

Criticism, tested in both directions

There is a test for criticism of the core product. If an objection holds up from first principles, it gets built in. If it is only fear, it gets a precise, honest answer.

WAY ONE

The objection holds up from first principles. Then it gets built in, even when it is uncomfortable.

WAY TWO

The objection is fear. Then it gets a precise, honest answer, and the thing stays.

SIX QUESTIONS FOR YOURSELF

Before you give criticism

- 01 Do you mean the thing or the person?
- 02 Does your objection hold up from first principles, or is it a habit?
- 03 Did you look at the case yourself, or only hear about it?
- 04 What exactly should be different after your criticism?
- 05 Do you name your own wrong assumption before somebody else finds it?
- 06 Are you saying it early enough that it can still change something?

SIX QUESTIONS FOR THE OBJECTION

When you receive criticism

- 01 Does the objection hold up from first principles? Then build it in.
- 02 Is it fear? Then give a precise, honest answer.
- 03 Which of your assumptions is wobbling right now?
- 04 What would be true if the other person is right?
- 05 What do you need to test it: data, a sketch, an attempt?
- 06 When do you report back what came of it?

RED TEAM ON YOURSELF

Room for your own hardest question

Write down the hardest question somebody from outside could ask about your plan, and answer it here before it gets asked.

ON FAILURE

Convenience can easily disguise itself as failure. What gets celebrated is an honest setback after a genuine attempt: worked on, feedback sought, documented, reflected on. If there is no trace of any of that, we talk openly about the missing ownership.

On record: Paideia core handbook, chapter 16: Red team, first-principles questions and critical parent answers.

