



CATCH INNER CRITIC



C

CATCH THOUGHTS

Notice and catch any Inner Critical thoughts, self-berating, comparing, doubts, obsessing, all-or-nothing beliefs.

A

ASSERTIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Be clear and assertive by thinking something like, "I hear you Inner Critic" "I feel your shame" or "I am paying attention to you now."



T

TALK INTERNALLY

With the Intent to Learn, talk WITH (not at) Inner Critic about what it fears, what it's protecting you from, its needs and what it thinks is so important and urgent.

C

CREATE BALANCE

The critical, all-or-nothing beliefs, can feel realistic because of the emotions associated. Find the realistic balance in your beliefs.



H

HONOR AND COMPASSION

This part of you deserves respect and honor as it has worked hard, adapting to protect you, since you were about 6 years old.

CATCH INNER CRITIC

C CATCH THOUGHTS

What shaming or critical thoughts are you noticing (regrets, should's, expectations, anger)?

A ASSERTIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Think "I hear you Inner Critic." Visualize your Inner Critic. What does your Inner Critic look like if you were to imagine it? How are you feeling towards your Inner Critic?

T TALK INTERNALLY

Inner Critic, What is this belief of yours trying to protect me from? What do you fear?

C CREATE BALANCE

Inner Critic is perception/emotion based, it's irrational, but important. What do Inner Critic's beliefs say about you? What does it expect from you? What is realistic?

H HONOR AND COMPASSION

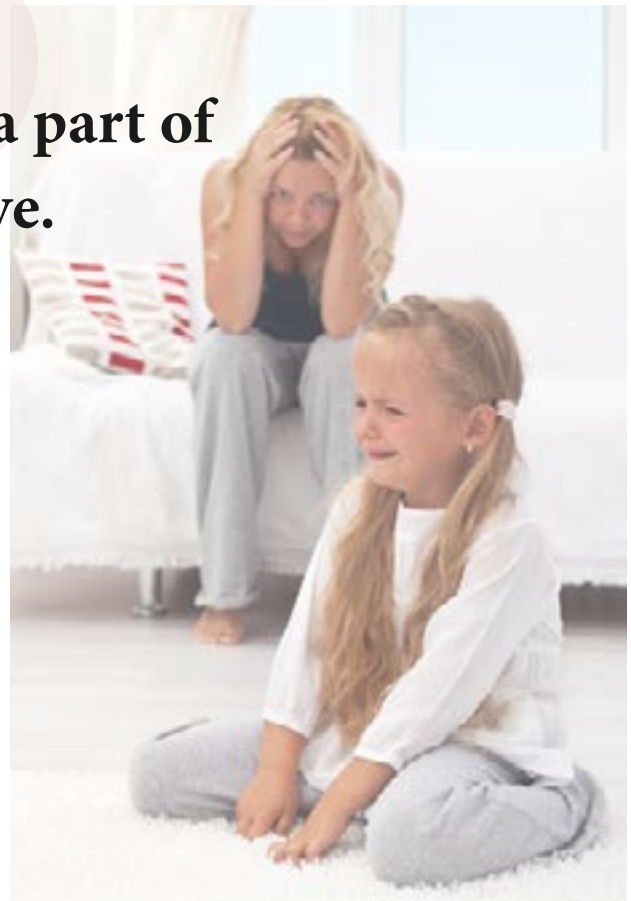
Take a deep breath and envision honoring your Inner Critic, as it has a crappy job to enforce harsh judgments and shame-based beliefs in attempt to protect you. How do you feel towards your Inner Critic right now? How are you feeling overall?

Your Inner Critic is simply a part of you that needs more self-love.

Amy Leigh Mercree

Remember, even though Inner Critic can feel like facing a demon, due to the excruciating shame it triggers, it is a childish, immature part of your mind. As you learn Self-Leadership, your ability to be in Wise Mind strengthens with neuroplasticity. Like building muscle, it takes exercise.

You will find Inner Critic is terrorizing at first, with its berating, shaming, and hating, but it stems from the toddler-like part of your mind, much like a toddler's temper tantrum.



Inner Critic needs you to Catch it, pay attention to it, be Assertive with it, not abandon nor succumb to it. It needs you take time to Talk with it and Create balance by listening to it, yet showing it the truth by rationally guiding it. And it needs you to Honor it with compassion, not shame it more. The proof will be in how you feel as you practice C.A.T.C.H.

The C.A.T.C.H. practice can provide a process for you to navigate everything from subtle comparisons and obsessions, to berating shame attacks and excruciating, self-hating, crisis-like complex-PTSD flashback.



Shame arises out of the need to be loved. The need to be loved is universal and it drives the whole train of shame. Yet what connects us more than anything else is our need to be loved.

Christopher Germer, PhD

C RITIC ATTACKS REATE BALANCE

Perfectionism

FEELS LIKE

I am a failure. I am not enough.
I am ugly. I am broken.

CLARITY

My perfectionism arose as an attempt to gain safety and support in my family. Perfectionism is maladaptive as it is a self-persecutory myth, offering a false sense of lovability that my rational mind knows is impossible so it triggers anxiety. Yet Perfectionist Inner Critic enforces perfectionism, grappling to control others' love and approval, on top of the shame. Triggers 'shame-anxiety looping'.

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- I allow myself to use perfection in small bursts by choice. Like when driving.
- I am able to turn 'perfectionism' off, much like I turn my car off.
- My anxiety is right about perfectionism being impossible. What is possible is trying my best and learning from mistakes.
- Mistakes do not make me a mistake.
- Every mishap is an opportunity to love myself (resolves the Inner Critic shame) even more, learn and do better next time.

Destroyer, Self-Hate, Self-Disgust and Toxic Shame

FEELS LIKE

I hate myself. I am the worst.
I am disgusting. I suck at life.

CLARITY

My hate and disgust are normal human, toddler-like emotions, however without Emotional Health Skills, a strong sense of "Self" and ability to separate my mind from emotion, so I can self-guide and 'parent' these toddler-like emotions, I can get stuck and enmeshed in their painful, overwhelming effect, shaming myself and spiraling into a hate-shame cycle.

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- I can hold space for these emotions if I can be assertive with Inner Critic with the Intent to Learn, observe and understand what I am mad at myself for.
- 'Self-parent' these 'Inner Child' emotions
- I remember that hate, disgust and shame are normal human emotions that have a lot of energy to them and have a lot to say.
- Even with access to my caring, inner parental self (Wise Mind), I can talk these big feelings through in counseling with support for more self-understanding.

All-or-Nothing Attacks

FEELS LIKE

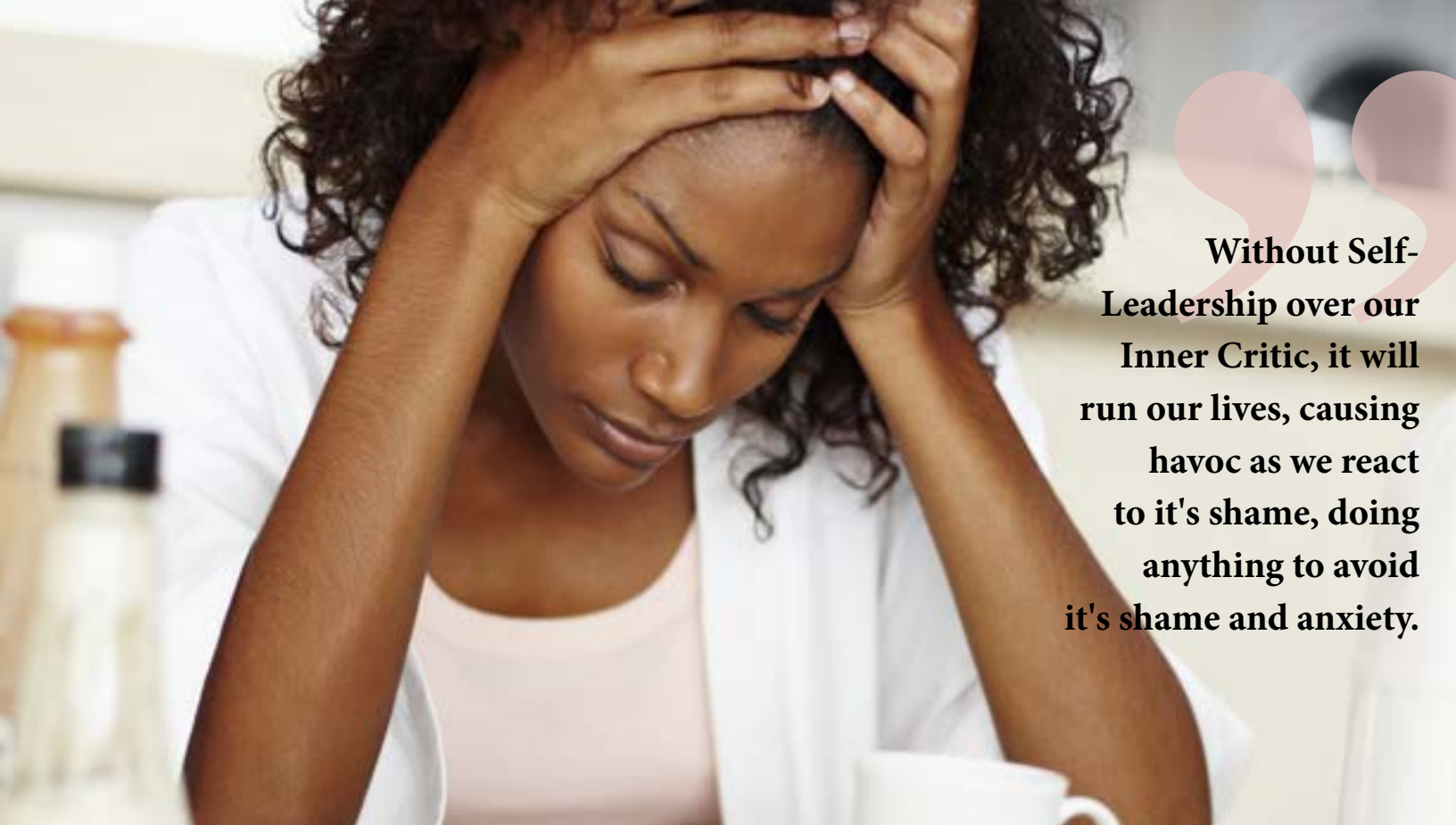
I always screw up. I am always sad.
I will never be loved. I never get it right.

CLARITY

This is my maladaptive way of grappling for control to feel calm, to rid of anxiety, at the expense of myself (the only real control we have). These mean false beliefs keep my anxiety at bay temporarily. However, my rational brain eventually catches on and tells me the truth, I really don't have control and this triggers anxiety. Without Wise Mind I loop into a tug of war between reality and false beliefs (Inner Critic), looping into anxiety and all-or-nothing attacks.

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- Statements that describe me as "always" or "never" this or that, are automatically false
- I am able to turn 'perfectionism' off, much like I turn my car off.
- Perfectionism is impossible. What is possible is trying my best and learning from mistakes. Mistakes do not make me a mistake.
- Every mishap is an opportunity to love myself even more and learn and do better next time.



Without Self-Leadership over our Inner Critic, it will run our lives, causing havoc as we react to it's shame, doing anything to avoid it's shame and anxiety.

Worrying/Obsessing/Looping/Over-Futurizing

FEELS LIKE

What if _____

I will feel calm later, tomorrow, tomorrow.
If I don't worry or obsess, I'll lose control.

CLARITY

This part of our mind convinces us to stay worried, obsessed or thinking about things and people, as it brings a false sense of safety. There is an innate fear that if we 'take our eye off the ball' and stop worrying about something, we are going to get hit by the ball. This part is also task oriented and forces you to stay busy, which can be good, but you need to be able to turn this off as well, otherwise you are in chronic stress.

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- My anxiety will want to repetitively examine details over and over, jump to negative conclusions, make assumptions, and even try to control or micromanage others through 'getting and protecting' behaviors like poking or passive aggression.
- I need to expect this part to show up, but I will identify it and balance it.
- Give yourself daily time to worry and even freak out using Conscious Anxiety Practices and planning. The #1 antidote to anxiety is to write it all down and then plan for the worst and best. I can do this for 15 mins a day, and then turn my worry/obsessing off.

Social/Performance Anxiety

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- I am becoming aware that 'social anxiety' is normal as we are wired to fear strangers since we literally do not know them. My nervous system alerts of 'stranger danger.'
- Performance anxiety is a form of social anxiety with perfectionism (see Perfectionism).
- Performance Anxiety may trigger procrastination, shame and Fight-Flight-Freeze-Fawn responses.
- I can learn to have self-compassion and allow myself find the balance of 'good enough.'

Guilt Tripping

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- Feeling guilty does not mean I am guilty. I refuse to make decisions from guilt.
- I need to take time to process through guilt and ascertain my genuine needs, limits and boundaries before saying 'yes' to anyone or anything.
- If I inadvertently hurt someone, I will clearly apologize. I will not apologize for things that are not directly my fault.
- Guilt is sometimes camouflaged fear of disappointing others. I need to prioritize my own needs and limits.

Negative Focus/Vigilance

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- I renounce over-noticing and dwelling on what might be wrong with me or life around me.
- I will not minimize my attributes.
- Right now, I notice, visualize and enumerate my accomplishments, talents and qualities, and the gifts life offers me, friends, nature, music, film, food, beauty, color, pets, etc.

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference" - Serenity Prayer

Devaluing Comparisons

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- I refuse to compare myself to others most perfect moments (like social media). I will not compare "my insides to their outsides".
- I will not judge myself for not being at peak performance all the time. In a society that pressure us into acting happy all the time, I will not get down on myself for feeling bad.

"I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself". - Jane Eyre

Drasticizing

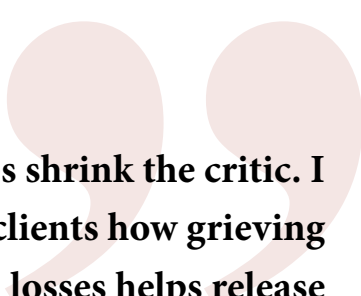
CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- When hypochondriacizing, I feel afraid but I am not in danger.
- I am not “in trouble” with my parents.
- I may feel the need to blow things out of proportion, which is okay as long as I discipline this by giving it 15 minutes max to freak-out, list all the things that could go wrong, scare myself with worst case scenarios, plan for as much prevention measures as possible and close the practice.
- I will go to the doctor for any and all health concerns.

Workaholism/Busyholism

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- I am a human being not a human doing.
- I will not choose to be perpetually productive.
- I am more productive in the long run, when I balance work with play and relaxation.
- I will provide myself with balanced care so I am not trying to perform at 100% all the time.
- I subscribe to the normalcy of vacillating along a continuum of efficiency, from stop, neutral, slow, and fast, highly productivity only when I choose it is needed to do so..



Grieving helps shrink the critic. I point out to clients how grieving their childhood losses helps release the painful feelings (especially fear, shame and depression) that fuel the assaults of the critic. I help the client notice how the critic's intensity typically ebbs dramatically following egosyntonic grieving. We also begin to notice the spontaneous self-compassion that can arise.

Pete Walker, MA

Defending and Explaining

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

- I will use CATCH to be Assertive with my Inner Critic, instead of JADE-ing (justify, argue, defend or explain) myself to Inner Critic (and to others criticism).
- I Assert Boundaries with my Inner Critic.
- I remember, I am not my Inner Critic. It is a part of my mind that has a job to do, which is to criticize and shame me. I need to stay in Wise Mind, empowered and strong and use the CATCH practice to continue building my Self-Leadership, Self-Compassion and Soothing System.

Should-ing

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

I will catch myself when I "should" on myself. I will understand who or where this "should" came from. I will choose if I want to subscribe to a "should" I will use the words "want to" or "I choose to." I will only use "should" when I am under legal, ethical or moral obligation.

Time Urgency

CREATE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

Unless I am in immediate, real danger, I do not need to rush. I will allow myself to be present, in my being, even when working or driving. I am learning to enjoy doing my daily activities at a relaxed pace.

Reflection Questions

How are you feeling and what are your thoughts on what you have learned about Inner Critic?

Which types of Inner Critics do you notice show up the most for you?

Do you feel ready to start trying the C.A.T.C.H. practice? If yes, what makes you feel ready? If no, what do you think you need to feel ready?

Learn More on Pete Walker's Website: <http://www.pete-walker.com/shrinkingInnerCritic.htm>