



PETRA
PEOPLE

AT WORK, COMPLIMENTS TRUMP CRITICISM



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LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

There's no shortage of advice out there about how to receive criticism at work. We're constantly reminded not to take things personally and to try to put ourselves in our boss's shoes. Be objective, be logical and above all, do not cry!

Criticism can be effective — when it's given in a constructive and positive way. And, when it's delivered (and received) well, it can lead to improvement. That said, maybe there's an alternative to rebuking employees for every mistake. Maybe what we need isn't thicker skin, but thicker filters. As a business leader, you want to inspire your team, and you can achieve that a lot faster by lifting them up than by shooting them down. We need to think before we speak, filter our critiques and find ways to suggest change without condemning the person we're trying to help.

In his book "How To Win Friends and Influence People," Dale Carnegie devotes an entire chapter to resisting the urge to criticize. He says that harsh criticism is counterproductive and rarely gets us what we want. Think of the last time you made a harsh correction to an employee and heard, "Wow, you're right!" when you were through. I'll bet you can't remember, because it's probably never happened. More than likely, they got defensive and tried to justify their actions — maybe they even sent some criticism back your way. Carnegie writes, "Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain — and most fools do." Well here are a few suggestions we can all use to help us avoid being the fool:

Criticize less, compliment more.

Positive reinforcement will generate better results than punishment, so give compliments whenever you can. Most importantly, be authentic and specific when giving praise. That will give your employee an opportunity to repeat the behavior, which will be a win-win for everyone.

Assume everyone is doing the best he or she can.

If you've hired smartly, you should be confident that your employees are working to the best of their



abilities. Don't go looking for mistakes. People tend to live up to what you expect of them, so expect the best and see what happens.

Don't confuse compliments with flattery.

A compliment is only effective if it's genuine. Don't give praise for something that isn't praiseworthy, and don't dole out credit where it isn't due. When you notice someone has done well, say so. And, if you really want to make an impact, write a note.

Offer a solution. There are times when you need to make a change. So, be sure to correct mistakes by suggesting a different approach, sharing insights and providing possible solutions. Be clear about what has been done wrong, and be specific about how to fix it.

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Hold that thought.

When you're ready to tell someone "exactly what you think," wait on it. Write down what you'd like to say and come back to it the next day. I'll bet you find you're more constructive and positive when you take a step back — and that's better for everyone. Your employee is more likely to make the necessary changes, and you won't alienate your colleagues.

Nobody wants to perform poorly, and nobody intentionally messes up. As managers and leaders, we need to develop the best in those around us by encouraging what's working and helping to improve what's not. And, if you do it well, the next time you offer some targeted advice to your employees, you might just hear, "Wow, you're right!"

This article originally appeared in the Tennessean.

THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.

Looking to change your business life - forever?

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

Andy Bailey is lead entrepreneur coach with business coaching firm Petra and serves as the Entrepreneur Organization's global membership director. Visit his blog at www.petracoach.com for more business and leadership insight.

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342 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 203, Franklin, TN 37067 | 615.601.0542
www.petracoach.com | www.facebook.com/petracoach

