**Dealing with Criticism**

**Case Study**

Art class is Andrew’s favorite subject. Everyone admires his drawings. Andrew believes that he has natural talent. He isn’t very interested in learning theory or technique.

Andrew’s high school fine arts teacher believes that it is important to learn technique. Andrew rejects his teacher’s suggestions on ways to improve his drawings. Andrew cannot handle criticism of his artwork. When his teacher makes suggestions, he feels personally attacked. He takes criticism as a sign that he has no talent.

Andrew has his heart set on attending a famous art academy. The cost is very high, but Andrew is convinced that he will be awarded a scholarship. He confidently sends his application and samples.

Andrew is stunned when he is rejected. He is angered by the reasons he receives: “some talent, poor technique.” “Those big city art snobs,” he yells. “They can’t even recognize talent when they see it!”

After failing to gain admission to art school, Andrew decides to apply for a position as a drafting apprentice for an airplane manufacturer. He gets the job and starts the company’s training program.

Andrew attends a three-month training course. He is surprised that he likes drafting so much. He likes the detail work. In a way, it is like being an artist. He is drawing and doing something useful with his talent.

Andrew trains with a veteran drafter for one year. He is not given much responsibility, but he is learning his trade. In this situation, Andrew accepts criticism of his work. He feels that because he is an apprentice, he is supposed to be learning.

When his apprenticeship ends, Andrew is assigned to the electrical department. Now he is given jobs to do on his own. When there is a problem with one of his drawings, the designers and engineers discuss it with him. Unfortunately, Andrew’s difficulty with accepting criticism returns. Because he is now a trained drafter, Andrew feels that he knows how to do his job. He becomes upset whenever he has to make corrections to his work. He feels he is failing at his new job.

Andrew begins to resent the engineers and designers. He feels that they think they’re better than he is because they have more education. When one of them questions his placement of a wire, he sulks for the rest of the day.

Andrew has a great deal of trouble working on a team with other drafters. When Andrew’s ideas are not used, he is personally insulted. Andrew refuses to talk to some members of the department because they have changed his drawings. He is quickly earning a reputation as a troublesome member of the department.

After Andrew has worked as a drafter for 18 months, his boss is forced to cut the staff. Although Andrew has more talent than many of the others, Andrew is let go.