

FEEDBACK

Exchanging feedback requires responsibility on the part of both the giver and the receiver. Here is a sample list, not exhaustive, of some things to keep in mind in each role.

Speaker:

sensitivity
timing
context
owning feelings
also including appreciations & acknowledgements,
be honest but also gentle and loving

Listener:

respond to the truth in what someone else says, rather than the part you disagree with
welcome feelings
try not to be defensive
thank the person for bringing the feedback, give positive reinforcement for risking
honor the feelings and desires underneath the statements
hear the person where they're at in whatever form that comes out in

EMAIL

Recommended uses include:

- community-building (borrowing items, ridesharing, etc.)
- announcements
- factual information
- posting agendas
- minutes distribution
- logistics
- background research & documentation
- sending out drafts of proposals

Don't try to use email for:

- upset feelings
- resolving interpersonal tensions
- personal feedback about each other's behavior—unless you know the recipient prefers that
- discussions that have significant emotional content
- revising proposals if there is any emotional charge
- sarcasm

Other things to keep in mind about using email:

- like any format, there are biases; for example, email privileges fast readers and typists, which often includes people who are more verbally articulate and express themselves in a linear way
- remember that some people check email often, others occasionally, others not at all
- use a clear subject line to help people filter what to read, because most people receive more emails than they can give good attention to
- have alternate means of transmission available as needed (put minutes into a common notebook for the record, put a note in someone's mailbox if they don't do email, and so on)

