

Some critical words can encourage growth

Of all the unpleasant experience we encounter, I believe criticism ranks among the most vexing.

The Book of Proverbs declares, "Rebuke a wise man and he will bless thee." But most of us know from experience that we get precious few blessings from those we rebuke, and we are seldom wise enough to thank our critics for their reproaches.

Criticism is perceived as a blow to our ego, a threat to our self-esteem. Critical words hurt, sometimes even more than physical pain.

Criticism hurts most when it comes from those we love. We want to look good to others, and most of all, we want to look good to our parents, our spouse, our children. Our hearts are so designed that one word of reproach from them appears as a threat. It is felt as a withdrawal of love, a rejection.

And yet, we need to learn to accept criticism. The ancient sages declared that love that does not contain a measure of reproach is not authentic love.

Does love mean total acceptance of one's partner in marriage, of one's children in everything they do? If we truly love another, we seek to enhance the life of the other. When love is not blind, but critical, then it leads to the growth and development of those who are close and dear to us.

HOW CAN we learn to take criti-



moral perspectives
Rabbi Irwin Groner

cism constructively? The first rule is to listen. "He that hears reproach," the Bible says, "gets understanding." But we don't hear, we don't listen. In counseling with couples in conflict, I find this deafness so frequently.

The wife will say, "My husband does that which I do not like." I ask, "Have you told him how you feel about it and why?" She responds, "I told him a thousand times!"

When I mention this problem to the husband, he says, "I never heard her say a single word about it." I believe him, and I believe her, too. She criticized, but he did not listen.

THE SECOND step is to admit that we are not perfect. This is a hard admission to make. We learn so much about normal psychology from abnormal. Those who study the alcoholic personality articulate this truth. It is hard to admit you have a serious fault that needs correcting.

An expert in this field wrote: "One of the most difficult problems in treating the alcoholic is to get him to

admit that he is an alcoholic, that he has a drinking problem and needs help."

And so it is with all of us. We have to admit our imperfections and failings in order to overcome them.

Frequently, our severest critic and dearest friend are one and the same. Who loves us better, who knows us more intimately, who accepts us as we are even with our faults and criticizes us more often than a parent or a spouse?

THIS DIMENSION of human interaction has broad implications. The very life of a democracy depends on people giving and taking criticism. The difference between a dictatorship and a democracy is not discerned simply in the structure of government.

The true distinction is this: do the citizens have the right and the freedom to criticize their government? If they do, they live in a democracy. If they don't, a dictatorship.

The worst thing that could happen to America is that critics of national or local policy should be silenced or become silent. The constructive response to criticism makes for a healthy and vigorous democratic society.

Rabbi Irwin Groner is with Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield.

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Red Cross appeals for blood

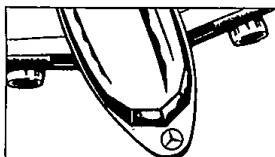
The American Red Cross has issued an emergency appeal for blood donors in an effort to reverse a critical decline in the community blood supply in southeastern Michigan. Blood collections in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and St. Clair counties were 22 percent below need in June and 18 percent below need so far in July. There is a shortage of all blood types, with an especially critical need for all negative blood types and for O-positive blood. There is a critical need for businesses and organizations to call Red Cross at 494-2700 to schedule on site blood drives for this summer.

"One of the major causes of the shortage," said Dr. A. William Shafer, Red Cross executive director, "is that too many businesses and organizations say 'no' when we ask them to schedule summer blood drives. If more of them would say 'yes' we wouldn't be in this serious situation."

"As it is, it will take us at least two to three weeks at peak collections to get our inventory back up to where it should be. Without a full schedule of on site blood drives during this critical time of the year, we will face a chronic shortage," Shafer said.

BLOOD DONORS who have not given blood within the last eight weeks are urged to donate as soon as possible at one of the air-conditioned Red Cross Blood Donor Centers in Ann Arbor, Bloomfield Hills, Dearborn, Detroit, Livonia, Oak Park, Port Huron, Southgate and Sterling Heights, or at a community blood drive in their area. First-time donors are also welcome. Appointments are not necessary.

Donor center hours vary. Appointments may be made for the convenience of donors by calling 494-2800.



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Join us in breaking ground for Brighton Hospital's new Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Center on Sunday afternoon, July 24th. The groundbreaking ceremony will begin at 3 p.m. and will be the highlight of our annual picnic, which will begin at noon. This day of family fun and fellowship will include:

- Free hot dogs, pop & coffee
- A hole-in-one golf contest, starting at 11 a.m. Tee off for your chance to win a 1988 Buick Park Avenue, courtesy of Waldecker Pontiac-Buick-Jeep-Eagle. There will also be a closest-to-the-pin contest, with other prizes.
- The Serenity Walk on our exercise trail, with medals for the first 300 people who finish.
- Games for kids of all ages, including a "moonwalk," a calliope, and a children's carousel.
- Live music for listening & dancing, featuring the Anne Be Davis folk-rock band.

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Inspirational talks will begin at 9 p.m. and feature Clancy I. from Los Angeles and former NFL Miami Dolphin football player Mercury Morris. The groundbreaking ceremony will follow.

If you would like to come or you need more information, please call the Brighton Hospital Community Relations Department at (313) 227-1211, ext. 276.

Brighton Hospital's Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Center Groundbreaking Ceremony And Annual Picnic Sunday, July 24th, 1988



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