



EPISODE 33: HOW EFFECTIVE LEADERS HANDLE CRITICISM, PART 2

EPISODE NOTES

Thank you for joining the *Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast*!

In our last episode, we talked about how to minimize criticism. In this episode, let's dive in to understanding our critics. All critics are not created equal. Some criticize just to point out problems—some point out problems so you can find solutions to them. Our responses need to be different based on the type of criticism we receive.

We need to remember a few things:

1. **The criticism is often not about you.** The angriest people are usually the ones who are hurting the most. Have you ever met a happy, well-adjusted, productive, positive person who spends time hammering out hateful comments on social media?
2. **People are quick to criticize what they don't understand.** We talked a little about this in Part 1—it's important to lead with the why. Most of the criticism you'll receive will come from people who don't understand your context. They don't sit where you sit, see what you see, or think how you think.

“Your role as a leader is to **fulfill your mission**, not to **explain yourself** to people who don't have your **perspective.**” –
@craiggroeschel

What you criticize the most often reveals what you understand the least. Criticism often breeds ignorance. You're not learning when you're tearing down people and their ideas.

3. **Sometimes, your critics are right.** If you can't point to a few times you have learned from your critics, you're probably missing some great opportunities to grow. Sometimes, that feedback comes from what you don't see or hear. If no one is buying your product or visiting your restaurant, you need to learn why! Don't write off every critic as an uninformed idiot. Some can be a source of wisdom or insight.

So now that we know how the basics about handling criticism, how do we respond to it? Here are

three practical ways:

1. **Often, you don't respond.** Sounds simple, right? Many times, you don't need to even acknowledge criticism. When someone is incessantly critical, the best way to reward them is by letting them know you hear what they're saying. Feel free to hit "delete" when you need to.
2. **When you do respond, it's often wise to wait.** If you're emotional, don't respond immediately.

"When your **emotions** are **high**, your **wisdom** is **low**." –
@craiggroeschel

3. **Lead from a deep, grounded confidence.** You must be able to say and believe: *This is what I stand for. This is why I do what I do. I have a higher purpose.* That higher purpose is what helps you endure criticism from small-minded people. Remember, you don't need the praise of people to be successful.

"If you **live** for the **praise** of people, you'll **die** from the **lack** of it."
– *@craiggroeschel*

You are not as good as your fans think you are, but you're also not as bad as your critics think you are.

"Don't let the **compliments** get in your **head**, and don't let the **criticism** get in your **heart**." – *@craiggroeschel*

People are naturally critical. We have to deal with it the best way that we can. If you ever need an extra boost, remember this: critics are loud, but success is louder. Don't just endure criticism—lead through it. Wouldn't you rather be criticized while leading through something that makes a difference than avoid criticism by doing nothing at all?

"It's easy to criticize what happened **then**. A leader focuses on what needs to happen **now**." – *@craiggroeschel*

Remember, you don't have to know it all to be a great leader! Be yourself. People would rather follow a leader who is always real than one who is always right.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here's an exercise you can do to grow as a leader—ask your team these questions:

1. **What is a specific type of criticism that you have let in your heart that you need to keep out?** What can you do to keep it out?
2. **What is a criticism that might be correct about you?** What can you learn from it? What should you change?
3. **What is your higher purpose?** What keeps you above the criticism of small-minded people? Try to put it into words. Find a go-to sentence or phrases that can help you stay focused when distractions compete for your attention.

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