

Right Way to Criticise Someone

Before you criticise someone, you should be mindful with respect to five things and carefully establish five things:

1. “Is my bodily behaviour blameless? Do I possess bodily behaviour that is pure, flawless and irreproachable? Does this quality exist in me or not?”
If your bodily behaviour is not beyond blame, there will be those who say of you: “Please train your *own* bodily behaviour first.”
2. “Is my behaviour of speech blameless? Do I possess behaviour of speech that is pure, flawless and irreproachable? Does this quality exist in me or not?”
If your behaviour of speech is not beyond blame, there will be those who say of you: “Please train your *own* speech first.”
3. “Have I established a mind of loving kindness without resentment to my associates? Does this quality exist in me or not?”
If you have not established a mind of loving kindness without resentment to your associates, there will be those who say of you: “Please establish a mind of loving kindness without resentment to your associates first”
4. “Am I learned, and do I remember and understand correctly what I have learned? Have I learned about those teachings on Dhamma that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, which proclaim the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life? Have I remembered them accurately, investigated them thoroughly, and understood them properly? Does this quality exist in me or not?”
If not... there will be those who say of you: “Please learn your *own* tradition first”
5. “Have both Monastic codes been well learned and understood by me? Does this quality exist in me or not?”
If not... there will be others who say of you: “Please learn the monastic rules first”
6. You resolve to speak at an appropriate time, not an improper time.
7. You resolve to speak truthfully, not falsely.
8. You resolve to speak gently, not harshly
9. You resolve to speak in a beneficial way, not in a way that causes harm.
10. You resolve to speak with a mind of loving kindness, not while harbouring ill will.

This sutta is translated by Venerable Bodhi and edited by Ajahn Brahmavamso. Reference: Anguttara Nikaya, Book of the Tens, Sutta 44 (4) Kusinara. From the book: Teachings of the Buddha. The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha. A translation of the Anguttara Nikaya by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Publisher: Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2012. Page 1392 to 1394.