

**Series title:** Concerning Purposeful Creativity © 2012

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**The topic of this audio essay is criticism**, something all creative people experience and have to cope with over the years, whether you're unknown or a superstar, and across all disciplines and genres. If you struggle with criticism, you'll be less productive. If you're not creating new songs, illustrations, videos, articles or books, then you are probably doing far less than you're supposed to. Criticism can be spoken, whispered, shouted or non-verbal, person-to-person or impersonal, but probably most often it's internal self criticism.

When an artist understands that there are actually only three types of criticism, creative life gets better. The 3 types of criticism are:

Unjustified

Valid

Vague

**Unjustified** criticism may be merely the subjective opinion of somebody with no harm intended, but usually given by someone who in the past suffered an emotional injury, got their feelings hurt or got kicked down, and deals with that by saying you're not living up to their expectations. It's unjustified so ignore it.

**Valid** criticism is the hard truth. Criticism may be valid when you've heard it more than once from different, reliable sources. If the speaker knows what he or she is talking about and is considered to be a reasonable person, pay attention.

**Vague** criticism is confusing. Some people imply their criticism with a cutting question, or a joke and you just don't know what they meant or intended but know it didn't feel good. If you must respond at all: ask a question in the category of "who, when, where, why or what?" These types of response questions are a form of verbal Judo inviting the critic to fall under the weight of their own subjective opinion.

If you're any type of creative person your livelihood depends on generating great, original ideas for stories, songs, music, visuals, whatever. How you deal with criticism is one of the influences on your creative output, which ultimately determines your shelf life as an artistic commodity.

Wrapping Up:

A professional creative lifestyle can be pretty hard so don't make it any harder than it needs to be.

Just as an exercise, it might help to ask yourself: **How do you respond** when praised or criticized? Do you become immobilized? Do you shut down and wallow in self-pity? And when you triumph, do you recline in glory because there's nothing left to do? Or do you practice, refine, and re-write until the song is perfect, the riff is smooth, or the phrase has turned eloquently into prose?

Thanks for listening and happy creating. Good luck.

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