



Ten Tips for Taking Criticism

by Patti Hathaway, CSP

- 1) Seek feedback on projects or assignments before a potential miscommunication can occur and mistakes become a crisis.
- 2) Ask others for positive feedback where none may be offered. An example might be "What did you especially like about how I handled the project meeting?"
- 3) Keep a "ME FILE" with examples of work you are especially proud of, letters of appreciation and notes of congratulations you receive throughout the years. Review your ME file when you are feeling down and need an encouraging boost because of others' criticism.
- 4) Listen carefully to your critic to make sure you understand the criticism.
- 5) Do not automatically assume your critic is right or wrong. Take time to assess whether or not the criticism is valid before taking action. Ask questions to clarify the criticism or get specific examples of where you were wrong.
- 6) Evaluate the source of criticism and whether it was offered constructively, ie gives you action to consider and is future oriented, or destructively, ie used words such as "always, never, should" and is focused on the past.
- 7) Do not passively accept criticism or become a silent victim. You will appear to have little self-confidence and may lose the respect of others and yourself.
- 8) When you have made a mistake, avoid over-apologizing or over-compensating. Instead, freely admit your errors rather than trying to cover up. Cover-ups usually come back to haunt you.
- 9) Don't make globally negative assessments about your character or ability based on one mistake, ie "I'm such a jerk! I'll never be any good at this" Give yourself credit for past victories and accomplishments.
- 10) Lower your emotional temperature and use positive self-talk when dealing with criticism, such as "I'm OK, I may have made a mistake, but learning from this error will increase my professionalism."

These ideas are excerpted from Patti Hathaway's book, Feedback Skills for Leaders which has sold over 100,000 copies and has been translated into 5 languages. Patti Hathaway, CSP, The

CHANGE AGENT, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books. She solves your people challenges by providing highly customized solutions to meet your needs. Contact Patti at 1-800-339-0973 or at her web site: www.thechangeagent.com for information on her speaking and consulting services or to receive her free e-mail newsletter/blog.