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From the Archives: Great Men and Critics

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From the Archives

Great Men and Critics

“If I tried to read, much less answer all the criticisms made of me and all the attacks leveled against me, this office would have to be closed for all other business — I do the best I know how, the very best I can — I mean to keep on doing this, down to the very end.”

— President Abraham Lincoln

“I have benefited enormously from criticism, and at no point did I suffer from any perceptible lack thereof.”

— Sir Winston S. Churchill

“It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

— President Theodore Roosevelt

Source: Peter G. Tsouras, ed., *The Greenhill Dictionary of Military Quotations* (London, Eng., and Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Greenhill Books, Stackpole Books, 2000), pp. 78, 126-27. Lincoln quotation is from Russell B. Reynolds, *The Officer's Guide, 1970-1971 Edition*. Churchill quotation is from Omar Bradley, “On Leadership,” *Parameters*, 11 (September 1981), 5.