

TAMING YOUR *Inner Critic*



THE PRACTICE

- 1 Kindly acknowledge when it's active**
"Hello [inner critic name] - I hear you. Thank you for the signal. Message received. At ease."
- 2 Don't treat it as an enemy**
Choose to see it as an overactive protector that's ultimately on your side.
- 3 Give it a persona**
Name, wardrobe, tone of voice, and personality.



THE CONTEXT

Most of us experience a persistent and belittling inner critic in our daily lives. Yet, we are often unaware that it exists, or the extent to which it whittles away at our wellbeing and happiness.

By building self-awareness, we can learn to recognize our inner critic or "inner roommate" and choose to work with it in a constructive way. The key is to understand that our inner critic believes it has a very important job to do that is central to our survival. It prevents us from getting kicked out of our tribe, which for our ancestors was an urgent matter of life or death.

While our circumstances today are quite different, the inner critic hardwiring is still present, and it will do everything it can to protect us from making mistakes, failing in front of other people, or being humiliated or rejected in a group.

While it has reasonable intentions, the inner critic gets the best of us because **we fail to recognize it for what it is - an alarm system.** We can easily absorb the negative judgments and constant critiques and start to believe we are fundamentally flawed or bad.

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We can't argue with or ignore the inner critic – it will only push back with greater force. The most skillful thing we can do is to kindly acknowledge when our critic is active. One helpful tip is to give it a full persona – a name, wardrobe, tone of voice, and personality. Giving the critic an identity helps us begin to relate to it in a different way. When we sense the critic getting louder, we can say, *"Hello [inner critic name] – I hear you. Thank you for the signal. Message received. At ease."*

When we **stop treating the inner critic as an enemy** and instead honor its protective role, it will naturally start to settle down and cause less reactivity and stress for us.

Remember – working with the inner critic is a practice, so be kind and gentle with yourself as you go and if possible, try not to be too critical of your inner critic!