

## Get Past the Excuses and Move Forward

Do you get excited when your spouse or co-worker regales you with their perfect memory of your past mistakes? Does it motivate you to have someone go over your past transgressions with you in excruciating detail? For most of us the resounding answer is no. It makes us feel bad, and generally takes the wind out of our sails. So why do so many managers seem to feel the best way to help their team or their peers is to start by recounting their past mistakes?

We know we don't like reliving our mistakes with our managers and spouses. So what makes us think doing that same thing with other people will positively motivate them? Do we really think that our advice and delivery is so much better than everyone else's that people will appreciate our review of the situation, even though we don't find a lot of use when people do it to us? For some reason we have this sense that people need to be sat down and talked to about all of their mistakes when most often that is not the best way to handle the situation. Unless you truly believe the person you are trying to help doesn't understand that they made a mistake, there's a better way to handle it.

Reviewing and questioning about the past forces people to make excuses for their performance. Telling someone their project has slipped by 2 months and you want to know why generally gets you a list of all the things that went wrong, and why none of it was under their control. I've been in many of these sessions over the years, and the usual outcome is that everyone leaves the meeting an hour later feeling bad about their performance, and one more hour behind.

So instead of starting with a review of the past, try to just acknowledge the situation and move right to the positives. Start with a review of where you are, and then move straight into solutions for moving forward. Instead of asking "Did that get done? Why not?" ask "Did that get done? Ok, how do we get it done?" I've tried this over the years and the difference in people's attitude and commitment leaving a meeting on how to move forward is like night and day compared to the review and excuse sessions of the past.

Let's face it, in general people know when they've made mistakes. When you get together to review it they know the problems and the right excuses. When you simply acknowledge the situation and move straight into ways to move forward you see a different response. You can almost hear the sigh of relief of not having to go over everything that went wrong and look for excuses. And only a moment later you start to feel the energy of people looking for ways to move forward and redeem themselves. They know things need to improve and an uncomfortable situation has suddenly turned positive. They will be grateful for the turn of events and for the positive encouragement even more than the positive ideas. Instead of spending an hour making people feel bad, you've spent an hour making people feel energized. Instead of looking at the past, you focused on what you can actually change: the future. This motivates people to get things done.

So the next time you find yourself disappointed in the performance of a person or project try a different approach. Instead of giving feedback on what could have been done differently, give and ask for feed forward on how to get it done from where you are. You can't change the past. You are where you are. Feedback puts your focus on the part you can't change. Feed forward looks to the future. Starting from here, wherever that may be, how do we best move ahead?

One of the most powerful management tips you can learn is how to say and accept "We are where we are", and then move straight into how to get it done from here. Forget feedback. Feed forward.

## About the Author

Daryl Cowie has shared management tips with 1000s of people in over 30 countries around the world. His mission is to help you and your company turn business opportunities into business realities. Sign up for his free business management home study course at <http://FreeManagementTips.com>

Source: <http://www.articletrader.com>