

greater impact if you can talk about what you did to fix the issue or what you're doing to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Readers do not appreciate excuses or blame-passing, especially if they think you're trying to avoid taking responsibility for whatever the problem is. You can almost always defuse irritation with graciousness and an explanation of what happened, even in situations where you can't actually fix the problem.

- ✔ **Acknowledge valid criticism.** You'll deserve some criticism, and you can do yourself and your readers a great service if you respond forthrightly to it. Let readers know you're paying attention and responding. It is the best possible outcome they can expect from making criticism. Besides, your readers know your products and services well — they may very well give you criticism that helps you improve what you're doing and just maybe sell more of that better product or service as a result.
- ✔ **Don't give scathing, vicious attackers the satisfaction.** *Trolls* (commenters who post offensive feedback) and folks who just plain don't like your company will find your blog. If they post abusive criticism that is more invective than informative, feel free to delete the comment and ban the user. No one benefits from remarks clearly intended to stir up trouble, but make sure the criticism isn't valid before you get rid of the comment. In his blog, [www.bbrown.info](http://www.bbrown.info), Bill Brown makes clear he doesn't accept dialogue of this nature in his blogging policy, as shown in Figure 9-2. You can go directly to his blogging policy at [www.bbrown.info/blogs/policy.cfm](http://www.bbrown.info/blogs/policy.cfm).

**Figure 9-2:**  
Bill Brown's  
blogging  
policy  
makes clear  
that abusive  
comments  
are deleted  
from his  
blog.

