

Give yourself a little time before responding to the criticism. You can always say, "Well, you've given me something to think about." Then just be quiet until you've had time to think about it.

Don't respond too quickly
When you receive a criticism, weed out the emotional content and ask yourself if it's valid.

I realized it was because I'd been very tired and recorded those programs when I was feeling stressed. And it showed in my voice. It was a very good lesson for me to learn, and subsequently I've been very conscious of how my voice may sound when I'm under stress. So, that criticism was very good for me, though it didn't feel good.

That's defensive mode, but after a while I began to think about what she said. If indeed my voice was harsh, I needed to know that because my voice is my medium on the radio. So, I got some tapes of recent programs and listened, and she was right. There was a harsh edge to my voice.

The tone of her letter was very abrupt and harsh itself, and my first reaction was to throw it in the trash and tell her she needed to get her own act together.

If you discover that there is some validity to the criticism, put the hurt and pain out of your mind and just thank God that you are able to see this so that you can improve. You might even want to thank that person who criticized you. That shows a wonderful attitude and maturity on your part.

Don't take on false guilt

Let me hasten to say that just because someone criticizes you doesn't mean you're guilty. If you really don't believe the criticism is valid, you might ask for specifics: "Well, could you please give me some specific examples of what you're talking about so I'll understand exactly what I'm doing that's wrong."

Accepting and using criticism to help you see yourself as others see you is a very important part of growing and learning. You and I will never improve unless we change, and we need to know what needs changing. Many times that comes to us through criticism. We can learn to be thankful for it.

Giving and receiving criticism is a skill that we can hone and refine, by God's grace, so that we are a help and encouragement to others, and we are open to see how we can do a better job.

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Giving and Receiving Criticism

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Choose words that don't have a "finger-pointing" tone to them, that don't unnecessarily cause the other person to become defensive. And always remember to combine the negative with the positive.

Your choice of words can be a "deal-breaker" in determining whether your criticism is received well or not. It might be a good idea to write out what you want to say, and then ask yourself, "How would I feel if someone said that to me?"

Proverbs 16:21 says, "...gracious words promote turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Choose your words carefully

recover before offering you criticism.

immediate confrontation, give them some time to

something else on them. If there's no need for

discouraged, or exhausted, it's not a good time to lay

And if the person you are criticizing is rushed, depressed,

good one to keep in mind.

Also, consider your own state of mind and that of the other person. If you are angry at the time you choose to criticize, you are much more likely to use words that are unnecessarily hurtful. So, make sure you are in control of your emotions. Sometimes the old rule "sleep on it" is a

For example, a manager might say to an employee: "I really appreciate the promptness with which you prepare this report, and it is important to submit it on time. However, you need to also recognize that accuracy is a high priority, and lately your work has not been very accurate. Let me show you exactly what I mean."

Then end the criticism with a suggestion or ask that person what they suggest. Get them involved in the solution. "Why do you think you're having a problem with accuracy here? Are you starting too late? Are there other pressures that take priority? What can we do to solve the problem?"

Receiving Criticism

I can never remember enjoying a criticism. I tend to go into defensive mode, especially when I think the criticism is unfair. So when we're on the receiving end, our first challenge is to get past defensive mode.

When you sense you're becoming defensive, just keep your mouth shut, pray and ask the Lord to calm your emotions down, and then re-think the criticism. It may or may not be valid, but you must give it consideration, even if it was given in the wrong way.

I remember getting a letter from a listener who criticized my voice. She said she no longer listened to me on the radio because my voice had become harsh and "preachy."

How often have you seen a boss criticize an employee in front of others - in a meeting, or standing in the middle of the workplace? Their intention may be good, the criticism may be needed, but the timing and the place are all wrong.

always hard and fast is to never criticize someone when others are present.

Your timing is absolutely critical when you are going to offer a constructive criticism. One rule that is almost

Pick the right time

motives pure.

We are to speak the truth in love, according to Ephesians 4:15, and that means our hearts have to be right and our

frustration or pride. Pray for pure motives and let God reveal any areas in your heart that need cleaning out.

I find that often I have mixed motives. My good intentions can be tainted with my own selfishness or

that's not constructive.

improve, then you're criticizing for the wrong reason and person, so that he or she can grow and learn and

you're not honestly doing it for the good of the other your heart to make certain that your motives are pure. If

criticism, begin with prayer. First, ask God to examine when you know it is your duty to give a constructive

Make them constructive

Don't you wish you could get through life without ever having to give or receive a criticism? Whichever end you're on, it's never fun or easy. But criticism is a part of life, and actually can be a very constructive experience, if we know how to give it and receive it.

On the positive side, criticism is an opportunity for growth. On the negative side, it can be occasion for great hurt and long-lasting pain. It behooves us, then, to learn how to handle criticism on both ends so that we don't inflict unnecessary pain on others, and we know how to distance ourselves from inappropriate and undeserved criticism.

Giving Criticism

Whether you're a manager on the job, a parent, a friend or a mate, there are times when it's necessary and important to critique that employee or child, that friend or mate. To fail to do that would be negligence on your part.

Many of us are so reluctant to confront, so fearful of a negative reaction, or so obsessed with being liked by everyone, that we refuse to give needed and timely criticisms. The issue is then never resolved, and we begin to smolder with resentment or anger, which usually comes out in uncontrolled and damaging ways.