

Accepting Constructive Criticism

Specific & Practical Recommendations For Students

How Criticism Can Lead to Success

- **Maintains or bolsters relationships**
- **Reduces repeated errors in habits**
- **Improves efficiencies**
- **Teaches new skills**
- **Shows your commitment to increasing your quality of work**
- **Allows room for professional development**

Constructive criticism should spark positive solutions and environments that allow a person to build confidence and share their perspectives or experiences. This type of criticism should not focus on blame, personal attributes, or lack of options for support.

Steps to effectively accept constructive criticism

- Pause before reacting: *Be aware of the initial reaction to become defensive and be aware of non-verbal communication (body language, facial expressions, eye contact).*
- Appreciate the perspective emphasizing improvement: *Aim to remember that constructive feedback is valid - constructive criticism is beneficial at any level.*
- Actively listen: *Keep your attention on the conversation, rephrase their feedback to ensure you understand correctly and summarize what you heard them say.*
- Show appreciation: *Acknowledge their effort because chances are they were nervous while offering you this criticism - this doesn't mean you have to agree.*
- Be curious: *Ask questions to learn more and clarify what you may have missed, and identify solutions.*
- Remember that your work is consumed and valued by others: *Being rigid in your approach to completing your work takes away from the idea that your product or behavior is produced for and consumed by others, and will be ineffective if their ideas and expectations are not considered.*

Behaviors to stay away from

- Don't interrupt the person mid-conversation: *Allow the other person space to share their perspective and ideas fully before you offer your feedback - this can avoid confusion and potential miscommunication.*
- Avoid debating or defensive responses: *Remember that constructive criticism is offered to improve your skill set - take some time to formulate your response and remind yourself to appreciate the perspective.*
- Avoid combative questioning: *Asking clarifying questions is normal and even necessary, but being combative closes the door to open communication and can create conflict.*

Sources:

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