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The Secret to Receiving Criticism

By Brooke Loening

You know what it feels like when someone criticizes you. For many people it instinctively feels like a personal attack. Our ego is threatened and our first instinct is to defend ourselves with guns blazing. We may even launch a counter attack just for good measure. In addition, our feelings may be hurt because we perceive someone else doesn't like us the way we are.

The truth is that most of the criticism you hear is not likely delivered with a malicious intent. Constructive criticism is, in reality, potentially one of the most powerful assets we will ever have. It is actually incredibly valuable information in that we can use it as a feedback to improve ourselves.

Your first instinct will be to react

Here are some tips on how to change criticism from an attack to valuable feedback, no matter how it is delivered!

First- Get some distance. Your first instinct will be to react, and that will likely undermine your opportunity to benefit. You may need to go into another room and take a few breaths, call someone back later, or not respond to the email right away.

Second- Write down on a sheet of paper why the criticism is true, even if you don't believe it at the time. Be thorough.

Third- Write down what you can do now to change what you are doing in a positive way based on the criticism.

Fourth- And now you are really cooking with gas, thank the "critic" for the feedback and explain the changes you are going to make. Not only will they be shocked, but it will lay a safe groundwork for them to be honest with you again.

Most people don't have the nerve to criticize, for it is a very difficult thing to do and may not come out perfectly. Also the fear of what the reaction from the other person will be prevents most feedback from ever getting off the ground. But remember, many times criticism is the most valuable information you will ever hear! If you can learn to here the feedback without reacting, you go from defense mode to a place self empowerment

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