
On Criticism

How are you taking criticism? Not too good, I imagine. Of course, a lot depends upon the kind of criticism and how it's given. But most of us don't like criticism of any kind. I know that I don't.

Criticism tends to lower our opinions of ourselves, to make us feel less worthy. It can also make us nervous, depressed, anxious, fearful and angry.

Parents criticize their children orally; children criticize their parents silently. No one can even guess how many marriages have broken up as a result of too much criticism. And each year, thousands of people leave their jobs because of what they consider to be undue criticism.

We all tend to be critical of others, of the way they look and act and talk and conduct their lives. We tend to be mildly suspicious of persons who do not attend our particular house of worship, belong to our political party, or hold our personal beliefs in other areas. And, of course, other people operate within this same frame of reference.

As much as we hate to be criticized ourselves, we are often prone to hold no such feeling when it comes to criticizing others. We seem to forget that they don't like being criticized any more than we do. So a pretty good rule to follow is to avoid criticism whenever possible. As the old saying has it, be quick to praise and slow to criticize.

But when we must criticize someone, such as an employee or a youngster, or even—when there's no other way—our spouse, I agree with Dr. Harold J. Mandl, formerly on the staff of the Menninger Foundation, who says that the criticism should be carefully thought out and then delivered with complete honesty and candor.

He says, "Many of us, when we are obliged to criticize someone, turn to an old technique for which I have my own term: 'the praise-criticism sandwich.' This is supposed to be the golden road to smooth relations. It isn't. It doesn't work, but people persist in using it.

"The praise-criticism sandwich is the method of making sure to precede and follow criticism by praise, on the theory that a little bit of sugar makes the medicine go down."

Dr. Mandl believes that this device fools no one. The person can tell by your demeanor that he's in for criticism, and to slop on some sweet syrup along with it is, to an intelligent person, ridiculous and infantile. He knows that you praise him when he's done something well, and he expects fair criticism when he's messed up.

Dr. Mandl says, "Your criticism must be firm, open and clear to the other person, even if anger results. There is no simple gimmick, like the praise-criticism sandwich, that can do the job perfectly. Continual open communication with people tied to the job to be done is the only effective approach." □

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Sunday

Monday

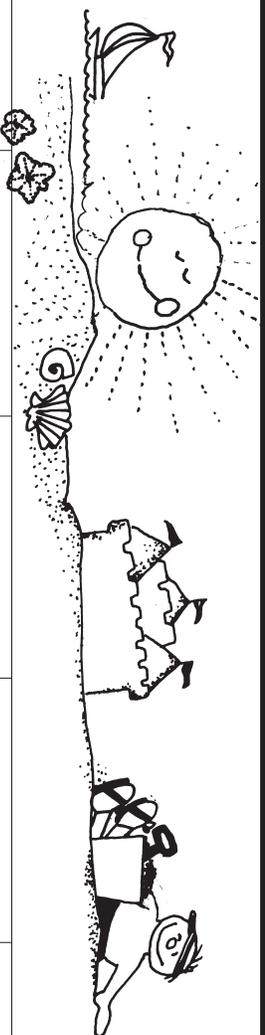
Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



Summertime ends ...

1

Draw a map that shows where you live.

2

Enjoy some quiet time together—reading, rocking, swinging, singing, listening, napping.

3

Labor Day



4

Where does honey come from? Look it up. (You may BE surprised!)

5

Put the baby in a stroller and go for a walk.

6

Try walking with a book balanced on your head. Who can walk the longest?



7

Name four things that are white.

8

Do you have a rain gauge? This is an excellent way to learn about our weather and the concepts of "more" and "less."

9

Rosh Hashanan begins at sundown.



Grandparents Day

10

Donate outgrown, gently used toys to a local charity.

11

Patriot Day.



To remember those who were injured or lost on 9/11/2001.

12

Tape a BIG piece of paper on toddler's door to draw on.

13

Clean out your closet.

14

Read "The Story of the Tortoise and the Hare." What's a tortoise? What's a hare? Look it up.

15

Help make a salad for dinner.



16

What made you laugh today? Tell someone else about it.

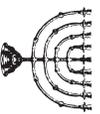
17

Constitution Day

To commemorate signing of the Constitution and to recognize all who by coming of age or by naturalization have become citizens.

18

Yom Kippur begins at sundown.



19

What words rhyme with "me"?

20

Find four things that are red.



21

International Day of Peace.

To recognize the efforts of those who have worked hard to end conflict and promote peace.

22

Help sweep out the garage, or the porch or sidewalk.

23

Autumnal equinox. Better look how can you figure out which way is west?

30

Draw an interesting picture to put on the fridge.

24

For breakfast, pancakes with fresh fruit on top!

25

How far can you hop on one foot?

26

What is your favorite beverage to drink?

27

What happens to an ice cube if you leave it out in a bowl?

28

Attend a local football game.

29

