



Traffic Light Guidelines for Feedback

Three Golden Rules

1. Before offering feedback set the ground rules with the person you are giving feedback to. Is there anything they would like feedback on? How do they feel about feedback and what has been their experience in the past? Be guided by their behaviour and listen carefully to their comments. Be specific, not general in your comments (very important) and focus on actions and next steps that will lead to change.
2. Environment: Agree a time and place for feedback. Coffee shops are a good place paradoxically noisy, public, anonymous, relaxed, and yet a place where people go to both socialise and work. Where and how you meet is crucial to the atmosphere of an exchange of ideas.
3. Make feedback an exchange of ideas not a one-way street. Share ideas and encourage conversation. Use an A4/5 sheet to sketch and draw ideas together. Share concerns and visions of the future. Make this an opportunity to use the past to develop for the future. Feedback without an action plan is wasted. The future is more important than the past.

Traffic Light Feedback

GREEN: This is what I observed and enjoyed! Be specific and let the mentee know how this made you feel. We are often unaware of our behaviours and how we can have a positive or negative impact. Try and focus on one to three strengths at a time. Green is an important light for confidence and growth.

ORANGE: These are areas for development. Things observed that went well but could be better (how?). Places where gaps needed filling or where activity was satisfactory/good and has the potential to be even better with effort/thought/creativity/innovation etc. Be specific about exactly what could be further developed and explore how this could happen. This is a sensitive area to explore but the most important of the traffic lights for development.

RED: This should stop or should be left out. Any activity that no longer works and needs revisited and reworked or edited out. Any reds must be specific and obvious and easily fixed by the mentee. Old information-poor visual slide design-poor spelling, standing with your hands in your pockets when presenting professionally. Reds are often details that others notice, but that we ignore or are unaware of: important but fixable.

Finally **BIG GREEN:** always finish on a larger summary about what went well and what needs to be developed for the future. Be positive but realistic about goals and agree with the mentee. Ask for their comments and let them have the last word. If in doubt-leave it out.

Final words: your intention to help and facilitate change is the underpinning belief you should work from as a mentor. Be a compass not a map!