

Reflection 3: Clash of Criticism

Over the course of my life, the term “feedback” has had a tumultuous history over the years. Whether it was a critique of a picture I drew as a kid, or criticism that I have received during my time as a student in school environments, it has always been a bit of a love-hate relationship when I am on the receiving end of feedback/criticism. I am in the process of working through this problem, but I feel this is a good opportunity to work through it through writing.

For me, I have tended to associate feedback, particularly negative feedback or “needs improvement”, with me not being good enough in a particular area. Normally this wouldn't be an issue, but I also have quite an unfortunate habit of denying criticism in a foolish attempt to try and justify why that person's feedback was invalid. Essentially, I would be trying to create a scenario in my head that would make sense as to why this person wasn't just acknowledging the flaws in my works and what I should do to fix them, but instead, they were there to ravage and discredit my work, fueled by personal vendettas and spite. If I had to guess, I would say that the root of this issue comes from deep-seated problems with low self-esteem, in order to defend my fragile self-esteem, I artificially inflate my self-worth and fend off any thing that might damage the already fragile self-esteem, instead of looking inward and facing the reality that this is a deeply unhealthy way to cope with a low self-worth. To help with this, I am attempting not to take every piece of feedback personally and see it at face value, and simply correct the problem that was stated.

Regarding giving feedback, I feel as though I try to be very gentle/uplifting in how I give feedback, because of my issues regarding criticism in the past, I feel like I need to extend people the same amount of grace I need. But this can often cause me to leave out the rather negative aspects of the work in favor of sparing the person's feelings. I feel as though I can achieve this in a way that isn't rude, but also doesn't leave out genuine aspects that are in need of work, and to do that, I need to change my own feelings towards criticism.