



How to Tame Your Inner Critic

Training your inner critic takes time, practice, and consistency, but it's important because when your inner critic is running the show, anxiety runs rampant. Often you will know the inner critic is around when you can't vision, reflect, or analyze effectively because you see everything from your inner critic's perspective – and most often this perspective is negative and hopeless. Everyone trains their inner critic a little differently, but here are some ideas to get you started.

1. Be really clear about when that inner critic shows up

This can be tricky because the inner critic has likely convinced you that their voice is the one true voice. Sometimes you'll know they are around if you start having nagging or racing thoughts. Or you may feel negative, like you can't cope, or very stuck. Notice if you have a physical reaction when your inner critic shows up. Does your stomach feel sick? Does your chest feel heavy? That's inner critic territory.

2. Acknowledge that the inner critic is here

Say hello. Tell them that you know they are here.

3. Fight back (if you can)

Say "thanks but no thanks inner critic. I heard what you said but I am choosing not to listen to you because you are a big liar" (you can insert whatever explicit remarks or hand gestures feel the most effective). You can do this in your head or even scream it out loud! Sometimes it helps to visualize or act out doing things to your inner critic, like having them shrink to nothing, blowing them away, slamming a door in their face, or locking them in a box.

It doesn't always feel possible to fight your inner critic. That's okay. They are tough, persistent creatures who like to show up when we are at our most vulnerable. Sometimes inner critics get smart and stop coming at you in a loud voice, and come at you from a softer, less noticeable voice that is close to reasonable. If your inner critic gets a hold of you and you can't shake them, just sit with them for a while. These times feel can feel pretty yucky. Name the emotions that come up without judging them. Remind yourself that you are not your inner critic and that the feeling will pass.

4. Be extra gentle with yourself

Sometimes inner critics emerge out of a place of protection. Try asking your inner critic what it wants or what it is trying to tell you. If you can find the 2% truth or something helpful from your inner critic, then you can create an inner ally to communicate the same message in a much more positive and uplifting way.