



Using no-blame language



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You can't change the past, and blaming people for their errors actually reduces the chance of them changing their ways, because learning is less likely to happen when people are upset.

Instead, develop a no-blame culture by simply changing your language:

Three things to avoid:

- Remove 'right', 'wrong', 'good' and 'bad' from your vocabulary. These emotionally loaded words attack the individual rather than the behaviour, generating resentment and reducing intelligence. Stick to 'what works' and 'what needs to work better', and keep the person out of it.
- Avoid saying 'you' as in "you caused". Sending blame generates unhelpful emotion that will cloud thought, create resentment and prevent learning.
- Avoid asking 'why didn't...' as it will make people feel stupid and reduce their confidence, a key resource they will need when building their improved behaviour for the future.

Three things to practise regularly:

- Find some good in the situation and start the conversation with that. This generates positive feelings and lets people know you want to focus on the future, not the past.
- Be very careful about how you bring people into the situation - ask 'what did not work so well', leaving 'you' out of it at the start. Then move to 'what would make it work better'.
- Don't blame, but do give credit: let them suggest better ways of working whenever possible, and give credit when they have suggested something that could work. Make sure it sticks by getting them to rehearse the idea in their head, and then be sure to witness the new behaviour at work and thank them for the improvement.



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