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NOTHING SIGNIFICANT HAS EVER BEEN ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT CRITICISM

February 20th, 2020



Ralph Waldo said; *"whatever cause you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong."* No one reaches the top without criticism. Yes, no one has, and no one will. If you think you have achieved or you are able to achieve success without controversy, I have bad news for you; you have a long way to go and you have not yet started climbing the success ladder. When you see someone, whom you consider to be successful, odds are high that there were people in his life, who counted him out,

who did not give him any chance to succeed, who criticized his ideas, who offended him or called him stupid.

Successful people take criticism as manure for personal growth. True, smart people build monuments from stones that critics throw at them. You will never achieve greatness if you are afraid of being criticized. You should accept the unacceptable, ignore the rules, and disregard the norms. Instead, you should write your own rules, accept to be controversial, run your own race and rebel against convenience. No one achieves success without being controversial.

Criticisms, like babies, grow larger by nursing them. Criticism has a drag effect on the criticized as it pulls you down, slows you down and kills one's sense of worth. To succeed in life, you must learn to overcome forces of criticism and discouragement. The way you respond to negative words determines your future. If you allow other people's words or action to stop you, believe me, they will. Winston Churchill put it better than I could; *"You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks."* If you find someone disapproving you, making negative statements about you, it does not hurt to ignore them. You will not be able to make meaningful progress by pointing fingers at every one who makes offensive statement about you. Do not let people tell you that your ideas are thoughtless. Be focused and find a way to develop and act on your ideas.

If you accept criticism as fact, you will not act to better yourself and your situation and you will not grow. Criticism may in the first place look like a fact, but in real sense, it is just someone's opinion. It is someone's perspective of you and your situation. Let someone be entitled to their opinion and do



not fall into the trap of being shaped and sharpened by other people's viewpoints. What they see is their world. Let critics say what they want to say, listen to their story, learn a lesson, and forget the details of the story.

You need to understand that there is something special about you that makes people talk about you. People will not discuss you if you were an average achiever. Pat yourself on the back. You are above average. You are a person of substance. Congratulations! Do not be discouraged by critics. Remember, critics said the Wright brothers would never be able to put man in the air; the apartheid government of South Africa did not give Nelson Mandela chance when he said he would bring and form a united nation, where blacks, whites and coloreds would live together in harmony; Julius Nyerere's prowess to unite the eighty-something fragmented tribes of Tanganyika and Zanzibar were questioned; Mwalimu, went on to found and form the United Republic of Tanzania despite all criticism received. If you are a person of distinction, people will try to offend you; they will criticize you; they will doubt your ideas; they will make every effort to discourage you; they will not give you any chance; they will count you out. Ignore them. Shield yourself from provocation. Move on.

If you allow critics to hang around you, they will cause damage to your personality and if it is prolonged, it can be impossible to reverse. When you find out that the people you associate with do not share your enthusiasm for growth, it pays to change the environment. There are many people, who have changed jobs simply because their work environment was not conducive for growth. Similarly, we have seen people moving from their home countries to foreign countries, stepping into the unknown, due to lack of goodwill.

There is no one, other than you, that can make you go forward. A man is measured by the amount of heartbreaks he endures to achieve success. If you are not being criticized in your undertakings, I bet you are playing small with your life. If you avoid being criticized, you will never act beyond your comfort zone. Think big. When you start to associate with people who are smarter than you, listen to the more gifted, spend time with those who are more successful than you. If you follow the crowd, you will remain a follower for life, not a leader. Be bold. Do the right things, not the popular stuff. The label of true leadership lies in being upfront, taking the road less travelled, doing the very things that the majority consider unachievable, unpopular, impossible. You will live an average life if you resign yourself to public opinion. You are far much better than that.

Not all criticisms are true criticisms. Sometimes people criticize others simply because they are misinformed or uninformed. Some people will make you to be offended, deliberately, to distract you from reaching your potential. Some people disapprove you out of envy. Some make you to feel debilitated simply out of jealous of your achievements. Others compare your achievements with what they have achieved themselves; if you are moving faster than they are, they will try to slow you down. Do not compare yourself with others, instead, compare who you are today with who you were yesterday.

Believe in who you are, what you are and who you can become. If you listen to the nay-sayers, you are delegating your thinking capability to them. They will control your life and you will be a passenger where there is no bus for life. As Kenneth Tyne said; "*A critic is a man who knows the way but can't drive the car.*" Some people will pretend to give advice when in actual sense they are trying to erase your dreams from coming true. No one, other than you, knows your dreams. You cannot



reach your potential without experiencing a dosage of criticism. Do not quit because someone criticized you, offended you, ridiculed you, demeaned you, unappreciated you. A life well lived is created; it does not come by accident and is only available to those who live on their own terms. Create it, live it and turn the challenges of each day into lessons.

If you accept criticism and take them as facts, you will not enjoy the journey to success, and you will not make any progress. Instead of building a positive attitude and an outgoing personality you will end up being withdrawn, depressed and sad. You'll start to doubt your capabilities and abilities which in turn will make you less competent. Do not change your personality simply because people cannot accept your viewpoint. Do not let disapproval of other people hurt you. There will be times when someone will say you are not good at certain things. They will poke fun at you. The point is that criticism, disapprovals, negative words, and discouragements will happen in your life, my life, her life, his life, their lives, and our lives. Learn to insulate yourself against it because criticism is inevitable in life. Criticism is part of your personal growth, and those who understand this fact, become great.

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