

How to give caring (and honest) critique to a fellow clubber

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Some of you mentioned that you are a little in doubt about how to give critique to a fellow student when posting on social media such as facebook or instagram. After all, you are not sure if that is the right advice, or if any critique will be taken as a personal offense or in the wrong way.

I've moderated online groups for over two decades, and instead of offering just "critique", I advocate the use of "Caring Critique".

The formula to give Caring critique is simple and is made of 4 steps:

1. Start by making sure that the person wants to receive feedback. If the post says "cc welcome", or something like "feedback appreciated", then continue on. What if the post does not ask for CC? Then follow the same advice here, but leave out item #3 of this list. And remember to be specific!
2. Write about what you like and what you feel is good. Anything will do. Do you like the choice of color, or the use of pen, or the smoothness of the lines, or how a shadow falls off from one side to another. Be as SPECIFIC as you can. Remember that it does not matter the level of proficiency of the student, every piece has something that is good. It could be something you personally have difficulty with, or even simply their choice of paper! WRITE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN. There is no limit to how many compliments you can post. If you cannot think of anything, then applaud the person for having the energy to get up in the morning and be creative! You never know how much effort it took for someone to

post.

3. Once you've stated everything that is good, find ONE thing that you feel could be improved. Again, be as specific as you can. It could be that the shadows could be a little darker near the edges, or that the person could perhaps add a bit more patterns on the left side. OFFER ONE SINGLE SUGGESTION, NO MORE, even if you can see a whole lot more. If your suggestion can be implemented right away on this drawing, then better.
4. Finish off with a few words of encouragement. A pat on the back. Applaud that the person had the courage to draw AND more importantly, to post on the wall of a social group, which can be a scary thing altogether.

So in summary:

1. The person must ask for it. If not, leave out item 3.
2. Comment on as many good things as you can think of. Be specific and detailed.
3. Offer ONE suggestion for improvement. Be specific.
4. Finish with encouragement.

This formula has worked for me for many years, and if you truly care about helping the person on the other side, chances are that it will be well received and even appreciated!

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