

How to Win Friends and Influence People

By Dale Carnegie

Review by William Gross

Don't Criticize

The first chapter deals with a fundamental truth about human nature: *people who do wrong can't see it and won't accept correction*. So what? So don't waste your time trying to criticize them. It won't do any good. If you insist on trying to change someone, make it yourself. There's plenty to do at home without looking at somebody else's mess.

If you criticize, all you do is force other people to justify themselves. It will start an argument that has no resolution. So why start? More than that, it builds resentment and shuts down future communication.

"Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain - and most fools do. But it takes character and self-control to be understanding and forgiving... Let's try to figure out why they do what they do. That's a lot more profitable and intriguing than criticism; and it breeds sympathy, tolerance, and kindness."

There are several applications of this principle:

Negative speech reflects a *habit* of negative thought - it destroys our creative energy and saps our imagination. We need *both* of those to pursue our goals.

Criticizing is *offensive*. It separates us from other people even when our criticism isn't directed at them. No one wants to be around a negative person.

When we criticize *anything*, there is the possibility of giving offense to the person we are talking to. What we complain about may be something they cherish. What we oppose may be something they support.

The single biggest hurdle in building any business or enterprise is getting and keeping clientele. You can't meet people and engage them in a conversation if the things you talk about drive them away!

So listen more than you speak, ask more than you say, and find the positive in every contrary situation. That's a skill that will serve you well in business and in life. *Positive* people are *attractive* people.