Handling criticism

How to take criticism in, sort what is fair and respond.

Name _____ Date _____

Criticism stings, especially if you are already hard on yourself. The usual reactions are to crumple ("I am useless") or to counter-attack. There is another option.

In the moment

1. **Pause and breathe.** You do not have to answer straight away.
2. **Listen for the content,** not the tone.
3. **Ask for specifics.** "Can you give me an example?"
4. **Buy time if you need to.** "I would like to think about that."

Sorting it

Type	What to do
Fair	Agree, without grovelling. "You are right. I was late with that. I will sort it."
Partly fair	Agree with the true part only. "I did forget to ring. I do not agree that I never think of you."
Unfair	Disagree calmly. "I do not see it that way."
A put-down	Name it. "I am happy to hear feedback. I am not willing to be spoken to like that."

My example

What was said

What is fair in it

What is not fair, or exaggerated

What my critic added on top (the leap from "I made a mistake" to "I am a failure")

A balanced reply I could give, to them and to myself

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