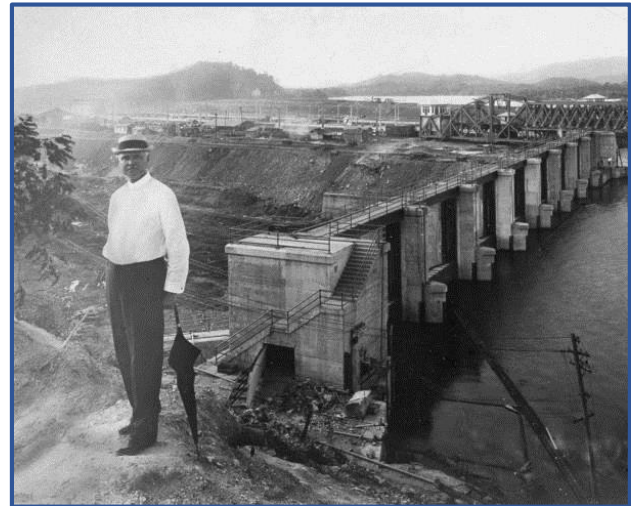


HANDLING CRITICISM

The late comedian Groucho Marx said, “Whatever it is, I’m against it.”

Criticism is defined in the dictionary as “the art of judging with propriety of the beauties and faults of a performance; remark on beauties and faults; critical observation, verbal or written.”

Maj. Gen. George Washington Goethals, the man who completed the Panama Canal, handled criticism effectively. During the construction, he had numerous problems with the geography, climate and mosquitoes. Like all mammoth projects, he had his critics back home who constantly harped on what he was doing and predicted that he would never complete the project. However, he stuck to the task and said nothing.



One day, an associate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer the critics?”

“Yes,” Goethals responded. “How?” he was asked.

“With the canal,” Goethals replied.

Though that approach didn’t bring instant satisfaction, the canal itself brought long-term vindication.

Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C.), Greek philosopher and scientist, said criticism was meant as a standard of judging will.

Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719), English essayist, poet, playwright and politician, said it was ridiculous for any man to criticize the works of another if he was not distinguished himself by his own performance.

Writing on this subject, the late author and internationally recognized motivational speaker Zig Ziglar, wrote: “The world is hard on critics but on occasion they have real value. Ask yourself this question: ‘What interest does this person (the critic) have in me?’ A parent, teacher, employer or coach has a vested interest in your performance. Unfortunately, many of them do not know how to effectively build up a person while giving suggestions that can make a difference.”

The key, Ziglar said, is to “criticize the performance and not the performer.”

(more)

As an example, he said, “My mother once criticized my performance by saying, ‘For most boys, this would be all right. But you’re not most boys – you’re my son and my son can do better than that.’

“She had ‘criticized the performance,’ because it needed improvement, but she had praised the performer because he needed the praise.”

The difference is all-important to us as leaders in Life Care and Century Park as we coach those for whom we are responsible.

Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored (Proverbs 13:18 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter