

Be Nice! Making it Happen

Directions

How can we give constructive criticism without appearing phony, or angering or upsetting the person?

1. Constructive criticism has to be **genuine**. A person giving this criticism has to really, genuinely feel it is important to give.
2. The person receiving the criticism needs to have some **level of understanding** of your role, and understand that you truly want to help them improve.
3. Do **not** use statements like, “I want you to...”, “You must understand...”, “You must see the difference...”, “I need you to...”. You are immediately setting the stage for the individual to become defensive, especially if there is already a bad history of communication.
4. **Take a team approach**. In other words, words like, “Let’s look at the following...”, “Let’s look at how you are dribbling or passing the ball, and how we can improve your passing ability, or your shooting technique so you can improve and be a better basketball player.” In the school setting, “Let’s brainstorm together”, “Let’s put our heads together and think of how we can achieve an increase in your journal entries.” By doing this, you have created a team-building type atmosphere. Both individuals are on the same level and are willing to work together. Now you can set the stage to critique, not criticize, and then begin to **construct a foundation for improvement**.

Effective constructive criticism happens every day of our lives; most of the time we are very unaware that it is even happening, if it is good. Constructive criticism occurs in relationships, at the workplace, and at school. There are times it can be manipulative, with a selfish intent. This does not mean the criticism is not helpful, the receiver needs to consider the source and intent.

Constructive criticism takes time and practice. If we want students to accept constructive criticism immediately, that will not happen. Constructive criticism presented in a positive way, as well as open communication, takes practice. Constructive criticism has to be used effectively if the receiver is to improve.