback. The advantage of this method is that it softens the blow of criticism but The Compliment Sandwich has become overused, employees expect it, and it can make the compliment seem insincere. That's what we recommend that you stick with the following order:

1. Start with what you liked about the person's work
2. Ask questions like why the person completed a task a certain way, why they forgot to do XYZ during their workflow, etc.
3. Offer opportunities to improve with real examples

## What's the Difference Between Criticism and Constructive Criticism?

Constructive criticism is given with the goal to help the other person improve. Usually this feedback comes with ideas on how the person can fix the problem, too. It can be challenging to hear feedback but constructive criticism should never get overly personal or negatively affect your self-esteem.

### Constructive criticism looks like this:

*"I reviewed your report, and highlighted some sections that just felt off to me. I also suggested some additional sections that would be helpful to include."*

### Criticism looks like like:

*"Your report was probably one of the most disorganized report I've ever reviewed. I wouldn't even bother setting up a meeting with this client."*

### **What Should I Do After Receiving Feedback?**

Giving feedback is a stressful process and there are plenty of bosses who really struggle with this so they either never give feedback—or think their feedback is only required when you’ve done something wrong. Leaders understand that you must give constructive feedback and positive reinforcement. If your boss is only going negative, it’s time to change your communication with them. Start by listening to the areas of improvement and then ask them to tell you what you’re doing well. Make sure you write that down so you can go back to it in a later meeting if needed. We all need and want positive reinforcement and the hope is that you’ll start with asking for it but, eventually, your boss will start including it.

### **How Do I Deal With a Lack of Positive Feedback From My Boss?**

Set up an improvement plan for setting a timeline and specific actions you’ll take during that time to implement the feedback. Feel free to run your plan and timeline by your boss, too.

Once you’ve reached the time you allotted yourself to improve, set up a meeting with your boss to check-in, review your progress, and discuss any steps moving forward. The feedback session is not the goal. The goal is to prove that you can be given feedback, implement changes, and get different results. By showing evidence of your ability to implement feedback, you’ll probably get more it more often.

### **How Do I Get My Employee To Understand The Impact of Their Mistakes?**

When you’re giving feedback and it doesn’t seem to stick with your employee, try linking it to the overall impact or performance of the company and/or team. Maybe the employee will better understand why or how they can improve if they have a true understanding of how it affects the bottom line.

### **How Can I Give Feedback If My Employee Gets Defensive Right Away?**

Going back to the tips we taught you in the course, start with the positive. Next, reinforce your desire to help the person. It might be helpful to share a personal story of when you needed to improve at work so you can appear more relatable. The goal is to be authentic and connect with your employee.

And definitely don't criticize or cast judgement on their reaction. Telling someone to "calm down" or "don't get defensive" won't help the situation and, in fact, it will distract for the rest of your messaging.

### **How Do I Offer Opportunities To Improve Without Mico-Managing?**

Employees often get too much feedback that feels like a long to-do list or a long list of expectations that they didn't measure up against. The key here is present yourself as a coach, the person who's here to build the knowledge and skills of their employees so the employees can meet the new challenges.

In order to play the role of "coach" and not "micro-manager," make sure you're communicating the purpose behind your feedback to your employee. You're already being asked to record this in your Feedback Preparation Worksheet—just make sure you communicate it directly to the other person as well.

# Have More Questions?

**Don't forget to ask the Career Contessa community  
in our private Facebook group:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CareerContessa/>