



DELIVERING STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS ACCA'S 2000 ANNUAL MEETING

Learning to Deal with Criticism

Receiving criticism in public is embarrassing for the recipient and awkward for third parties who are present. While we want to be helpful and to turn out correct work, we must always be mindful of the way we deliver criticism.

Trying to be overly familiar or friendly as a way of compensating for public criticism doesn't help. Even if Brutus smiled and joked, Caesar still felt the knife.

Making angry, humiliating, loud, or sarcastic comments in front of others makes you a pariah. People no longer focus on the issue at hand, but on the boorish behavior you displayed.

Criticism should never be personal. "It would be better if you wore a business suit to our client meetings" is appropriate. "You look awful in that ill-fitting outfit...can't you do better than that?" is not.

Working with a hypersensitive individual can be trying. People who cannot take criticism may become angry, defensive, sullen, or emotional, depending on their personalities. While it's easy to shrug it off as "not my problem," it's far more productive to find out what you can do to make it easier for them to accept the next time.

When you are on the receiving end of criticism, try to listen dispassionately, with an open mind. You may find that the other person really has your best interests at heart and only wants to help you improve your work.

Remember: Criticism should be given behind closed doors, in a spirit of helping and with an eye to improving the work as well as maintaining the relationship between you and the person whose work you are correcting.

"The Lett Group

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