

Mariel: “How To Give Powerful Design Critique” by Alexandra Kovacs

<https://uxstudioteam.com/ux-blog/design-critique/>

- Why is feedback important? → We need to see if what we do has an effect on the world
- Honesty binds people together → Hard truths.
- Critique does not react instantly.
 - ◆ Does not involve feelings when seeing something. → Emotional Feedback.
 - ◆ Does not involve taking away the opportunity of two-way communication → Direction Feedback.
- Drive improvement and progress in the design.
 - ◆ Critical Thinking: examination of the object designed against its creation objectives.
 - ◆ Delivery: how you present your critical thinking to your collaborators.
- Bad design critique is:
 - ◆ Selfish.
 - ◆ Untimely.
 - ◆ Incomplete. → Lead the designer to *why* you came to this conclusion.
 - ◆ Preferential.
- Good design critique rather:
 - ◆ *Identifies* a decision in the design being analyzed.
 - ◆ *Relates* that decision to an objective or best practice.
 - ◆ *Describe* how and why the design decision work to support the objective (or not).
- Best practices for giving a design critique:
 - ◆ Lead with questions:
 - Show interest in their thinking.
 - Provides a basis to get feedback on.
 - ◆ Use a filter:
 - Wait until they *fully* explain their thoughts → give them analysis, not reactions.
 - ◆ Don't assume:
 - Ask more questions!
 - ◆ Don't invite yourself:
 - Ask if they want any feedback, if the designer has not explicitly asked for it.
 - ◆ Talk about strengths:
 - Neglecting the positive parts of a design may lose them → focus on the positive not the negative.
 - ◆ Think about perspective:
 - Don't forget you are not the users, remember perspective.

Maya: “Learning to Love Criticism” by Tara Mohr

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/28/opinion/sunday/learning-to-love-criticism.html>

- Statistics
 - Across 248 reviews from 28 companies, managers, whether male or female, gave female employees more negative feedback than they gave male employees.
 - 76 percent of the negative feedback given to women included some kind of personality criticism, such as comments that the woman was “abrasive,” “judgmental” or “strident.”
 - Only 2 percent of men’s critical reviews included negative personality comments.
- Many women don’t know how to become better or “having a thick skin” when it comes to receiving criticism
 - Powerful women receive over-reactive, shaming, inappropriately personal criticism
 - Vulgar, sexualized and angry
- Steps:
 - Can identify another woman whose response to criticism she admires.
 - Interpret feedback as providing information about the preferences and point of view of the person giving the feedback, rather than information about themselves.
 - Ask herself “Does that criticism in some way mirror what I believe about myself? When and why did that negative self-concept arise? Does it reflect the truth?”

Calista: “How To Give and Receive Design Critique Well” by Andrew Wilshere

<https://trydesignlab.com/blog/how-to-give-and-receive-design-critique-well/>

- Created their own five step guide to receiving criticism--similar to our idea
- Table of suggested phrases and terminology to use in a critique: too negative, just right, and too positive
- Ask Socratic questions when critiquing

Francesca: “Design Critiques: Encourage a Positive Culture to Improve Products” by Sarah Gibbons

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/design-critiques/>

- A design critique refers to analyzing a design, and giving feedback on whether it meets its objectives
 - Ultimate goal is to improve a design, not simply judging
- Two types of design critiques:

- Standalone critiques: gatherings with the sole purpose of improving a particular piece of work
- Design reviews: evaluations of a design based on a set of heuristics and can be done by a usability expert or in a meeting held at the end of the creative process in order to gain approval and move forward
- Standalone critique:
 - Two roles:
 - Presenter: shares the design
 - Critiquer: acts as the critic, offering informed thoughts or perspectives
- 3 themes of effective critiques:
 - Clear scope for the conversation
 - Set boundaries for what can and should be critiqued
 - Agreed-upon design objectives for the work
 - Agree on the problem that needs to be solved
 - Conversation rather than command
 - Foster open discussion to improve the outcome
- A design critique is a positive event that should feel good for all parties involved
- Feedback from others helps avoid mistakes and produces higher quality work
- Positive critiques support team building
 - Everyone is able to stay up-to-date and in the loop
 - Enables cooperation and collaboration
- Critique facilitation is the conscious, balanced management of conversations towards a conclusion
 - Two main facilitation approaches:
 - Round robin: participants share their perspectives one by one and everyone contributes
 - Quotas: the facilitator gathers a specific, predetermined number of positive and negative comments from each participant and initiates the conversation
- Designated facilitator: in charge with the overall handling of the critique (rotate this role)
 - Time boxing
 - Keeps conversation on track
 - Negotiates any tension
 - Creates and distributes the scope and agenda for the design critique
 - Asks the right questions
 - Documents the discussion
 - Makes sure to follow up with notes
- When presenting during a critique, keep your mindset on improving your product
 - Repeat objectives

- Tell a story
 - Make your designs readily available
- Start soon and start small
- Bad habits that can negatively impact critiques:
 - Not agreeing on objectives
 - Critiques that last too long
 - Taking feedback personally
 - Problem solving in the moment
 - Focusing only on the negatives
- Honest critique improves design by incorporating multiple perspectives and insures that the end product meets the original goal