



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Constructive Criticism

Criticism is often unpleasant. Moreover, it can come whether or not it is needed. Managing criticism so that it is constructive is a difficult task. However, it can be done if certain steps are taken.

The Eight Insights

1. **Give importance to relationships.** Whether it is an employer criticizing an employee, a project head criticizing a team member, or a colleague criticizing his peer, certain precautions are necessary. Keep in mind the nature of the relationship and the expectations that are present.
2. **Examine assumptions.** Most people involved in an issue assume that they are right and others are wrong. They take it upon themselves to correct others. The other party may assume the criticism is uncalled for. By examining any assumptions before speaking, one can gain insights by looking at the situation from another perspective.
3. **Relax and focus.** While delivering criticism, the concerned individual is generally in a state of emotional upheaval. This state could result in ineffective delivery of constructive criticism, thereby defeating its purpose. By remaining calm, one can look at the issue from a proper perspective and stay focused.
4. **Convey your intentions.** Examining the intention of the criticism before voicing it provides clarity to the situation.
5. **Elucidate expectations.** Constructive criticism becomes effective only when it is clear.
6. **Question and listen.** Asking relevant questions clears up any misunderstandings and gives a better understanding of the situation.
7. **Convey criticism respectfully.** It is unpleasant to hear criticisms being shouted out in public. The situation can be made more comfortable and constructive if both parties are able to share their views on the issue.
8. **Focus on positive and negative aspects.** Employees feel that they are criticized more often than they are praised. So, before hurling criticism, employers can make a list of the employee's positive attributes. By conveying appreciation of the employee, the employer can avoid seeming too harsh when then offering up a criticism.