Pre-requisites for Giving Difficult Feedback

1. **Be clear about the outcome you want**
   Pause for a few moments and think about the best outcome you could possibly have in this situation…. Now think again and aim even higher! If you started out thinking you just want them to be aware of the impact they are having on others….. wouldn’t you actually like them to have a positive outcome on others? Focusing on what you want rather than on what you don’t like gives the conversation a positive focus and will help keep the discussion on track.

2. **Be genuinely curious**
   We tend to assume that our picture of reality is full and accurate and feedback is often a one-sided monologue. We may be missing important pieces of the picture - be genuinely curious about what is actually going on for the other person.

3. **Assume goodwill**
   Finally, our emotional relationship to the person and the situation will leak into the feedback. If we are feeling irritated, put-upon, frustrated, overloaded, etc, these feelings will come through our feedback, however much we try to script it. (Or perhaps because we try to script it, it will come over as impersonal or inauthentic.) Do not give the feedback until you are able to assume goodwill on the part of the other party. They may well be trying to do their best, be unaware of the impact of their behaviour on others, or be unclear about what outputs or standards are expected from them.
Having Difficult Conversations

A step-by-step process...

Step 1: Agreeing what you both want
- Describe clearly and objectively what you want
- Ask if the other person agrees and discuss any points of disagreement
- Once you have reached a shared agreement, you can move to stage 2...

Step 2: Agreement about the actual situation
- Describe the objective current situation in relation to this. Be specific and factual – have relevant instances or examples
- Ask open questions to find out what’s going on for the other person
- When you have reached a shared agreement, you can move to stage 3...

Stage 3: Collaborate on the way forward
- Work together on the solution
- Agree who will do what
- Decide when and how you’ll review

Remember to focus on the outcome you want, assume goodwill on the part of the other person and be genuinely curious – there are two sides to every story!