

This Criticism Isn't Personal

Name _____ Date _____

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Even people who are usually thick-skinned may become defensive when they are corrected. To grow in a career, you must be able to take criticism as helpful feedback. If you see it as a personal attack, you will come across as defensive.

Low self-esteem and lack of confidence are the usual culprits when people strike back after criticism. They get hurt when someone brings up a problem that involves them, even when the comments are not meant as criticism.

Here are three important reasons people reject criticism:

- They don't feel good about themselves, so they pull back from situations that could make them feel worse.
- They have been mistreated in the past by a critic and fear being criticized by others, even when the criticism is constructive.
- Defensiveness has worked in a previous situation when the critic backed away.

By demonstrating the following behaviors, you will show you can take criticism without becoming defensive:

- Be attentive to what is being said without making excuses or blaming someone else.
- Show you are agreeable to being corrected.
- Get over anger quickly.
- Stay focused and don't let your mind wander to how you want to reply.

Action: How would you handle the following criticisms without pushing back or becoming defensive?

1. Your boss asks, "why do you come late to our staff meetings?"

2. A team member comments, "You always want to be the leader. Give the rest of us a chance."

3. A coworker remarks, "What's eating you? You're being nasty."

1. Sorry for being late.
2. I like to get things done. Someone else can be in charge this time.
3. I am letting my personal life infect my work. Sorry.

OK

I can come across
defensive depending
on your tone.

90/100