

# Criticism

RUTH: I can't just applaud you and pat you on your back and offer unconditional love and support. I could use a little reassuring too.  
- from tonight's scene



EMPEROR JOSEPH: My dear, young man, don't take it too hard. Your work is ingenious. It's quality work. And there are simply too many notes, that's all. Cut a few and it will be perfect.

MOZART: Which few did you have in mind, Majesty?  
- from *Amadeus*



Cheech: Olive, I think you should know this: you're a horrible actress.  
[Cheech shoots Olive dead]  
- from *Bullets Over Broadway*



IAGO: "O gentle lady, do not put me to't; For I am nothing, if not critical."  
- from Shakespeare's *Othello*

## 2 Samuel 6:16, 20-23

As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul\* watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart... When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"

David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel-I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."

And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

\* FYI: Michal is also David's wife.

## Proverbs 13:10

Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

- ☞ What is behind Michal's criticism in the Samuel passage, and what is David's response? How do you feel about his response, especially in light of your passions?
- ☞ We artists are frequently caught between the preservation of our passion, and the necessity to other people's input. Proverbs tells us to swallow our pride and take advice, but 2 Samuel indicates that some criticism isn't worth taking. What factors contribute to the way you react to criticism? Your relationship to the critic? Relationship to your art?
- ☞ Which attitude do you prefer when giving and receiving criticism:
  - ◆ "I care more for the person and process than the specific product I'm evaluating"
  - ◆ "I deliver the unvarnished truth – nothing is gained if I withhold that."
- ☞ Have you developed productive critics in your life, or are you still just listening to your mother?

### Discussion Guidelines:

1. Allow everyone a chance to speak. If you are bursting with ideas and tend to share a lot – great – but occasionally pause a bit before you go, sometimes the quieter ones are just waiting for their chance and they need a little space before they go.
2. Respect the opinions of others, and refrain from giving advice.
3. Keep discussion focused on the material being studied.
4. Maintain the confidentiality of personal things shared within the group.