

2014

Critiques: Survive & Conquer

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Recommended Citation

Carr, Ashley (2014) "Critiques: Survive & Conquer," *Memorandum*: Vol. 2: Iss. 2, Article 7.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/memorandum/vol2/iss2/7>

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Critiques: Survive & Conquer

By Ashley Carr

It's Criticism Day! Whether it be for a writing workshop, meeting with an important client, or the day of a deadline on a creative project, we are all familiar with public critiques. Some find them helpful, but a vast majority find them excruciating. That's unsurprising, as the actual definition of criticism is, "the act of passing judgement as to the merits of anything." Yikes! As English Majors, it can be easy to get caught up in semantics. However, do not fret! It does not have to be as scary as it sounds.

It can be an overwhelming task to provide someone with helpful criticism. This is especially so when it comes to creative work. It's important to remember that a piece of creative work is not necessarily a reflection of a person's inherent abilities. The notion that creativity is a tangible part of us, like our fingers and toes, is rotten deception! There are times when a project simply just doesn't resonate. It's natural to become defensive when your work isn't received the way that you'd hoped. Think of every project as a work in progress and listen to suggestions with an open mind. Never let your brain fool you into thinking that your work defines you. The folks at Writers Relief have some great insight on how to deal with criticism and rejection in professional writing.



Contrarily, give open-minded suggestions. When critiquing a piece of writing, look for strengths and weaknesses in sentence length, syntax, and tone. Occasionally a slight shift in tone can really make a difference without changing the meaning. Likewise, pay attention to the way that you phrase your opinions. Sometimes it's better to challenge,

rather than to metaphorically scream someone's weaknesses from the rooftop. Like many things, giving and receiving criticism takes practice. As a student and professional writer, criticism is inevitable; don't let it define you. Be confident in yourself and your ability to improve and put those twiddling thumbs to rest.

