



Supplementary resource for the book *Agile for Non-Software Teams*. More at [AgileForNonSoftwareTeams.com](http://AgileForNonSoftwareTeams.com)

## Gil's Process for Effective Feedback Requests

Let's say you've been working hard on a deliverable. How do you know that your work hits the mark? Or that it's as valuable as you imagine? Or that its recipients would respond to it as you hope? Agile addresses these questions by having you seek actionable feedback frequently, *yet how do you request feedback effectively?* The following process has served me well over many years.

1. **Make sure you're ready to receive feedback.** Candid feedback might need you to revise something you've worked hard on – are you willing to do that?
2. **Determine the specific purpose of the feedback.** Vague requests such as “Please check my work” and “How do you like this?” don't tell the other person what sort of feedback would be useful to you. You need to be clear – first to yourself, then to them – what need it would fulfill. Try formulating the need as a short list of open-ended questions.
3. **Decide whom to ask.** This isn't just a matter of expertise and relevance of opinion; your relationship with that person is also an important factor. If you need real feedback, consider the likelihood and the consequences of it being not-so-positive.
4. **Tell them how you'll use it.** This will help the giver know the appropriate level of detail and show them how they're making a difference.
5. **Make the act of giving feedback simple for them, not for you.** If you don't know what would be simple for them, ask. People won't provide useful feedback if they feel it's a hassle.
6. **Give them two points in time:** your ideal time for receiving the input, and the cutoff after which it will no longer be useful.
7. **Offer an easy “out.”** If they don't want to give you feedback, or can't accommodate your timeline, it should be easy for them to decline without harming your relationship. This should help you avoid the situation of making a request, and hearing nothing in return.

If you'd like the same person to give you more feedback later on, remember that there's one more step:

8. **Follow up.** After you've processed and potentially applied their input, let them know what you did. This act closes the loop and strengthens your relationship better than a simple “thank you.”

Feedback is a gift. This process will help you receive many gifts.