

NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

1. **Be SPECIFIC:** describe the BEHAVIOR (what they said or did) in very specific detail. *When you documented Stan's goal you.....*
2. **Stick to the Facts:** Talks about the facts of the situation, avoid talking about what you think they thought or intended. *When you were doingI observed you.....*
3. **Don't Guess about Motivation:** Resist the temptation to guess why you thought the other person took or failed to take a certain action. Guessing wrong puts the employee on the defensive and may lead to an "argumentative" situation.
4. **Give Personal Reactions:** Talk about your own personal reactions, feelings or emotions, NOT what you thought the feelings of the other person were. Do not guess about how others would feel because this also may provoke disagreement and arguing.
5. **Be Non-Judgmental:** Erase the words – Ought/Should/Bad/Wrong/etc. from your vocabulary. Instead of judging the person's behavior as good/bad – give your personal reaction: *"When I heard what you said to that client I felt angry and sad!"*
6. **Praise when Possible:** Use positive reinforcement whenever you can. Positive feedback is the best means available to help you shape a person's behavior – now and in the future. (We know this for the clients.....we need to remember it for our employees!)
7. **Provide Examples of Alternate Positive Behaviors:** The best method to change a response is to replace it with a new response. *"So the next time a vendor starts to yell at you about an order you will..... - that should diffuse the situation so you can solve the problem!"*