

# DIVERSITY PRACTICE

## CASE STUDY 35

### Let Me Tell You

*Directions: Bill, the White team leader who is a few years away from retirement, is giving feedback and coaching Rosie, a second-generation Hispanic woman in her mid-30s. To give feedback skillfully, Bill needs to provide feedback that is free of cultural bias.*

Appropriate intercultural feedback has five characteristics:

1. **Describe** what needs to be done using an “I” message, rather than making a judgment.  
EXAMPLE: **“I need to discuss this idea with others in the department before deciding what to do.”**  
NOT: “This idea is awful.”
2. Stick to the **here and now**. Avoid the use of the words **always** and **never**.  
EXAMPLE: **“Trying this idea has certain risks for the customer. Let’s evaluate them.”**  
NOT: “This will never work. We’ve always done it this way.”
3. Promote the employee’s **self-esteem**.  
EXAMPLE: **“It would help me evaluate your questions if I knew more details about why this procedure causes a problem.”**  
NOT: “You’ve got to be kidding about this suggestion.”
4. Focus on a **specific behavior**, which the employee can do something about. Avoid comparisons.  
EXAMPLE: **“Your suggestions can be evaluated more quickly if reasons are given to support a suggestion.”**  
NOT: “Randy’s suggestions are so much more complete than yours.”
5. Give **specific information** and a “real” answer.  
EXAMPLE: **“If we stop using form XYZ, we will not have the information needed to process the order.”**  
NOT: “We can’t do that. Manufacturing won’t let us.”

As you read the case, assess how well Bill is using appropriate intercultural feedback.

Bill has noticed that Rosie has been doing part of Loretta’s job. Loretta is overweight and finds it difficult to perform some of the more physically demanding parts of her job in the packaging and shipping department. He wants to be sure all employees have equitable work as a part of the team. These are statements that Bill has made to Rosie as part of his feedback and coaching discussion.

1. “Rosie, you’ve been helping the other girls out by doing their work.”
2. “I’m concerned that everyone has an equitable workload.”
3. “When Loretta needs to file shipping documents in hard-to-reach places, what options are available for her to do the filing herself?”
4. “You always seem to rescue Loretta, instead of letting her find ways to do her job.”
5. “Some of your work is suffering because you take on the work of others.”