If you are required to give feedback about your classmates/colleagues (work or performance), would you like to give positive comments or negative comments first?

Giving and receiving feedback is so decisive a part of an activity to thrive. Many believe that negative feedback does not have priority over positive one. Others, however, maintain that negative feedback has more effect on performance compared to positive counterpart, so it deserves to be the main priority. I am of the latter opinion.

To begin with, according to studies on brain scans, when we give others feedback positively at first, the brain does not process it deeply. In fact, they will remember that they have been admired and feel well, but they will not remember the details completely. In other words, compliment does not end up with the cognitive process, so the feedback you give might not be functional. On the contrary, negative feedback triggers the brain to process the received information. As a result, if we provide negative feedback as the first step, not only will negative feedback be in the process but also the positive ones, because the brain has warmed up enough to analyze all our opinions. Besides, we should not forget that our principal aim of providing feedback is the improvement of people's performance not pleasing them. To reach this goal,/to that end negative feedback might be more efficient.

However, there are some considerations we should take into account when we want to give feedback. According to research, novices and experts are different in feedbacks they are required to be promoted. Since beginners do not have enough self-esteem, they demand more positive feedback. In contrast, adept workers feel an urge to hear negative ones, because they are sure of themselves and intend to increase the quality of their job. Furthermore, in order to give effective negative feedback, they should be timely and precise and we should avoid judgmental language. Many experts suggest that negative feedback should include "what if" instead of "but". For instance, if you do not like the sketch of an animated character your colleague has drawn, you can say "what if it has bigger eyes?".

To make a long story short, negative feedback supersedes positive one, because our goal is resolving issues which we face in the job. Also, I personally hold this view that negative feedback will backfire unless we give it some careful considerations.

Time: 35 mins