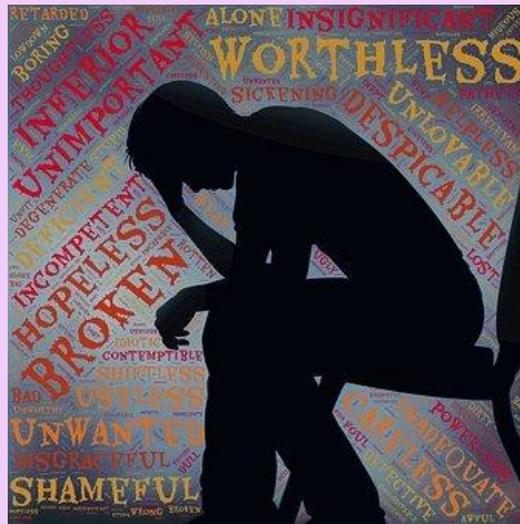


BOOK BONUS 1

Exercise: Turning Down the Volume of Your Inner Critic



The most common approach to dealing with the inner critic is to ignore it. If we don't engage with this negative voice it will eventually go away, right? Unfortunately, this is usually not the case.

If achieving higher levels of success is not enough to quiet down the inner critic, covering our ears and running from it won't do it either. The best way to turn down the volume on the inner critic is to actually listen to what it has to say. This means taking some time to get a bit more acquainted with your inner critic. Try the exercise below.

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Begin by getting a blank sheet of paper and writing down your responses to the following questions:

- What types of things does your inner critic tend to say to you? Take a moment to write each of them down using the same words that your inner critic uses.
- When does the voice of your inner critic get the loudest? Are there certain scenarios that tend to trigger this voice for you? If there is more than one, pick your predominant one.
- Does the voice remind you of, or have certain similarities with, anyone else in your life? For instance, a parent, sibling, friend or colleague?
- Although the inner critic may be the voice of someone else in your life that you've internalized, it's important to take ownership of how this particular voice now resides within you. With that in mind, give your inner critic a name – preferably a name that cannot be associated with anyone else you know.
- Draw a visual representation of your inner critic.

Now that you've explored your inner critic in more depth, it's important to realize that this voice isn't going to disappear any time soon. The reality is that it may be with you for a long time. The next time your inner critic makes an appearance, try practicing the following three steps:

Step 1: Recognize when your inner critic is present.

This first step is simply about cultivating awareness around the inner critic. The best way to determine if your inner critic is present is to check in with yourself in terms of how you are feeling. Generally, when we are feeling low or off, it's usually a reliable indicator that our inner critic is present.

Step 2: Allow it to speak

Again, while the tendency is to simply ignore this voice and the discomfort that arises with it, a much more effective technique when it comes to diffusing the power of this voice is to simply listen to it. What does this voice want to say to you? Take a moment and write down what is coming up.

Step 3: Acknowledge the purpose of the inner critic

Why did this voice first develop? For most of us it emerged at a young age as a protective mechanism. It is the part of ourselves that perhaps didn't feel safe and would therefore talk us out of doing things in order avoid feeling vulnerable. We might therefore imagine the inner critic as a younger, more misguided version of ourselves. Viewing the inner critic in this way allows us to have compassion for this voice, and ourselves, whenever it surfaces. By becoming more conscious about the roots of this voice, the inner critic will have a lot less power over you and your actions.

Perhaps the best longer-term antidote to the inner critic is to work towards developing greater self-confidence. Below are a few bonus tips for cultivating self-confidence.



- ✓ Beware of the urge to compare yourself to others, which is often a major trigger for the inner critic.
- ✓ Start a positive aspects journal or a gratitude journal – what are the things that you appreciate the most about yourself?
- ✓ Practice mirror work daily, as recommended by [Louise Hay](#).
- ✓ Become more conscious of the language you use when talking about yourself.

- ✓ Accept compliments with gratitude instead of resistance.
- ✓ Surround yourself with supportive and uplifting people – those who you feel your best around.
- ✓ Draw boundaries with people who are critical, judgmental or overly negative.
- ✓ Make peace with the past – rewrite and reframe old stories; look for the hidden lessons and forgive yourself for any perceived mistakes.
- ✓ Treat yourself regularly – what are the small things in life that make you happy?
- ✓ Ask yourself what you would say to a friend in any given moment and then practice saying these things to yourself.
- ✓ Be gentle and compassionate with yourself as you practice working with your inner critic.