

The Leadership Principle of Criticism



“If you profit from constructive criticism you will be elected to the wise men’s hall of fame.” Proverbs 15:31

By John E. Schrock, Businessman

Underline the key concepts found in this principle.

“I hate it!” is the most common response to the word *criticism*. The dictionary defines criticism as “the act of analyzing or passing judgment.” As strange as it may seem, we can benefit in our business and in our personal lives by receiving criticism. The benefits vary:

1. Become wise—we learn from the good and the bad.
2. Gain a powerful perspective—because we understand the critic.
3. Gain good judgment—because we pursue truth not personalities. Our value for truth should always be greater than any feelings we have toward the person revealing the truth.

Since we all want to grow and experience the good life, we had better be prepared to listen to the critics. But first, we must differentiate between the humanistic way and God’s way of criticism. One popular positive mental attitude theory says that there is no such thing as constructive criticism. They say criticism is all a negative approach to things. But the Proverb above implies that there is a way that criticism may be profitable. To say that criticism is wrong is the same as saying that we cannot bring correction to what is wrong—that is not common sense.

The root word of criticism is “critic.” Nobody likes a critic, but Solomon admonishes us to profit from them. A critic is someone who criticizes and makes accusations. What he is saying

may be true, so we should always be open to receive. It may be what we need.

A critic is usually branded as a fault-finder with a rotten attitude. In most cases we will not listen to what he is saying because of his attitude. Some take the attitude that it’s like getting kicked by a mule; you have to consider the source. However, we should be thankful for the critics—at least they have the guts to tell us what they think. Others may feel the same way about us, but would never have the courage to confront us, denying us the privilege to grow.

If we accept criticism we will profit. The criticism may not be true, but then again, it may! So the value is in listening to it, and not measuring it by the person giving it. That’s what Solomon was trying to tell us. He said we would be elected to the wise men’s hall of fame if we learn from them!

Yes, some criticism may stem from fault-finding people with a bad attitude, but we must still choose to carefully consider what they are saying. It may be something we need to hear that

our friends would never have the courage to tell us.

So when criticism comes, we must ask ourselves if there is an objective standard or value that we are violating indicated by the criticism. If so, submit, not necessarily to the person, but to the principle or value. Use the content of the criticism for personal growth. How about this truth, “Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm 119:165). This means that if we are of the “right stuff,” criticism will not offend us. We would rather be thankful and take it into consideration.

Food for thought ... Someone said that if you want to know how to live the good life, ask a critic—he might have some good instructions.

This principle is part of the one year character development program:

Foundations For Achievement.

Thoughts to Ponder:

There are three things that are extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one’s self. Sometimes, we need the critic to help us.

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
What specific action can you put into practice to test the benefits of this principle?										
Check list for the daily reading of this principle	M	T	W	T	F	S	S			

Completed

Not completed