

Tough To Criticize: Action Checklist

A step-by-step protocol to de-escalate hostility, extract constructive insight, and protect your psychological boundaries.

☐ **Rule 1: Grasp the Substance, Discard the Tone**

Filter out sarcastic or hostile delivery. Ask: *"Is there an actionable fact here?"* Extract practical feedback to help you improve, and dismiss emotional baggage.

☐ **Rule 2: Identify the Target (Issue vs. Identity)**

Distinguish whether feedback critiques your output or attacks your personhood. If it is a personal attack, recognize it as their limitation and projection—not your identity.

☐ **Rule 3: Engage the Thinking Brain First**

Do not reply while in emotional defense mode. Take a slow, measured breath to deactivate fight-or-flight instincts and allow your prefrontal cortex to review facts calmly.

☐ **Rule 4: Guard Against Becoming the Counter-Bully**

Resist matching verbal aggression or petty barbs. Meeting hostility with hostility prolongs conflict, clouds clarity, and surrenders your emotional high ground.

☐ **Rule 5: Refuse to Internalize as a Personal Affront**

Harsh criticism frequently reflects the critic's own unresolved insecurities, stresses, and envy. Another individual's opinion does not rewrite your character or worth.

☐ **Rule 6: Enforce Clear Behavioral Boundaries**

Define what tone you accept: *"I am open to discussing constructive solutions, but I will not engage with disrespectful remarks."* Step away if they refuse to adjust.

☐ **Rule 7: Set a Strict Expiration Date on Rumination**

Process actionable takeaways once, note the solution, and close the mental file. Refuse to replay the interaction repeatedly in your mind after the moment has passed.

John C. Maxwell's 4-Step Leadership Protocol

CORE FRAMEWORK**STEP 1****Know Yourself**

Anchor your core values and self-worth so external noise cannot shake you.

STEP 2**Change Yourself**

Act promptly on genuine, constructive blind spots to foster continuous growth.

STEP 3**Accept Yourself**

Acknowledge natural human imperfection without shame or defensiveness.

STEP 4**Forget Yourself**

Release self-conscious ego obsession and redirect focus toward your purpose.

Read the complete psychological breakdown and deep dive:

happyproject.in/criticism-sensitive/