

Recently, I came to know of a book by Dr. Henrie Wiesinger. The title is: **THE POWER OF POSITIVE CRITICISM**. I further learnt it is available in an Indian edition. Prentice Hall of India, New Delhi has published it. It costs Rs.250.



I used to think positive criticism or constructive criticism is a contradiction in terms. How can criticism be constructive or positive?

I noted there are two types of criticism - **destructive and constructive**. A good example of destructive criticism is the political criticism. Here the aim is to demolish or destroy the other party or person.

enough. A good strategy is essential. The how of criticism is as important, if not more important than the what of criticism. This is where the art element, the fine art element, comes. The art element will **INCLUDE** the where, the what, and the how - the place, the words, and the tone of voice.

I am **NOT** summarising the book here. I am not suggesting that you attend a seminar. Instead I am suggesting an approach that is much more simple and much less expensive.

One way to learn this fine art - and it is a fine art - is to reflect on the way criticism is aimed at us.



THE FINE ART OF PRODUCTIVE CRITICISM

The user therefore thinks that all is fair in love and war and he is engaged in a war. He does not restrain himself in his sentiments or expressions. We can have liberal samples from the current political election speeches and statements. We, teachers and parents, fortunately, are **NOT** in that game.

We are keen in correcting people thereby creating a good future for the other person. We are therefore interested in constructive criticism.

For this Dr. Wiesinger suggests that we look at criticism's original purpose - a neutral, objective, appraisal of ideas and actions. The word 'criticism' comes from the Greek word 'kritikos' meaning 'able to discern or judge'.

As was originally intended, criticism is to ignite the best in oneself and others. "Over the years the concept of criticism became skewed until only the negative connotation of the word remains."



When used in the original sense, criticism becomes creative power. Giving and taking criticism is an essential and underlying factor on how well the task is performed. To give a criticism, we need to have a good criterion - to help the other person be at his or her best.

Good intentions, however, are not

If only the giver will consult us, we will be able to tell him or her what **NOT** to do and what to do, how **NOT** to do and how to do.

As teachers, we can also learn from forethought and after thought. A little thought before criticism and a little reflection after criticism will enable us to fine tune the art progressively.

As parents we get a daily opportunity to fine tune our art of criticism and reap the rich benefits. Often, we are impulsive in our criticism and not intelligent. This behaviour is remediable.

Once we concede it and once we focus on the goal, we will make fast progress to our benefit and the benefit of all concerned.

N.H.ATTFREYA

" Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation with full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, that honor is to be earned, not bought."



Abraham Lincoln