



Dealing Effectively with Criticism at Work

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Criticism at work can stimulate professional and personal growth if you know how to deal with it effectively. Here are some guidelines for adopting a positive mindset and responding to feedback from supervisors and colleagues.

Taking a Positive View of Criticism

- 1. Stay relaxed.** If you try to appear calm and confident, you're more likely to feel that way. Keeping your emotions under control will enable you to listen better. Take some deep breaths and keep your body language open.
- 2. Look on the bright side.** *If you're sensitive to criticism, remind yourself of your good qualities and the many things that you do well.* Maintain a good work-life balance so you can draw on support from your loved ones or spiritual practices to help manage any tension at the office or in the warehouse.
- 3. Keep an open mind.** Your co-workers may have valuable suggestions for areas where you can improve. Respect their point of view. ***Be receptive to new ideas*** and alternative approaches. You might learn something that makes your job easier.
- 4. Look for the humor in the situation.** Even if you receive unjustified comments, you can make them easier to deal with by noticing the comic elements. For example, if a Supervisor blames you for a short-on-truck, respond tactfully without taking it too seriously.
- 5. Take a compassionate view.** Your supervisor may speak harshly about your performance because they're stressed about pressures in their own life. Give others some leeway if you know they just came out of a difficult counseling meeting or are experiencing challenges at home.

Responding to Feedback From Supervisors and Colleagues

- 1. Invite feedback.** Asking for feedback regularly beats waiting for the annual performance review. You'll get prompt and specific guidance for doing your job better, and you'll demonstrate your ability to take initiative.
- 2. Ask questions.** Show the other person you're really listening by asking pertinent questions. You'll also clarify any areas of doubt.
- 3. Hear the other person out.** Let the other person speak without interruptions. For the moment, pay attention to them instead of working to prepare a defense.
- 4. Conduct a self-appraisal.** Regularly evaluate your own work. It will give you a stronger foundation for reflecting on your colleagues' remarks.
- 5. Focus on the message. *Distinguish between the content of the message and the manner of delivery.*** Even if you think someone is being less than courteous, there could still be some truth in what they're saying.
- 6. Get a second opinion.** Surveying other people around the office is helpful if you need some objective input. You may find out that your experience is typical. On the other hand, you may discover that you'll need to make a special effort if you and your boss appear to be a difficult fit. (Be careful with this approach though. Trust who you're speaking with)
- 7. Document your position.** If there's an ongoing disagreement, find ways to support your conclusions. Industry statistics or internal memos may strengthen your case. However things turn out, you'll contribute to a constructive and informed dialogue.
- 8. Be gracious.** Set a good example by offering your feedback in a way that's timely and specific. Focus on people's conduct rather than their personalities. This will encourage better morale and office communications. Show your willingness to cooperate with everybody even when you experience occasional conflicts.
- 9. Schedule a follow-up session.** Let people know how much you appreciate their advice. After you've had time to implement their suggestions, tell them how they helped to improve your performance. This will also give you a chance to make a better impression on them.

Make criticism at the office work to your advantage. Use feedback from others to improve your performance and advance in your career.