



DEALING WITH CRITICISMS

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People tend to think of criticisms that are thrown their way as a direct affront to their ability. However, there are still well-meaning people out there who are willing to dish out truly constructive criticisms in order to help others become better. It can often be very difficult to tell the difference, but the important thing is for people involved to be as open-minded as they can be, both in receiving and accepting criticisms.

Some get insulted too easily just because they have been doing the same thing for a very long time. Such individuals already have a fixed mindset that really proves hard to bend, let alone change. They also tend to have really sensitive egos that get hurt at the slightest poke. Although it is better to just let them go scot free with their minor mistakes, major errors cannot be so easily tolerated. It would be best for one with higher authority to handle the task of making such people know where they stand in the scheme of things rather than risk a huge snafu. Highlighting their achievements is a great way to make them feel they matter to the team, and helping turn their negatives into positives will show them how they can still contribute to future team endeavors and successes.

When we criticize, let us consider our purpose for doing so. Is the purpose noble enough or do we just criticize to make the other person feel bad? Criticize for the better, and not to simply put someone else down.

Of course, heaping too many praises and compliments, especially insincere ones, on people is never helpful. It might inspire someone at the onset but can lead to arrogance eventually. Achieving a balance is the key: highlight the genuinely good points but temper them down with a bit of healthy criticism. And make sure your words don't bite too hard. Nobody likes hypercritical people, especially those who cut too deep with their comments.

I, for one, would rather hear a sincere, constructive remark or comment rather than a dozen insincere compliments. However, hearing too many negatives tends to be off-putting for me. In such cases, I take the time to step back, restudy my options, change what I can, and proceed with what I do best. That way, I avoid too many setbacks and delays that could completely derail me. I tend to overthink things, some people say. I guess this stems from the fact that I try to be careful with what I do, too often. I've been advised to take things easy many times. I believe if I am finally able to do that, I will be able to achieve more. Well, there's still hope that I can become a better person, after all.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why are criticisms often difficult to accept?
2. Do you think you'll make a great judge in a contest? Why or why not?
3. What kind of criticisms turn you off or hurt you immensely? Why?
4. How do you deal with criticism?
5. Can you tell the difference between constructive and destructive criticism? How?