

COPING WITH CRITICISM: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. You have a right to be the final and sole evaluator of your behavior.
2. Evaluations -- criticisms of your behavior from others, however, may be quite useful to you, e.g. may improve your work performance, relationships with others, etc.
3. It is important to listen carefully to criticism and evaluate it realistically and objectively.
 - a. Avoid automatic denial
 - b. Avoid magnifying
 - c. Avoid over-generalizing
4. If criticism is given to you in an indirect manner, help the person communicate more directly with you. (Ask questions, prompt specific behavioral descriptions and requests).
5. Some criticism from others may be unrealistic or invalid. Assertively state your own perception, ideas, values, etc.
6. "Fogging" (or offering no resistance by agreeing to the criticism) may be used as a coping mechanism for "put-down" criticism, but use sparingly.
7. Assertively coping with criticism means maintaining your self-esteem by giving yourself permission to make mistakes.

GIVING AND RECEIVING COMPLIMENTS: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. A compliment is a sincere, specific expression of appreciation.
2. Complimenting yourself (recognizing and thinking about your strengths, accomplishments, etc.) on a regular basis leads to a greater sense of self-appreciation/esteem.
3. Compliments given you by others may be acknowledged simply and briefly. A simple and sincere "Thank you" will suffice. (Do NOT feel obliged to negate the compliment or feel flushed and embarrassed. This type of behavior only makes the giver of the compliment uncomfortable and that the "gift" of the compliment was unappreciated.)
4. It is unnecessary to "return" a compliment.
5. Compliments -- positive feedback from others -- let us know we are recognized and appreciated. Don't let a busy schedule keep you from acknowledging your colleagues, friends, and family!

Remember, in giving compliments to others: What is important is my intent and not the other persons response.

If you give a compliment to get something back, i.e., another compliment, positive regard, etc., you are in a more likely position to be hurt than if you give the compliment solely because you see something that you like and want to share it with the other person.