

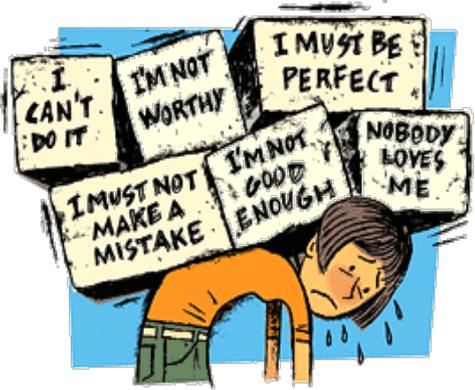


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TURNING DOWN THE VOLUME ON YOUR INNER CRITIC, ARTICLES, VIDEOS, AND MORE!

In this month's newsletter we focus on that nagging negative voice in your head – your 'inner critic'. Yes, we all have one – for some it's louder than others. Read on to find out how you can turn down the volume of your inner critic. And there's also links to some articles and videos that describe your inner critic and suggest how to work with it.

And don't forget, our last article was about vulnerability – how crucial it is to everyday life. Click [here](#) to learn

SHUSH THAT NAGGING NEGATIVE 'INNER CRITIC'!

By Amanda Pulford
Director and Clinical Psychologist
(BPsych Hons, MPsych Clin)

What does your 'inner critic' say to you? How often does it say something? Does it affect how you think, feel and behave? Would you like to turn down the volume on your 'inner critic'? How would life be different if you could?

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Read on to find out more about the ‘inner critic’ – how it develops, why it develops, and what you can do to turn down its volume.

What is the ‘Inner Critic’?

We all possess an inner critic, a critical inner voice, or critical thoughts directed towards ourselves. We experience this criticism via an ‘internal voice’ that is negative in its commentary about who we are, how we behave, how we look, what others think about us, etc.

This nagging negative voice is our ‘inner critic’.

Why Does our Inner Critic Develop?

Our inner critic develops from painful early life experiences. These experiences often include others being hurtful towards us – in their words, attitudes, and/or behaviours. Throughout childhood, we unconsciously integrate the ‘messages’ we have been given from others into who we are, and what we believe.

Further, our inner critic can also develop through trying to make sense of our world. If something bad happens to us as a child (or many bad things happen), we can adopt a critical pattern of thinking towards ourselves that says, somehow, we must be bad and at fault.

Common Dialogue from the Inner Critic

Ever heard those internal words “You’re not ...”? If you have, you’re definitely not alone. Our inner critic tells us we’re not ‘*something*’ enough, or that we’re too ‘*something*’. Our inner critic undermines our self-esteem, casts doubt on our goals and challenges our accomplishments. It shows up in our self-esteem, our

relationships, our work lives, and our achievements.

Our inner critic greets us first thing in the morning :

“You’re not as attractive as everyone else”

“You’re too fat”

“You’re such a slob”

“No-one likes you”

Our inner critic accompanies us to work :

“You’re going to stuff this up”

“You’ll never get everything done”

“You’re so stupid for making that mistake”

“You really shouldn’t be in this job”

Our inner critic joins our relationships :

“They don’t really love you”

“You’re way too needy”

“You’re way too aloof”

“You really don’t know how to be a good partner/friend/daughter/son/mother/father”

How our Inner Critic Affects Everyday Life

For some people, their inner critic is a bit like having to take a short detour on a longer journey. While the ultimate destination doesn’t change, they might have to slow down, recalculate their route, then step back on the path. In this way, their inner critic ‘visits’ from time to time, they can separate from it, and it doesn’t stop them from achieving what they want to achieve.

For others, their inner critic is more like taking a long journey with no road map. The path to the destination is filled with dead ends, delays, possibly going in circles, and sometimes getting stuck – all the while telling yourself you ‘should’ be doing better. In this way, their inner critic comes and hangs around, affecting every (or most) aspects of their life. They ‘buy into’ the negative self-talk.

We need to identify and separate from our inner critic, otherwise it will impact our thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and shape

the direction of our lives. It may sabotage our successes or our relationships, it may stop us from being the people we want to be, and it may prevent us from living the lives we want to live.

How Can We Quieten the Inner Critic?

As much as we would all like to rid ourselves of this inner critic, I actually don't think it's possible (and in some cases our inner critic can be helpful – but that's another conversation). But it is possible to turn down the volume on the inner critic. Following are 5 steps to do this.

Step 1 : Identify your Inner Critic

Be more conscious of and acknowledge the presence of your critical thoughts. Identify what your inner critic is telling you. You may want to write this down.

Step 2 : Differentiate your Inner Critic

Remember that your inner critic is separate from you, and it is not a reflection of reality. Your inner critic is a viewpoint you have adopted and internalised based on negative early life experiences.

Step 3 : Evaluate your Inner Critic

Decide whether these negative thoughts are fair, true or even based on evidence. Critically evaluate these thoughts.

Step 4 : Respond to your Inner Critic

Write down a more realistic and compassionate evaluation of yourself, your behaviour or the situation you're in. Write these responses in the first person. In response to "You're so stupid", you might write "I'm doing the best I can" "I'm not stupid for making an honest mistake" "I may struggle at times, but I am smart and competent in many ways". Be kind to yourself, and honest with yourself.

Step 5 : Take Your Own Action

Try not to act on the directives of your inner critic. Take actions that represent your own point of view, who you want to be, and the life you want to live.

Be aware – when you starting acting in the way you want to and stop listening to your inner critic – it might get louder for a while. However, by identifying, differentiating, evaluating, and responding to your inner critic, and then taking your own action you will grow stronger, and your inner critic will get quieter.

Articles

Below are some interesting articles on your inner critic and working with your inner critic.

The Inner Critic or Voice Inside Your Head

<https://www.habitsforwellbeing.com/the-inner-critic/>

This article describes the inner critic and offers ways in which you can respond to the inner critic – rather than react to it.

Working with your Inner Critic

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/working-with-your-inner-critic/>

Similar to the above article, this describes the inner critic and offers ways in which you can work with the inner critic.

3 Ways to Rewire Your Relationship with Your Inner Critic

<https://www.rewireme.com/insight/3-ways-rewire-relationship-inner-critic/>

This article describes the science behind your inner critic.

Killer Critics

<http://cultivatingconfidence.net/killer-critics/>

This article isn't for everyone – and it may be triggering for some people – so approach with caution!

This article describes inner critics that go beyond mean, and that have no good intentions. These inner critics are out to kill.

Videos

Below are three YouTube videos on the inner critic and working with the inner critic that you might find helpful.

The Critical Inner Voice – Whiteboard Animation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWc4pZhnpOw>

Learn about the inner critic that leads so many of us to sabotage ourselves. Discover where it comes from and how you can work with it.

Your Inner Critic is a Big Jerk!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3dEkLpeSZc>

Being bullied is awful, especially when that bully lives inside your head. Your inner critic can be a really big jerk, but there are ways to turn that little voice into a trusted friend (or maybe just an acquaintance who won't call you names).

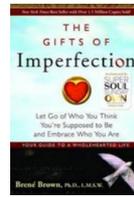
This Talk Is Not Very Good. Dancing with my Inner Critic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InfKa3ZmOM>

Steve Chapman shines a light on his inner critic – that whisper in his ear that constantly tells him he isn't good enough and that he should never try anything new or risk making a fool of himself.

More ...

I recommended some of Brené Brown's books in our last newsletter, and I think they're also relevant for working with our inner critic. I think the following book is probably the most relevant.



The Gifts of Imperfection by Brené Brown
We are led to believe that if we could only look perfect and lead perfect lives, we'd no longer feel inadequate. So, most of us perform, please, and perfect. This important book is about the lifelong journey from 'What will people think?' to 'I am enough.'

As always, if you would like some help, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, admin@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

Something you may not know about Awaken Psychology is that we work with Corporate's too. Each year, we partner with Leadership Solutions Global to run a 3 Day Mindful Leader Program.

The Mindful Leader Program is a public program designed for senior leaders to enhance their performance and well-being using mindful and self-awareness techniques. The three-day program provides techniques for investigating and developing attention, intention, perspective taking and new ways of being.

Do you know anyone who might be interested? Click [here](#) to find out more.