

# Taste everything, but choose what you swallow!

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*To thrive and lead a fulfilling life, I believe we need to nurture the most important relationship in our life - the one we have with our Self! Thus, my intention here is to share with you matters I hope you'll find useful to guide you on your journey to create a loving relationship with yourself and others, and to build a life you desire.*

*Shall we begin?*

Last month I decided to treat myself with a piece of art from a Macedonian artist. A woman I've known for a long time. We have never been close friends, but we've always had warm feelings for each other. More importantly, I've always liked her colourful style and admired her for her bravery and optimism.

Now, I am not an art expert, nor I pretend to be one. For me art is personal, it either speaks to me or not! *Just like many other things in life, right?* 😊

This one painting, spoke to me immediately as I saw it. It was the one! I had to wait patiently a few weeks for it to dry and finally, last week, I hanged it on the wall of my living room. **It brought joy to my home** ❤️



*My painting!*

Check the amazing art of Kalina Brajkovska on her [Instagram profile](#)

That same evening a friend came by and immediately offered a comment: "*I personally like it, **but** she is not a real artist.*" I was puzzled, **where did this opinion come from?** "*From another artist*" and they told me the name of this person, whom I happen to know, too. An artist with great potential, I believe. But, one who is not creating art and doing something completely different in life.

**I don't judge, we all follow our own path!** What irritated me was the harsh criticism, that is passed from person to person, blindly believed, and at one point becomes an accepted "truth" and opinion about someone who is courageously daring, doing, learning, growing and showing up!

Suddenly in my ear I heard Theodore Roosevelt's words from his speech "[Citizenship in a Republic](#)" in 1910, famously known as the "Man in the Arena" quote, and popularised by Brené Brown in her amazing [TED talk "Listening to Shame"](#)

*"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.*

*The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*

Throughout the years I've taken criticism by heart from people not in the arena and allowed it to knock me off my feet! As a recovering victim from childhood criticism, I know this can easily happen to people who grew up with parents that were constantly critical. There is harsh self-criticism already present as a pattern, so can you imagine what happens inside when criticism comes also from the outside? **It has affected my self esteem, my confidence, my motivation and left me with the bitter feeling of not being good enough. I know these feelings of worthlessness very well. I bet many of us do!**

At the same time I have been on the other side of the coin - I was the critic, too. I remember those feelings of grandiosity and nothing being good enough. Today, I know this was coming from my own insecurities, biases and ignorance.

But, that is in the past!

Now, I just responded: "***It is easy to criticise the players on the field from the comfort of your couch.***"

*Next, a few announcements:*

- Reserve your place for the live **2024 Vienna NLP Practitioner**. I offer this program **only once per year**, so this is your opportunity to learn to utilise the amazing NLP tools in your personal and professional life. Whether you are a CEO, HR manager, entrepreneur, coach, marketer, sales professional, or just someone who wants to improve their life - this program will do just that, **help you discover ultra-creative solutions** and teach you how to become the master of your life.



- 🙌 I invite you to attend a FREE of charge **Q&A Session with me about NLP** on the 21st November 2023 from 17-18h CET. Plus, you'll get a special offer. You want to be there, don't you? Register now at the link 🙌
- If you can't make it live in Vienna, then you can join us for the **online NLP 3-month program designed for busy professionals**, beginning in early February 2024. Click [here](#) to learn more. There is always a way when you want to grow!

*Now, let's move on with some*

## **Strategies for Handling Unconstructive Criticism**

Dealing with criticism can be challenging, especially when it comes from individuals who seem to enjoy finding fault rather than offering constructive feedback. *I hope such skills soon are taught in school, they are essential for our wellbeing!* And while it's natural to feel frustrated or hurt, it is important to develop strategies to manage criticism in a healthy and constructive way.

Here are a few that I practice:

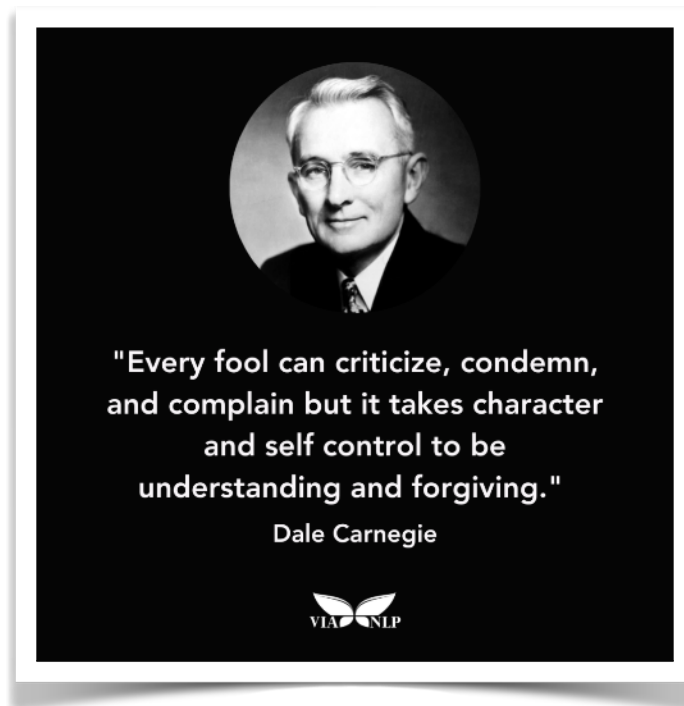
### **1. Maintain Emotional Distance:**

When faced with relentless criticism, it's crucial to detach your emotions from the situation. Avoid taking the comments personally, as they often reflect the critic's own insecurities or biases, rather than an accurate assessment of your actions or abilities. **You are not your work!**

2. **Evaluate the Source:**

Consider the credibility, expertise and intentions of the critic. Are they genuinely interested in helping you improve, or do they habitually criticise without offering solutions? Are they an expert in the field? Some people love to be critical, it is deeply rooted in their unconscious.

**It is important to look in the mirror and reflect: what is the level of your criticism for yourself and others?**



3. **Separate Valid Feedback from Noise:**

Recognise that everyone is entitled to their opinion, but not all opinions hold the same weight. While persistent critics may have a tendency to focus on flaws, there may still be nuggets of truth in their comments. Take a moment to assess whether there is any valid insight that can serve as fuel for growth. **Taste everything, but choose what you swallow!**

4. **Maintain Perspective and Have Confidence in Your Efforts:**

Remember that criticism from those not in the arena is often based on limited information. They may not fully understand the context, challenges, or constraints you're facing. **Trust yourself and have confidence in your own knowledge, experience, and capabilities.** You are the one in the arena, facing the challenges

and making the decisions. Your understanding of the situation is likely more nuanced than an outsider's perspective.

5. **Respond, Don't React:**

When faced with criticism usually we immediately react in a defensive manner. Some might even escalate the situation with an emotional reaction. We tend to immediately go in our head to find the reasons and excuses why. Instead of being impulsive, how about responding by saying "**Thank you for your opinion**" and leaving it there? This is the first step to creating space between you and the criticism.

6. **Ask for Specifics:**

When faced with vague or general criticism, ask for specific examples or details to better understand the critic's perspective. Ask for suggestions for improvement: "**What would you do if you were in my shoes?**". This can help you gain clarity and potentially identify areas for improvement.

7. **Focus on Self-Improvement:**

Use unconstructive criticism as an opportunity for personal growth. Consider whether there are aspects of your performance or behavior that could benefit from refinement. **Turn the negativity into motivation for self-improvement.**

8. **Surround Yourself with Positivity:**

Seek out a supportive network of friends, family, mentors, and colleagues who offer encouragement, constructive feedback, and positive reinforcement. Surrounding yourself with positivity can help counterbalance the effects of persistent criticism. Also, **become a cheerleader yourself - to your Self and to others!**

9. **Practice Self-Compassion:**

Be kind and compassionate to yourself. No one is perfect, and everyone makes mistakes. **Hold yourself gently!**

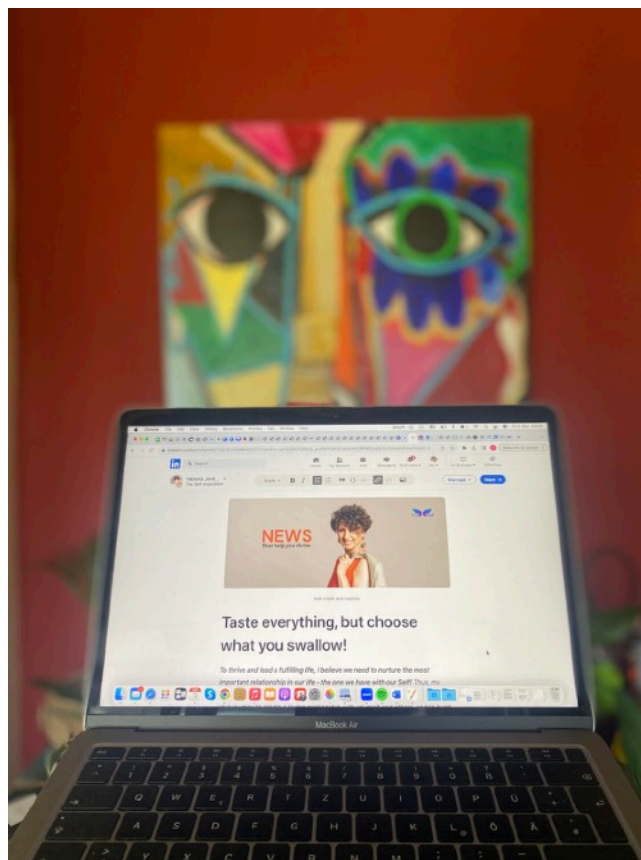
The impact of criticism on our wellbeing is highly contingent on how it is delivered and received. Constructive feedback, when given and received with empathy and respect, can be a powerful tool for personal and professional growth. On the other hand, constant, harsh criticism can have detrimental effects on our mental, emotional, and physical

wellbeing. It is important to cultivate a culture of constructive feedback and to approach criticism with sensitivity and thoughtfulness. I suggest you read this HBR article on [How to give \(and receive\) critical feedback](#).

*To finish,*

My message for the month of November is:

*Become aware, who and what you give power to.*



### **Inspiration and Information Sources:**

*I'm watching, reading and listening to:*

- [Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett: How to Understand Emotions](#) on the Huberman Lab Podcast
- ["Domace Lekovito Bilje"](#) - a book on healing with plants by Dr. Katja Toplak Galle
- Roberto Ottaviano's [Eternal Love](#) album