



Make Criticism About Them

Often when we're criticized, we take it to heart without considering the source. I've learned that all feedback must be taken in context. In other words, we've got to think about the other person's perspective.

I'm amazed by the different responses audiences can give me for the same presentations. Sometimes if I have a less enthusiastic audience, I question my impact. In doing this, I'm mistakenly making the experience about me. When I make it about audience, there are other explanations to consider.

During a recent workshop I gave, I found myself frustrated that the audience wasn't participating in the discussion. I'd throw out a question, and they'd just sit there. I felt I wasn't connecting with them. When I shared my frustration and asked for feedback, I learned they were, in fact, totally into what I was saying. They explained they were silent because they were thinking about what I was saying and applying it to their lives. This was verified in their written evaluations, which showed that workshop as one of the highest rated sessions. Had I thought to explore what they were experiencing instead of focusing on my own perception, I would have taken their silence differently.

When someone criticizes you, think about what that comment might say about *them*. When a parent tells you to be home by 10:00pm, it's easy to assume they don't trust you. It might also mean they care about you and are dealing with their own fears. If someone says something hurtful to you, it's not necessarily because they don't like you. They might be coping with their own inferiority. That doesn't make their comment OK, but understanding that may make their comment less hurtful.

When others make you feel bad, there's always something happening on their end. Take time to consider their perspective. You'll usually learn a lot more about them, and feel better about yourself.

Motivational speaker Scott Greenberg gives live presentations and workshops all over America. For more information on his programs or leadership books, call 1-800-450-0432 or visit www.scottgreenberg.com.