

Criticisms



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Criticisms-Good or Bad Criticism comes from the Greek word ??? Kritikos??? which means the ability to discern or judge the merits and demerits and speak accordingly. Criticism comes from everyone- friends, relatives and even strangers. While there is little we can do to prevent criticism from coming our way, there are ways of dealing with criticism that can turn it into a positive experience. ??? Blessed is the man who can take bricks thrown at him and build a strong foundation???.??? Why do we criticize??? Well the answer is when we have common concern or values but different perceptions. Criticism affects many of us negatively. Those who hurl criticism may not mean or believe what they say.

Their comments may reflect momentary jealousy, resentment, depression, fatigue or revenge. Regardless of the intent, harsh words sting like killer bees. Almost all of us have lived through moments when someone close to us has said something that has cut us deep in our heart and that hurt is sealed forever in the memory bank. That is an amazing property of the spoken words! Human Nature: It is instinctive for people to focus on the negative instead of the positive. ??? Rahul, your sister may be highly educated but is not all that good looking compared to her husband???. People refuse to see the good side of things and instead concentrate on something which may be immaterial.

Trust is yet another factor. Alka has no trust in her daughter and so every time, Prithi comes home late from her office, her imagination runs riot and thinks that her daughter had gone out with some one and starts criticizing her. Had she known the actual reason-say heavy work load due to annual closing or because of some urgent typing work, about which she could not

inform her mother, she would not think otherwise. Jealousy: There are people who are jealous of your success. Thomas Stanley, author of *The Millionaire Mind*, says, “ Successful people are different for they do not follow the crowd. This often results in criticism from people in the crowd who want to steal your success.” We hear some of our relatives criticizing us if we are better off than them. We fear rejection by our people and friends and so to make our presence felt in a crowd we indulge in criticism.

There is this fear of the unknown. Radha, who by nature is a timid and coward lady, imagines several things which might never happen. She fears that her son will desert her in old age and that fear makes her talk ill of her son. This criticism may be totally baseless. In general, it takes quite sometime for people to accept change. When a change is introduced, criticism is bound to be there, irrespective of whether the change is for better or not. Today working women may be common in India, but the scenario was entirely different a few decades ago.

Working women were criticized for not looking after their family and neglecting their household duties! We are afraid that criticism will bring to light our faults and so defend ourselves by criticizing. What would you think if Menaka, a very successful homemaker and computer analyst, were to tell you that she is an extraordinary person? Would you be impressed? Not at all, you would think that she is boasting. So, rather than blowing her trumpet about her own greatness, she disguises what she wishes to say by criticizing others. Criticism is inevitable; it is part of the reality in which we live.

When you get criticized, do you view it as failure or opportunity? It is not what you know that makes the difference but how you apply and utilize your knowledge in handling the criticisms. If you learn to expect and accept criticism, you are far more likely to remain in control when you are criticized. When we criticize others, we do not expose them but our own weaknesses. For as someone else once wrote, “The most censorious are generally the least judicious and those who have nothing to recommend themselves, will be finding fault with others- No man envies the merit of another who has enough of his own.” Does this mean all criticism is bad? Not necessary.

Types of Criticism: There are various types of criticism: 1.

Criticism can be categorized as either Constructive or Destructive. Learn to recognize and accept Constructive Criticism. Criticism that is well meaning and intended to be useful should be welcomed. Constructive criticism should leave you with the feeling that that you have learnt something.

Destructive criticism is the input you receive that might have malicious overtones. This type of criticism offers no value to the recipient that would allow him or her to learn and grow from the experience. What appears to be destructive criticism is often constructive criticism delivered by a person who has difficulty expressing thoughts in a non aggressive and tactful manner.

Destructive Criticism Negative criticism is unjustified when it results from wrong motive. Psychologist Henry Link says “If you wish to make enemies, tell people, ‘‘you are wrong’’ If you cannot explain why they are wrong, their motive is likely to be destructive. Criticism can be very destructive especially in parent-child relationship. Saurab, on seeing his son Rohit’s report card displaying low marks shouts at him ‘‘you are a duffer and

are totally useless???. This statement will damage the child's self esteem and his performance in the future will be worse still as he thinks of himself as an idiot.

If on the other hand Saurab, after giving a piece of his mind tells Rohit "you can do better???", then it will boost his image and will make him do better in his forthcoming exams. A good example of destructive criticism can be found in the following comments directed by Shakir towards his wife Shabnam " How could you make such a stupid mistake of giving away your gold bangles for polishing to some stranger, who has vanished into thin air after taking them I do not know why I married you in the first place." Perhaps Shakir thinks that his wife will be more cautious when she is placed in a similar situation in future. But this comment of his might result in her hiding the day to day happenings from her husband. This is because the criticism was general, negative and did not suggest as to how Shabnam could have acted. Constructive criticism: On the other hand constructive comments reinforce good behavior or motivate us to make positive changes. Pradeep was dining with his wife when a waiter put too much pepper on her salad.

Mrs. Pradeep tasted it and offered a constructive criticism " Needs more salad." The waiter did not feel offended and readily did the needful. At times our dear and near ones hold themselves from criticizing us for the fear of displeasure and emotional disturbance which it might create. But this need not be the case as our dear ones who happen to be our well wishers are the strongest source to give love, moral, motivation, inspiration and endurance. In several families we come across some husbands who, for the fear of hurting their wives refrain from pointing out their faults and weaknesses –

whether it be about the improvement of the wife's proper speaking of English language, or the flower arrangement in the drawing room etc. It is rather important that an understanding husband would have to put forth his comments in a positive way. He can tell her that her selection of curtains is good; furniture arrangement is appealing, it is the flower vase which has to be set more attractively.

It will definitely impress upon the wife and she will not mind carrying out his suggestions. At some time or other, you will find that people who are close to you disapprove of your decisions, even though you may feel that it is correct. It is better we keep in mind that other people's opinions are just that. If you allow what others say to negatively impact your thoughts or performance, then it results in your thinking that what others feel about you is more important than what you think about yourself. People would rather feel close to those who feel good about themselves. Owing to the harm we can do, it is better we do not look for an opportunity to criticize, for as the Yiddish proverb says, "If you are out to beat a dog, you are sure to find a stick. On the other hand, if you are out to befriend a dog, you are sure to discover its desirable traits. Criticism is almost never easy to accept. Almost all criticism feels destructive when you are at the receiving end.

Whether the criticism is constructive or destructive depends on the attitude of the person towards whom it is directed rather than on the critic. 2.

Misleading Criticism: Some criticism results from errors or lack of knowledge. There are some misleading, inflated compliments. We frequently hear something being described as terrific or wonderful when it is merely

alright. 3. Requested Criticism: The person??™s attitude of “ I am perfect???” is sure to fail.

??? Mom is my painting good enough or do you suggest some changes??? is a good way to improve oneself. Also the absence of criticism often signals a lack of concern by those around you. Anil, in an excited tone, telephoned his mother that he had topped his class, expecting a very enthusiastic reply from his mother. ??? Good Anil. Come home soon.

Got to go to the vegetable market, ??? said Pranitha, his mother in a flat voice. His enthusiasm fell like a prick in an inflated balloon. These types of replies lead to slippage and not to enhancement of further success. Art of criticism: Start on a positive note.

??? Rakesh you have done well in English and Sanskrit, which is good. Wow you seem to be a good sportsman too. Be a little more careful when you work out sums and avoid careless mistakes. I am sure you will do better next time???, said Nilufa to her son who had scored low marks in maths.

Follow the advice offered in the Native American proverb, “ Never criticize a man until youve walked a mile in his moccasins.” My aunt, an issueless widow constantly complains about her loneliness and health problems to whomsoever she meets, which draws criticism from various quarters. But if for a moment one were to put herself in my aunt??™s place she/he would know how my aunt feels and would stop criticizing. It is better we master the best type of criticism: self-criticism. James Pike, a clergy says, “ A man needs self-acceptance or he cannot live with himself; he needs self-criticism or else others cannot live with him.” When we see our faults, we will no longer need

to pretend we are worthwhile, and will, therefore stop criticizing others.

Dealing effectively with criticism.

Many of us feel that if we want another person's approval and appreciation, then we need to alter our behaviour to accommodate our critics. Intentionally or not, people use criticism as a form of controlling others and also as a tool for hurting others. Every time someone criticizes you ask yourself: Can I benefit in any way from the criticism? Look for grains of truth. Repeated criticism can be a valid warning. If two or three people independently provide criticism on something you feel is correct then look for grains of truth in their comments.

Leela lost her temper very often when she was busy with her household chores. When one of her friends pinpointed this, Leela felt a bit offended. When the same was told by her children she calmly thought about the remark and saw that there was some truth in what they said. She felt that her outbursts of anger at times were totally unwarranted and tried to correct herself, thereby changing the responses of her children from negative to positive. Have a sense of humour. Humour helps diffuse destructive criticism. Charles Swindoll, in *Laugh Again*, says, "A good sense of humour enlivens our discernment and guards us from taking everything that comes down the pike too seriously. By remaining lighthearted, by refusing to allow our intensity to gain the mastery of our minds, we remain much more objective.

"How to criticize: Combine criticism with praise: Shamu, you are very good at handwork and painting. How I wish I was also good at fine arts! Also, Shamu if you complete your plus two exams with good scores, we can admit

you to a good professional course of your choice,??? said Pritha to her niece who was not good at studies. This remark by her aunt may motivate Shamu to finish her school finals. One of Mary Kay Ash??™s (of Mary Kay Cosmetics) famous sayings was ??? Sandwich every bit of criticism between two heavy layers of praise???.

Criticize when it first occurs to you: Criticism hurts and so generally people try to avoid criticizing others. You can not go around only complimenting people. Sometimes criticism cannot be postponed for long. Finally, when you are unable to contain yourself, you tend to burst. When you criticize while you are angry, you are likely to offer destructive criticism and not constructive. Minimize the pain of criticism by not procrastinating.

You may find that the other person dislikes your criticism but that is the way the world works. Criticism is a necessary part of relationships of any kind. Who can deny the amount of criticism which a daughter heaps on her mother and vice versa! Turn your complaint into a request. Which would you rather hear: ??? Jyothi your room is always found to be strewn around with clothes??? or ??? Would you please tidy up your room??? In other words, do not pinpoint their irresponsibility but tell them what is to be done. Criticism should be viewed as an opportunity to learn and enhance what you can offer to others. Criticism is here to stay. You can deal with it or be destroyed by it.

You can learn and grow from it or slowly withdraw and fall apart from it. To quote Aristotle, “ Criticism is something we can avoid easily- by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing.”