

The people that helped me the most with my career were the people I did not necessarily like!

Eliane Markoff- March 2019

As I reflect on my career of close to 40 years, I realize how some of the people that helped me the most were the people I enjoyed the least.

During my first few years in business, as a young executive armed with an MBA, I am sorry to say that I acted entitled, a bit arrogant, and not yet mature or confident enough to accept constructive feedback; probably because I had been a great employee, always exceeding expectations and receiving great performance reviews. So when I heard, not listened to, feedback that was constructive but not so flattering, my ego got in the way.

Yes, sometimes the feedback was not always presented in the most helpful and proper manner. Actually, it was occasionally expressed in a quite destructive and negative way.

At times, constructive feedback is indeed overrated. That statement is especially true when you are young and lack the confidence that only comes with time, experience and accomplishment.

Looking back, however, I could have put my ego aside, listened more carefully, and asked questions for clarification. I should have thanked the person for his or her time taken to give me the feedback. Although painful to hear, I know now that time has long ago healed my bruised ego. Their feedback has turned out to be very helpful in my later years.

If I had one message to share it would be to encourage people to initiate the request from colleagues and mentors who they trust and respect to provide them with frequent feedback in a helpful and positive manner.

Having said all that, compliments and positive reinforcement remain extremely valuable and often not rated highly enough.

Wishing you all success!

Eliane Markoff is Ombuds person at Bentley University