

every
woman

WORKBOOK

Preparing for a successful appraisal



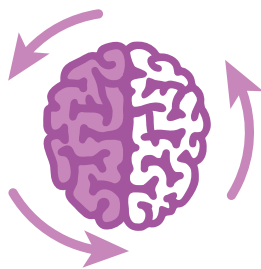
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ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

ESTABLISHED IN 1999, everywoman advances women in business. Our aim is to ensure women from all over the world fulfil their potential. We produce workbooks on topics that matter most to our members, and we're constantly listening to your views to give you the tools you need to kick-start your career, at a time and place that suits you.

Your appraisal is one of the most important conversations you'll have in the workplace. Managed well, it can supercharge your confidence and relight your ambition fires. performance review can also elicit 'frustration', 'anxiety' or 'boredom'. As well as those being appraised, many of the managers doing the appraising and the Human Resources personnel running the process admit dissatisfaction with what can be a laborious drain on resources¹.



Neuroscientists say that one of the problems is the way your brain receives feedback. The traditional method of rating employees with a score or ranking risks provoking the age-old fight or flight response - if you understand your colleagues have received a high grade, when you are being confronted with a lower ranking, you may 'fight' and react aggressively, or react with the equally unproductive 'flight' response: retreating into yourself and deciding you're not worthy of a higher score. This is what's known as a 'fixed mindset': the idea that receiving a grade 4 means you'll always be a 4; challenges are perceived as an invitation to fail².

Economists and neuroscientists agree, however, that, done well, a formal feedback and goal-setting session between you and your manager can reap enormous benefits. Employees - even those disengaged with the system - agree: 70% believe that the point of an appraisal is to develop and grow³.

Your own organisation's process and your manager's attitude will inevitably play a role in how valuable you find your appraisal. But that's only part of the story. The end result lies every bit as much in your hands; the more you put into preparation, developing a



'growth mindset' and engaging with feedback and goal-setting, the more you will get out of it. By completing this workbook, you'll lay the groundwork for that meeting; the finished document will be your blueprint for a meaningful appraisal.

We'd love to know how you get on. Share your experiences with karenmax@everywoman.com. Good luck!

Karen, Max and the everywoman team

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

In this workbook, you will undertake a series of exercises designed to help you lay the groundwork for your forthcoming appraisal. These will include conducting your own self-evaluation and turning this into a compelling story to share during the conversation with your manager.

The exercises will be more valuable if you are able to relate them to your own personal and organisational circumstances and key performance indicators.

Spend some time drawing together and reading any of the following information that's relevant - you'll need to refer to:

1. Notes from your last appraisal
2. A copy of your personal and/or organisational objectives - record these in the box below so that you can refer back to them throughout the exercises later in the workbook
3. Feedback you've received from your manager over the past 12 months - emails or notes from your 1-2-1s
4. Feedback you've received from other senior figures and/or peers and colleagues
5. Information on your organisation's performance review process (read and make sure you understand the process and timelines, and if in any doubt, speak to your manager or Human Resources representative as soon as possible)

If you are one of the many workers who approaches their appraisal with anxiety, frustration, or even boredom, allow yourself to reconnect with the potential benefits of the process before you start this workbook.

BENEFITS OF A PERFORMANCE REVIEW



*See 'further reading' for a link to the everywomanNetwork workbook *Negotiating your salary*.

Personal benefits

Highlight any other benefits that your forthcoming appraisal could bring for you and your career development.

1

2

3

PART 1

What's your mindset?



GETTING THE THINKING RIGHT

Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck has found that people approach feedback with what she calls either a 'fixed mindset' or a 'growth mindset'. Before you delve deeper into planning for your appraisal, it's important to understand how your mindset can affect the way you might respond to the feedback you will receive.

People with fixed mindsets believe that skills and strengths are things they either do or do not possess ("I can only do what I can do"). People with growth mindsets see their talents as a starting point for unlimited development possibilities.

This is relevant to appraisals, because how you receive feedback and act on it in the months to come is central to how your boss perceives your willingness to develop and how you actually grow over your career.

People with a fixed mindset	People with a growth mindset
Believe talent is static	Believe talent can be developed
This leads to a desire to "appear smart" and a tendency to...	This leads to a desire to learn and a tendency to...
Avoid challenges	Embrace challenges
Give up easily	Persist in the face of setbacks
See effort as fruitless	See effort as the path to mastery
Ignore useful feedback	Learn from constructive feedback
Feel threatened by others' successes	Find lessons and inspiration in others' successes
As a result they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential	As a result they reach ever-higher levels of achievement

Adapted from Carol Dweck's research.

The next section will allow you to diagnose what kind of mindset you have, as well as giving you practical tips on how to move closer towards 'growth' mode.

QUIZ: DO YOU HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET?⁴

This test, based on one developed by Stanford Psychologist by Carol Dweck, provides a barometer of where you currently sit on the fixed - growth mindset scale, and the work required to develop a growth mindset.

	For each of these statements, decide whether you 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much.	0	1	2	3
2	No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.	3	2	1	0
3	You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.	3	2	1	0
4	You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.	0	1	2	3
5	You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.	3	2	1	0
6	Music talent can be learned by anyone.	3	2	1	0
7	Only a few people will be truly good at sports - you have to be "born with it".	0	1	2	3
8	Math is much easier to learn if you are male or maybe come from a culture which values Math.	0	1	2	3
9	The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it.	3	2	1	0

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10	No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.	3	2	1	0
11	Trying new things is stressful for me and I avoid it.	0	1	2	3
12	Some people are good and kind, and some are not - it's not often that people change.	0	1	2	3
13	I appreciate when mentors or bosses give me feedback about my performance.	3	2	1	0
14	I often get angry when I get feedback about my performance.	0	1	2	3
15	All human beings without a brain injury or birth defect are capable of the same amount of learning.	3	2	1	0
16	You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.	0	1	2	3
17	You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed.	0	1	2	3
18	Human beings are basically good, but sometimes make terrible decisions.	3	2	1	0
19	An important reason why I undertake training or reading is that I like to learn new things.	3	2	1	0
20	Truly smart people do not need to try hard.	0	1	2	3

SCORING

0-20 points; Strong fixed mindset

21-33 points; Fixed mindset with some growth ideas

34-44 points; Growth mindset with some fixed ideas

45-60 points; Strong growth mindset

0-33



Fixed mindset

Developing a growth mindset is crucial to ensure you take the feedback from your appraisal as it is intended: to help you increase your skills and develop in your role.

If you're surprised by your results, don't be alarmed: having a 'fixed' mindset doesn't mean you're stubborn or not open to compromise. It just means you might not be getting as much out of the feedback you are offered during your appraisal.

The next section will encourage you to foster a growth mindset by making a few small changes to your thinking.

34-60



Growth mindset

Congratulations, you're in a strong position to accept the feedback at your next appraisal, and flex your behaviour accordingly. Hone and develop your mindset with the help of the next section.

DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET – FIVE WAYS

A growth mindset will shine through in your appraisal. It will communicate to your boss that you welcome feedback, highlight your desire to learn and develop, and propel you onwards. Discover below, you'll discover expert tips and scientific findings that can help you discover your own potential for a growth mindset.

1. Question your assumptions

The science: Toddlers who receive praise for their efforts (rather than the end result) are more likely to demonstrate growth mindsets in later years. But telling kids to “try harder” isn't enough to promote a growth mindset; a better strategy is to ask metacognitive questions, e.g. “What could you do differently next time?”⁵.



What you can do:

Look back over section one and question your self-evaluation. Where you've had successful outcomes, are there things you could do differently or better next time? Where you've had less successful outcomes, what can you do in future to ensure a better result?

During the appraisal itself, don't make the mistake of thinking that being open to feedback means having to blindly accept everything that's thrown at you. If feedback is vague, ask for a specific example of when you have demonstrated the behaviour in question and how you could do things differently in future. This applies equally to praise: “How could I put that to even better use in future to help me reach my goals?”

2. Push yourself harder

The science: Researchers asked participants to cycle as hard as they could for 4,000 metres. Later, participants were given the same instructions but were able to race against an avatar of their previous ride. What they didn't know was that the avatar was actually going faster than their previous ride. The experiment saw participants ride



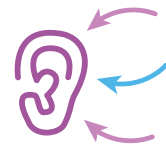
right alongside their avatars, significantly faster than their previous maximal efforts. The implication: people are poor predictors of their best efforts and may, when pushed, surpass their own expectations⁶.

What you can do:

Take a deep breath and put yourself forward for a stretch assignment that will take you out of your comfort zone. As you proceed, pay close attention to what you're learning and, once complete, conduct a thorough analysis of what happened, how you felt and what changed - internally and externally - as a result of your courage.

3. Switch on your active listening

The science: In a study of 1-2-1 conversations, those who demonstrated active listening (paying attention to the speaker, engaging in the conversation) scored higher for emotional awareness and the speaker reported feeling better about the discussion⁷.



What you can do:

Consciously remain present in the appraisal conversation and focused on what your boss is saying. Though you'll have your own prepared points to raise, recognise that you're also there to learn from what your boss has to say. Keep your body language open, show that you're listening by summarising the points back to your boss to show you understand, and ask open-ended questions if you need further clarity.

4. Enter the appraisal as a junior partner in your manager relationship

The science: Made famous in the 1950s by Dr Eric Berne, Transactional Analysis is a theory based on a belief in your ability to learn and potential for change. The

premise is that there are three ego states present in you (parent, adult and child). As you move between the ego states, you experience shifts in emotions or feelings, which result in noticeable changes in behaviour. Interactions with other people are called ‘transactions’ and you can learn to analyse these transactions to better understand communication⁸.



What you can do:

Be aware of the dynamics in your appraisal: rid yourself of the mindset that you’re a passive participant, a subordinate who has no control over what’s about to happen in the conversation - this ‘parent-child’ dynamic will hinder how you receive feedback, and how you participate in the conversation. Much of the groundwork you’ve already laid in this workbook will help foster that belief. Before you enter the room, consciously tell yourself that you are equally responsible for the conversation about to take place.

5. Play an active role in goal-setting

The science: Scientists refer to it as the “endowment effect”, the psychological phenomenon which occurs when you take ownership of an object or idea. The goal you’ve committed to becomes ‘yours’, making you more determined to succeed⁹.



What you can do:

Take an active role in this segment of your appraisal. Have some ideas for personal goals along with clear thoughts on how they benefit your boss, his or her team, and the wider organisation. Take an active role in the organisational goals your boss sets. Ask which are priorities, why they’re so important, what success looks like in as specific detail as possible. Don’t forget to ask about your boss’s priorities and goals for the coming year and how you can best support these.

A common framework for goal-setting is the SMART acronym - ensuring your goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely. If you regularly use this on projects, perhaps you'd like to try something different. Try the CLEAR acronym.

Collaborative: How will this goal involve others?

Limited: Is the duration and scope clearly definable?

Emotional: What is your connection to this goal? Why does it matter?

Appreciable: How will the overall goal be broken down into mini goals?

Refinable: How will the goal be moderated as new situations arise?

Think about professional feedback you've received in the past. How did you feel on receiving it? How did it help you change and grow over the long term? Make a note of anything that occurs to you in the space below.



PART 2

The appraisal



JOURNAL OF ACHIEVEMENT

Now you have spent some time understanding your mindset, you will be in a better place to reflect on the successes and failures of the past year – both critically and honestly.

Before your appraisal, it's important for you to gather as much evidence as you can to complete a full picture of the last 12 months. Set a time limit if that helps keep you focused.

Ideas for sources

1. Scroll through your inbox archive - just noting the subject titles of emails sent/ received in the recent past might jog some memories of the variety of projects you've been involved in that have challenged and stretched you.
2. Notes made during 1-2-1s with your boss and any documents you gathered at the beginning of the workbook.
3. Presentations or talks you've given.
4. Cast your mind back to networking events you've attended and the conversations you had around what was going on for you at work at that time.
5. Chat to your mentor, partner, close colleague or friend: what do they recall of your work experiences over the last year?

Keep in mind the objectives you agreed with your boss during your last appraisal, looking out particularly for tasks completed and behaviours demonstrated that show how you've been successful. You don't need to do any analysis at this stage - simply record all the things that were going on for you. You'll be able to use this list of completed tasks as you progress through the workbook to help you decide how well you have performed over the past year.



Months (since last appraisal)	Key events
November	Assigned to project team tasked with scoping out new customer account area of website. Highly pressured due to limited resources.
December	
January	Volunteered to present weekly project status to senior figures.
February	Volunteered to lead project summary reporting. Presented summary report.
March	Business as usual period. Used it to implement several new customer relationship processes in team. Joined internal women's network and began to grow contacts within the organisation.
April	
May	
June	Managed the production of documentation of new customer account area of website to help staff deal with customer enquiries.
July	Attended writing skills course in spare time to help with task. Was 'employee of the month' for the second time after department achieved best customer rating score in five-year period.
August	
September	Took on temporary management of another team within department while manager on sabbatical. Given two new heads for team - focused on designing roles and interviewing candidates.
October	Signed up to scheme to mentor new graduates.

YOUR VERSION

Month (since last appraisal)	Key events

One of the biggest issues employees report when it comes to their appraisal is that it doesn't account for past work. More than one in five (22%) say their annual performance review doesn't look at the entire working period; instead their bosses focus only on recent successes and failures - it's what psychologists call 'the recency effect'.

This is where your upward management skills come into play. Rather than expecting your manager to remember that brilliantly worded email you sent to the team back in January, or the project management skills you demonstrated over the summer, consider it your responsibility to present your personal journal of achievement from the past 12 months in relation to your objectives.

Start considering to what extent the tasks performed and behaviours demonstrated equate to successful completion of each objective. Are there any gaps you will need to take ownership of?

The next section will allow you to analyse the tasks you've listed above, and really delve deeper into the highlights (and lowlights) of the past year.

THE TOUGH LOVE REVIEW

The tough love review is the appraisal system used by New York start-up Motivate Design, whereby employees are given quarterly ten-minute feedback sessions in which they're told what they're doing well, what they're not doing quite so well, and how they can be supported in moving onwards and upwards¹⁰. You're going to conduct your own ten-minute tough love review of yourself.

This is how it works:



In **column one**, break down the last 12 months into time chunks that make the most sense to you and your work: quarterly, monthly or bi-monthly.



In **column two**, get **tough** with yourself. From your journal of achievement, highlight examples of where what you did and the behaviours you demonstrated fell short of completing an objective. If you achieved a hard objective such as a profit target or website traffic figure, focus on the issues that occurred along the way and what you'd do better or differently next time.



In **column three**, feel the **love**. From your journal of achievement, highlight examples of where what you did and the behaviours you demonstrated were intrinsic to successful goal completion.

Sample




Time period	 Tough	 Love
Nov - Jan	Project team was fractious and suffered motivation issues at times - in future would define roles and responsibilities more clearly upfront.	 Achieved deadline despite team issues. Went from nervous to confident public speaker after taking on feedback from boss on presenting style.
Feb - April	Team issues due to lack of delegation on my part - need to get team involved at start as way to engage them with change.	Achieved a 23% increase in customer satisfaction scores through the new processes I championed and implemented. Became more 'visible' in organisation as result.
May - July	Spent too long struggling with documentation production - should have asked for help and resources sooner.	On my own initiative undertook a business-writing course in order to aid production of documentation, which was a new area for me. Delivered report to deadline. This was received well across the business.

Aug - Oct

Underestimated the challenge of running a fractious team. Took too long to raise personnel issues with line manager.



Volunteered to oversee team in addition to regular duties. Kept things ticking over until new manager arrived.

YOUR VERSION



Time period 	Tough 	Love 

Notice if any common themes emerge in your tough love analysis. If so, make a note of them on the next page.

Sample

Tough 	Love 
I don't ask for help when struggling.	I can be relied upon to hit deadline no matter the obstacles.
I fail to empower staff by not delegating or involving them at start of project.	I push myself forward for new opportunities even when nervous or overwhelmed.

YOUR VERSION: THEMES

Tough 	Love 

EXPERT TIP

“Keep reminders of your successes throughout the year... a file of things that go especially well, kudos that you receive from co-workers and people outside the organisation, and notes about things you might want to do differently next time. When it’s time to write your [next] evaluation, you’ll have a whole file of material to work from.”

Alison Green, Founder Askamanager.org¹¹

FURTHER SELF-EVALUATION

If the tough love review was the first time you've really delved into how your actions and behaviours both impact and impede your success, you may wish to dig a little deeper.

For a thorough overview of your strengths and weaknesses, you can use one of the SWOT analysis templates on the everywomanNetwork. Or you can use the Star Method, which encourages self-analysis from the point of view of your objectives.

TIP

Find a SWOT analysis template in the everywoman workbook
Knowing your strengths

The STAR Method

In the STAR method, you will take each of your objectives at a time and analyse how your actions and behaviours played a role in bringing you to where you are today. In turn, describe the situation that you found yourself in while tackling the objectives, the tasks you needed to perform to move you closer to said goal, the actions you performed as part of each task and the result.

TIP

The STAR Method is a useful way to prepare for competency-based job interviews, where you're asked to demonstrate specific experience or behaviours, e.g. "Tell us about a time when you had to deliver an ambitious project with few resources".

Sample

<u>S</u> ituation	I was given a short-term objective to produce a plan for an improved version of the customer service area of the website.
<u>T</u> ask	The key task was to assemble a project team who would produce a scoping document through brainstorms, research and existing knowledge.

<u>A</u> ction	I organised and led action-orientated weekly team sessions. I fed back to senior management at regular intervals with formal presentations.
<u>R</u> esult	We delivered a scoping document on time, although by final delivery, the team was very fractious and there was a lot of confusion about roles and responsibilities. Next time I would assign these upfront. Senior management reported being well-informed along the way, and I gained valuable exposure and presentation skills in the process.

YOUR VERSION

<u>S</u> ituation	
<u>T</u> ask	
<u>A</u> ction	
<u>R</u> esult	

Repeat the exercise for each of your objectives.

TAKING IT FURTHER

If you feel you need to do further self-evaluation work, here are some everywomanNetwork resources you'll find useful.

Understanding your strengths in 9 simple steps

Why you fail to learn from your mistakes - and what you can learn from the executives who did

Career makeover quiz: where do you need most development?

CROWDSOURCING FEEDBACK

360-DEGREE FEEDBACK is a common element of many performance review systems. If you're not expecting to receive feedback from selected colleagues as part of your appraisal, you may wish to crowdsource your own feedback, in order to flesh out the picture you've built up through self-evaluation.

Below we present three ways you can approach colleagues and connections to ask for their feedback.

1. Top down feedback¹²

Best for: approaching a senior figure, past boss or your boss's boss.

Use your judgment and understanding of your relationships when deciding who to approach, and if in doubt speak to your boss or mentor before you act.

Questions to ask:

- What specifically can I do to better support your team's mission?
- If your boss were to give me one piece of advice, what would that be?
- Who should I be working with more closely?
- Which parts of my style concern you the most?
- Specifically, what do I need to work on to be ready for (insert the job or assignment you're most interested in here)?

2. Peer-to-peer feedback¹³

Best for: increasing your chances of hearing the truth from colleagues or your own direct reports.

- Be clear that you want honest feedback. Let people know they're doing you a favour by being truthful ("Don't be nice; be helpful"). Explain that you'll get more out of the conversation if they don't hold back.
- Focus on the future. Frame your questions around what you can do better going forward as opposed to what went wrong in the past.
- Make it specific. Ask about your performance on a particular project: a meeting you presented in or a task you worked on together.
- Don't judge, listen. If they think that you really want the truth and you won't react poorly to negative feedback, they'll be more willing to be completely honest. If

you get defensive about anything, they'll stop and be polite.

- Ask for feedback regularly. Don't just ask once: give people multiple opportunities to give you real feedback. This increases their comfort doing so.
- Do it in person and make notes. A little silence communicates that you're taking feedback seriously and it gives those offering it time to think about what else they might say. Often they'll volunteer a second – and very important – thought while waiting for you to finish writing.

3. The traffic light system

Best for: getting concise email feedback from time-strapped colleagues.

Decide which specific task, performance or behaviour you want to get feedback on, and ask your colleague the following questions:

- What should I stop doing?
- What should I keep doing?
- What should I start doing?

Taking it further

If you need further help with asking for feedback, explore the everywomanNetwork workbook Giving and receiving feedback.

PROFILING YOUR BOSS

When it comes to your performance review, some of the key feedback you receive will come directly from your boss. Don't make the mistake of not spending some time considering the success of your year through your boss's eyes.

Aim to answer questions like¹⁴:

- What is my boss's long-term vision?
- What are my boss's immediate goals and objectives?
- In what ways are these objectives aligned with my own and in what ways do they jar or create gaps?
- Is my boss currently under any particular pressures?
- What are my boss's strengths and weaknesses?
- Over what issues do my boss and I typically agree?
- Over what issues do my boss and I typically clash?
- What feedback has my boss given me that is likely to come into play during my appraisal?



With all this in mind, look over the self-evaluation exercises you completed in Section 1, trying to see your analysis through the eyes of your boss. You may not be able to exactly predict what your boss might have in store for your appraisal, but the process of seeing the world through his or her eyes may shine a light on aspects of your progress you may have missed and any areas where your opinions are likely to differ.

Make a note of any discoveries you make below.

If any of the answers to these questions don't seem immediately obvious, try to discover them in your next 1-2-1: checking in with your boss's long term vision and objectives on a regular basis will help you stay on track throughout the year.

WHAT BOSSES SAY ABOUT APPRAISALS

As well as looking at your objectives through your boss's eyes, it's a good idea to see the performance review in general from their point of view. It's likely they'll have to spend a lot of time on groundwork and paperwork, and will appreciate you doing the same and taking an active role in the process.

Below we look at some common thoughts bosses have on appraisals and how you can use this understanding to make yours more successful.

The takeaway: Rather than use your appraisal to take part in a "Charming complaint chorus"¹⁵, tell your boss you want to focus on improving processes or relationships and seek their advice on where you could begin.

"I wish my employees would bring me solutions, rather than problems."

The takeaway: Feedback is more likely to be direct, honest and ultimately useful if you let your boss know that you welcome it and are looking forward to your performance review as an opportunity to learn.¹⁶

"I know that my direct reports are dreading their appraisals."

The takeaway: Your boss is human and finds direct constructive criticism difficult to dish out. If you suspect there's more behind what they're saying, tell them that you want to develop and that candour would be appreciated.¹⁷

"I give feedback as kindly as possible, but then it's ignored."

The takeaway: Your boss has a vested interest in seeing you improve. Stay calm and accept feedback graciously, even if you disagree.

"My direct report thinks I'm being overly critical; I'm just trying to help them get better."

GETTING THE LANGUAGE RIGHT

How you communicate during your performance review will depend on the relationship you have with your boss, past conversations you've had with him or her, and the format of your organisation's performance review.

Thorough preparation and knowing exactly what you want to communicate will shine through. But it's also important you consider your tone and how you'll phrase your points.

1. Ensure any points you raise are backed up by evidence - whether in the form of hard results (customer satisfaction scores), tangible skills you've developed (improved presentation performance) or crowdsourced feedback.

“The key way in which I've successfully delivered this objective is ___”

2. Where there are mitigating circumstances for goal-incompletion, work on ensuring these do not sound like excuses. Avoid assigning blame. Accept where things didn't go well; focus on lessons learned.

“I take that on board, and what I've changed as a result is ___”

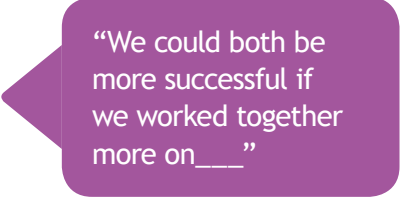
3. If you're placing requests - for training or additional resources - be clear and explicit about why this benefits your boss and the organisation as well as you and your future goals.

“This training will help me achieve this target in half the time.”

4. If you're sharing future goals and ambitions, engage your boss by asking for their thoughts. Ensure they know their help and advice along the way is valued.

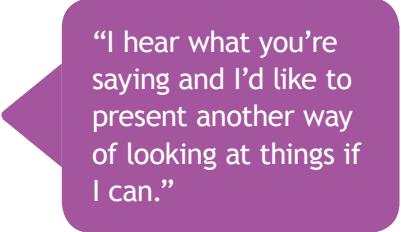
“I'd appreciate your thoughts on what I need to do in order to achieve ___”

5. Avoid arguing. Even if you disagree with a point your boss has raised, accept that they have this opinion. That doesn't mean you have to accept all feedback. But insisting something wasn't your responsibility or in your job description is unlikely to result in a fruitful conversation.



“We could both be more successful if we worked together more on____”

-
6. Don't retaliate. This is your performance review, not your boss's. Avoid offering them any feedback unless you're asked, in which case proceed with caution.



“I hear what you're saying and I'd like to present another way of looking at things if I can.”

PART 3

Personal action plan



YOUR PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Ensure your nerves or any surprise feedback doesn't derail your carefully laid plans for the appraisal. Use everywoman expert Sally Kettle's P.O.K.E.R. acronym, designed to help you in difficult conversations¹⁸, to create a summary of everything you've planned thus far:

The POKER acronym:

Pause, ponder, plan

Objective

Know your audience

Emotion

Respond, don't react

Keep it short - think of this as your at-a-glance guide whose trigger words and phrases will help you stay focused during the conversation.

PAUSE, PONDER, PLAN

Look over your notes where you've documented the past year. What are the key points you want to raise? For each objective, highlight trigger words for successes and learnings.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Is there any additional planning you need to do before your review?

What?

By when?

OBJECTIVE

Consider your own personal objectives for the conversation. To lay the groundwork for a future promotion? To demonstrate a greater willingness to learn? To improve your manager relationship? For each objective, highlight the key ways you'll go about achieving it.

1.

2.

3.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Look over your review of your boss. What thoughts and ideas did you have about your boss that will be most helpful during the review?

EMOTION

After all your planning, how do you feel about your review?

Set your intention to remain professional even if things don't go your way: write a short mantra that you can keep in mind if you feel your resolve slip during the conversation.

RESPOND, DON'T REACT

Look over your notes on mindset from the start of the workbook. What changes do you need to make to your mindset ahead of the performance review? How will you do this? What pointers can you put down in black and white that will serve as reminders to remain calm, open and focused during the conversation?

THE FOLLOW-UP

1. *Thank your boss for any particularly helpful feedback, summarising it on email to show you've listened.*
2. *Ask for clarification on anything you haven't fully understood after giving it careful thought. If anything came as a surprise, ask for a follow up in your next 1-2-1.*
3. *Assess the conversation against your own personal objectives for the session.*
4. *Look at what was learned: both praise and constructive feedback.*
5. *Turn feedback into action points you can implement immediately. Share this with your manager and refer to your plan in 1-2-1s.*

EVERYWOMAN EXPERTS

Everywoman creates workbooks on topics that matter most to our network members. We draw on member surveys and the latest thinking from the academic and business worlds, as well our own experiences as we navigate our careers. Each workbook offers practical advice, enabling tangible actions for your daily work lives ahead of those important performance reviews.



Maxine Benson MBE & Karen Gill MBE

Co-founders of everywoman, Karen and Max have spoken to thousands of women about the challenges they face at work. Through their own journeys at work and their experiences of starting a business, they uncovered a real need for a network where female entrepreneurs and businesswomen could interact and share experiences. The everywomanNetwork, launched in 2011, serves as a truly global tool to enable members the world over to propel their careers through online membership.

everywoman workbook team

Rebecca Lewis, Associate Editor

Mel Spencer, Managing Editor

Any topics you'd like to see covered on the everywomanNetwork?

We'd love to hear from you: contact@everywoman.com

FURTHER READING

everywoman Network workbooks

Negotiating your salary

Powerful workplace communication

Giving and receiving feedback

Managing upward with success

External resources

Influencing Up by Allan R. Cohen and David L. Bradford (Wiley: 2012)

Carol Dweck's TED talk: The power of believing that you can improve

Carol Dweck's Mindset Online

ENDNOTES

1. According to a survey by Globoforce, 91% of organisations conduct an appraisal process and more than half (51%) of employees see their reviews as inaccurate. A CEB study finds that 95% of managers - who can spend up to 200 hours each per year dealing with the review process, at an annual cost of around \$35 million to an organisation with 10,000 employees - are not satisfied with their firm's method for enacting reviews. Furthermore, 90% of HR leaders are weary of the technique.
2. Kill Your Performance Ratings, research by David Rock, Josh Davis and Beth Jones of the NeuroLeadership Institute (2014).
3. Globoforce Moodtracker (2013)
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