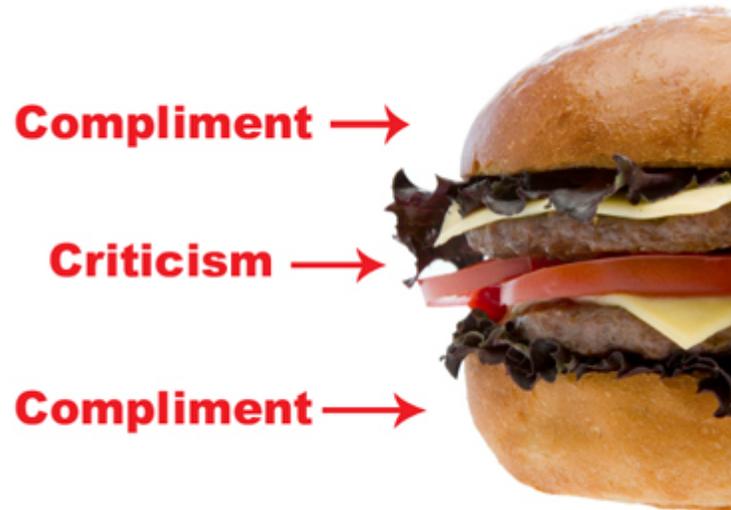


Hamburger Method of Constructive Criticism



When giving criticism, you start with a constructive **compliment** on something the person does well (Known as “the bun” part). You then get to the “meat” of the matter, which is the **constructive criticism** part. Finally, you end with another constructive **compliment** (the other half of “the bun”).

Basically, you are **sandwiching the constructive criticism** between two constructive compliments. It can be an extremely effective technique. It helps people let down their guard, and receive the criticism without being as defensive.

Here’s an example:

“Hey Dave, I noticed you went out of your way to get your report in on time every month for the last three months – that’s great!(bun) But I think it’s a bad idea to call Jane in the office “a sawdust head”. (meat) I know you don’t really mean it, but she may not be familiar with your sense of humor. She might be offended by your comment. Overall, Dave, your interaction with our work team has been great – thanks for making the effort.”(bun)

I once suggested the hamburger method to a client who quickly dismissed the technique as “candy coating.” Maybe it is, but if it gets a better result, isn’t that the whole point? Real-life medicine places a candy coat on medicine all the time for two reasons:

- So people will take it.
- It tastes like crap if they don’t.

If given the choice between cherry or crap flavored medicine, which would you choose?

Here are a few questions to ask yourself before giving criticism:

- 1. Is my criticism truly constructive?** Other words (synonyms) for constructive are: positive, helpful, productive, useful, beneficial, and practical. An opposite word (antonym) is destructive.
- 2. Why am I giving this criticism in the first place?** Is it because I'm really trying to be helpful, or just because I'm being a jerk?
- 3. Is the criticism necessary and appropriate?** Will it have an influence on behavior, or am I just being "nitpicky". Will focusing on this issue be worth the time and effort in the long run?
- 4. Have I earned the right to speak in this person's life?** The difference between management and leadership has a lot to do with the relationship you have with your group. Managers often will focus on control, whereas real leaders take people to the next level.
- 5. Have I noticed at least two things to compliment before beginning the criticism?** Time to try the hamburger method, if you ran through the list and you've have met all the questions/steps.

Adapted from: n8tip.com

Try writing one here, then be ready to try it out on a buddy in this class. Remember the 3 layers for "the hamburger".

1. The bun:

2. The meat:

3. The bun: