

Giving Effective Criticism

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the importance of effective criticism. Specifically, this will focus on:

1. Giving Effective Criticism
2. Techniques of Constructive Criticism

1. Giving Effective Criticism

The most basic "rule-of-thumb" of effective criticism is: "Respect the individual, focus the criticism on the behavior that needs changing - on what people actually do or actually say." Ideally, effective criticism should be positively intended, specific, objective, and **constructive**.

Knowing how to effectively criticize is a skill you will use throughout your life. Being able to give good criticism gives you the opportunity to be positively influential both personally and professionally.

Effective criticism is useful for the following two reasons:

1. New ideas and perspectives will be discovered.
2. Argument logic is tested, possibly revealing shortcomings.



TERM TO KNOW

Constructive

Carefully considered and meant to be helpful.

2. Techniques of Constructive Criticism

The goal of constructive criticism is to improve the behavior or the behavioral results of a person, while consciously avoiding personal attacks and blaming. This kind of criticism is carefully framed in language acceptable to the target person, often acknowledging that the critics themselves could be wrong.

Insulting and hostile language is avoided; instead, the phrases used are "I feel..." and "It's my understanding that..." and so on. Constructive critics try to stand in the shoes of the person being criticized, and consider what things would look like from their perspective. Constructive critics acknowledge points of improvement and also provide positive feedback when able.

Effective criticism should be:

- Positively intended, and appropriately motivated, as you are not only sending back messages about how you are receiving the other's message, but also about how you feel about the other person and your relationship with him/her. Keeping this in mind will help you to construct effective critiques.
- Specific, allowing the individual to know exactly what behavior is to be considered.
- Objective, so that the recipient not only gets the message, but is willing to do something about it. If your criticism is objective, it is much harder to resist.
- Constructive, consciously avoiding personal attacks and blaming, insulting language and hostile language are avoided. Avoiding evaluative language, such as "you are wrong" or "that idea was stupid," reduces the need for the receiver to respond defensively.

As the name suggests, the consistent and central notion is that the criticism must have the aim of constructing, scaffolding, or improving a situation, a goal that is usually subverted by the use of hostile language or personal attacks.

Effective criticism can change what people think and do; thus, criticism is the birthplace of change. Effective criticism can also be liberating. It can fight ideas that keep people down with ideas that unlock new opportunities, while consciously avoiding personal attacks and blaming.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **effective criticism** is useful because it allows for the logic of arguments to be tested and for new ideas to be discovered. Some **techniques for giving criticism** are to be specific, objective, and constructive, keeping in mind that criticism should be appropriately motivated and positively intended.

Source: Source: Boundless. "Giving Effective Criticism: Be Positive, Specific, Objective, and Constructive." Boundless Communications Boundless, 3 Mar. 2017. Retrieved 28 Jun. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/learning-to-listen-and-helping-others-do-the-same-5/giving-and-receiving-criticism-34/giving-effective-criticism-be-positive-specific-objective-and-constructive-151-10645/>



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