



Jonathan Estwick

BEFRIENDING YOUR INNER CRITIC



UNDERSTAND YOUR INNER CRITIC

Understand how the inner critic works. Find out where it comes from, what happens when the inner critic takes over and find out how to end criticism and live with motivation and compassion.

LEARN HOW TO APPLY THE 3S'S OF SELF-CARE

How to silence the critic, shift the energy, and soften with compassion.



RECEIVE BONUS SELF-CARE AND WELLNESS CONTENT

Inside you will find a printable checklist to help you monitor your well-being and symptoms, a 4th and bonus 'S' to support your self-care practice, and proven tips to change self-talk from negative to motivational.



Jonathan Estwick

Relational Trauma

FIND HEALING THROUGH
EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

INTRODUCTION



Hi my name is Jonathan. First of all, welcome. No matter what has brought you to this e-book, I hope you get what you need. From my experience as a psychotherapist and my Masters in Developmental Psychology, I have

devoted my professional life to supporting those who have experienced relational trauma.

Relational trauma is the result of single or repeated actions that bring traumatic symptoms to a victim in a relationship with another. These actions can range from varying degrees of abuse to neglect and domestic violence that occurred in childhood or adulthood.

Through an in-depth understanding of the impact of trauma to attachments as well as emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being, my work supports healing through the constructive properties of empathy and compassion.

These relational qualities repair the mental and emotional damage of trauma.

This is my free e-book to support the daily struggle that can come from relational trauma, and inner criticism. I hope it supports you as much as you need it to.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

- If you have internalized shame from past experiences that lead you to consistently think negatively of yourself or those around you.
- If you are overwhelmed from critical thoughts that has led to anxious, depressing, or isolating feelings.
- If you are wanting to incorporate greater introspection or self-care into your daily life.
- If you want to improve the relationship you have with yourself, and the relationships you have with others including children, parents, partners, work colleagues etc.
- If you would like to form a lifestyle without depression, overwhelming thoughts, and loneliness.
- If you would like to live without a fear of the future because of the feelings you felt in your past, this book is for you.



UNDERSTAND THE INNER CRITIC

- The needs of your inner child triggers the inner critic.
- Fueled by the needs of the inner child, the critic TAKES OVER.

WHAT DOES THE INNER CRITIC LOOK LIKE?

- Internal criticism looks like the criticism we think of ourselves as well as the external judgements, opinions, conditions and environments that match it.
- Eg. "I believe I am useless." is an internal thought. This could be compounded by a manager saying "you need further support in this area of work." Both are an example of an inner critic.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

- In childhood, the inner critic triggered a deep-rooted inner child belief.
- Past encounters with an authoritarian (including traumatic events) can develop a negative childhood belief that can manifest into adulthood.
- In adulthood, the inner critic then repeatedly reinforces the inner child's belief.

THE TAKEOVER



- Inner child beliefs + inner critic reinforcement = negative thoughts and behavior
- eg. "I am not enough + "You are unlovable." to keep others." = AGREE*
= COLLUDE*
= OVERWHELM*
= WITHDRAW*

AGREE

- When we agree with the inner critic and suppress these criticisms we experience feelings of shame, low self-worth and depression.

COLLUDE

- We can collude with the inner criticism and express these criticisms to ourselves and others. This shows up as a lack of compassion and a block to empathy.
- Eg. Having a history of being overweight and losing self-worth, to then lose weight but pass judgement on others with their own bodily issues.

OVERWHELM

- Overwhelm occurs when the inner critic takes over which can lead to negative behavior
- A build-up of negative criticism whether experienced internally or externally, can lead to reactive or attachment-based behavior.
- This behavior (fight/flight/freeze/fawn) indicates either an attempt to overcompensate for the criticism (eg. people-pleasing) or the belief in this criticism (eg. self-sabotaging).

WITHDRAW

- Withdrawing from relationships may be perceived as critical.
- Given that the root of this criticism is internal, separation can lead to isolation in order to avoid the experience of criticism.
- Self-withdrawal which includes choosing to lose self-care, greater personal technology use, and overworking occurs when we try to drown out the processing of these beliefs.

HOW DO WE DEFEAT THE INNER CRITIC?

- Trying to "defeat" the inner critic leads to the negative behavior we are trying to reduce. Perfectionism is a good example of trying to defeat the inner critic. This is an attempt to stop the inner critic from showing up.
- What we want to do is try to stop the inner critic from **TAKING OVER**. We do this by befriending the inner critic.
- Befriending the inner critic leads to forgiveness, acceptance, freedom and belonging.

BEFRIENDING THE INNER CRITIC: 3S'S OF SELF-CARE AFTER CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

SILENCE THE CRITIC

- Critical words can be motivating at times but too much of it can be degrading. This occurs especially during a takeover. The overall goal is to extract the motivation/support and reject the criticism, but reducing overwhelm or reactive impulses are required first to do this.
- I completely understand that in these moments the last thing a person wants to do is stay in their head when a takeover occurs but often it is about taking charge and establishing a sense of calm.
- Following this, we can extract what information about our past and present is triggering this takeover and then replace it with a supportive narrative.
- **Silencing the inner critic** healthily involves **breathwork, meditation, and affirmation.**



WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED OR TO PREVENT A PANIC ATTACK SIMPLE BREATHWORK EXERCISE

- Step into a different environment.
- Sit down, and put both feet on the floor.
- Place both hands on your stomach while you take long deep breaths in and count to 4 in your head.
- Take long deep breaths out and count to 5 in your head.
- Repeat continuously until the overwhelm settles down.
- This will slow down the heart rate, the ruminating thoughts, and negative impulses.



WHEN OVERWHELM OCCURS CONSISTENTLY: WEEKLY MEDITATION EXERCISE

- Befriending the inner critic requires understanding which means building a stronger relationship with the thoughts that exist. It means spending time safely understanding thought processing, the belief system, and taking charge of it.
- Find a guided meditation for at least 5 minutes that will allow you to safely stay in your head and calmly sit with what comes up. Do this daily or at least 3 times per week.
- Meditation builds the strength to receive thoughts, gently evaluate them, and then let them pass you by, allowing for clarity and choice over the thoughts that can be consuming.

*Get in touch with me if you need personal recommendations on effective meditations to suit your needs.

DEVELOP A POSITIVE LIFESTYLE AFFIRMATION

- Affirmations allow for empathy and empowerment to motivate you rather than criticism which can disempower or degrade you.
- Affirmations train your inner critic to use positive language when a trigger occurs.
- Eg. Through repeated affirmations "You are unlovable." can turn into "You are worthy of love and belonging.".
- To obtain affirmations use important quotes, relaxing and uplifting music throughout the day and write them down.
- The greater the repeated exposure to affirmations, the greater the reduction of negative self-talk, and the silencing of the inner critic.



SHIFT THE ENERGY



- A healthy lifestyle is the greatest prevention of TAKEOVER.
- Trauma is not just a prior experience but flashbacks, nightmares, overwhelm and panic attacks are symptoms of stuck energy.
- Carbs/sugar may feel soothing but does more damage in the long run.
- In addition to all other self-care measures, physical shifts of energy soothe traumatic symptoms and support greater resilience.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE



- Find an exercise that suits your lifestyle and choose one that you enjoy.
- Some could be gym, dancing, yoga, cycling, hiking, skipping and more...
- My suggestion is walking/jogging at a good pace.
- Do this at least 4 times a week for 30 mins.
- The most important thing is consistency.

Creativity



- IF physical exercise is not for you, find a creative outlet.
- Utilize quiet moments or an uninterrupted space to lean into your creativity.
- So creative outlets can be painting, drawing, adult coloring, sewing, singing and more...
- These engage the right side of the brain and support the regulation of overwhelming emotions.



PLAN A TIME TO BE A CHILD AGAIN

- Shift the energy gives permission to have child-like exuberance
- plan the activities that you used to enjoy when you were a child.
- Emotionally connecting to your child self has positive health benefits.
- Re-engaging in fun childhood activities can lead to positive feelings, reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, and increases serotonin.

WHEN THE CRITIC SPEAKS: SOFTEN WITH COMPASSION



WHEN YOUR MIND TELLS YOU "YOU SHOULD..." GIVE YOURSELF TIME

- Imagine time to be an investment. The more time you put into yourself, the more you grow from it.



- Give yourself time = compassion which can be applied in two ways.
- Firstly, allow time for mistakes, learning, and slow positive improvements. Self-development takes time. The amount of time it takes is not pre-determined and therefore allowing for time is the first compassionate step to take.
- Secondly, during a TAKEOVER the pressure to react grows. The last thing you may think of is to stop, relax and apply self-care steps. However, giving yourself time is the first thing to do. This is self-compassion.
- There is no conceivable reason not to give yourself time. Having responsibilities should not remove the time you give yourself.
- Believing you have no time is the absence of compassion and a symptom of TAKEOVER.
- Remember, your responsibilities will benefit from the time you give to yourself.

WHEN THE CRITIC SPEAKS

PRACTICE COMPASSIONATE LANGUAGE

- Simple exercise: Take a minute to notice your self-talk and see how often you use the following words and phrases... "should do", "need to", "awful", "stupid", "the worst".
- If you are anything like me, at least one of these is said regularly to motivate or describe what I do or don't do.
- When you notice these words, try for the next week to repeatedly change these words. Feel free to use the words or phrases below to help form a new way to speak to yourself.

TIPS

- Replace 'should do' with 'can do'.
- Replace 'need to' with 'choose to'.
- Identify 'failure' as 'learning moments'.
- Focus on re-engaging calm and proactive thinking rather than internal fight/flight/freeze responses.
- Take your time. You won't get it right every time.



WHEN SELF-CARE DISAPPEARS, OR YOUR WORLD DEMANDS MORE OF YOU: CHECK-IN



- In order to apply self-care we need to identify firstly how we feel. This requires repeated and consistent checking in with self.
- This can be done individually or through engagement with trusted friends, families, associates or professionals.
- Notice if you are working too hard or too little. Notice if you are using a lot more technology than usual.
- Notice if you are sleeping less, or isolating yourself from others a lot more.
- Notice how you might be talking to yourself or to others.
- Notice if you feel overwhelmed or in need of a break.
- Disconnecting is a symptom of stress, overwhelm and in some instances a response to a trigger from past trauma.

HOW TO CHECK-IN

- Manage the disconnect. If disconnecting involves technology or leaving triggering environments, allow for thirty minutes MAXIMUM to do this.
- In the time of disconnection use it to plan your next steps when the time finishes. Think of it like this: "I will return back to me and my environment but in order for me to do this safely I need _____"
- This could be to speak to someone, shift the energy or silence your critic.
- After the thirty minutes are finished, use one of these self-care tips to support you to return back to yourself and your environment.

CHECK-IN GUIDE

- Life can be challenging at the best of times and it is easy to get lost or caught up in the chaos.
- This is a check-in guide to help identify what you might be feeling and support you to take appropriate action when needed.

GREEN	YELLOW	RED
<p>"I am feeling OK."</p> <p>"I feel positive about things. "</p> <p>"I have put my well-being first."</p>	<p>"I don't have time to do anything, including looking after myself."</p> <p>"I have felt better."</p> <p>"I feel a bit anxious and worried about the things that are going on in my life."</p> <p>"I am starting to feel low."</p>	<p>"I am not OK."</p> <p>"I feel alone and don't want to speak to anyone about how I am feeling."</p> <p>"There is nothing positive about my life or who I am."</p> <p>"I am incredibly overwhelmed by everything."</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SHIFT THE ENERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SILENCE THE CRITIC• SHIFT THE ENERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SILENCING THE CRITIC• SHIFT THE ENERGY• SPEAK TO SOMEONE

- The Green column highlights a calm regulated state which is the state we want to be in for ourselves and others. Yellow is the experience of feeling dysregulated, and red requires the greatest need for self-care and attention.
- The last row shows the exercises to take to return you to the preceding color.
- Prevention is better than cure. For best results, do most of these exercises when you are feeling GREEN or YELLOW. They are most effective at these stages to return you or keep you in a 'green state'.
- Feel free to use the table below to complete your own check-in guide personal to you and your thoughts/feelings/behavior.

FEELING RED?

PRACTICE THIS AS A SELF-REGULATION EXERCISE

- It starts with deep breathing and feeling the bottom of your feet connecting with the floor. (If you are sitting, put your hands on a table and feel the surface on the palm of your hands.) While you are still breathing.
- Now I want you to try and mentally feel your 3rd toe on your left foot. Try to lift only this toe 10 times. When you do that, try the same with the 3rd toe on your right foot. BREATHE THROUGHOUT using the counting exercise described in Silencing the critic.
- Continue to do this until the overwhelm begins to reduce.
- THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO BRING YOU BACK TO YELLOW. Nothing is more important at this point.



PRINTABLE CHECK-IN GUIDE

GREEN	YELLOW	RED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SHIFT THE ENERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SILENCE THE CRITIC• SHIFT THE ENERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SILENCING THE CRITIC• SHIFT THE ENERGY• STAY PRESENT• SPEAK TO SOMEONE

BONUS 'S': SPEAK TO SOMEONE

- Talking to the right person is very important to reduce heightened feelings or negative emotions should a takeover occur.
- This can be a friend, a family member, a support group or a professional like myself.
- The importance of this person at this point is to listen and support your feelings especially when the inner critic is taking over.
- Being listened to and empathized with reduces the shaming and isolating component attached to the inner critic.
- Reduce the desire to receive 'fix it' advice as this desire comes from the building pressure to act on these feelings and enlarge them rather than settle them.
- Empathy and compassion produce longer-lasting benefits than quick advice given at the moment.
- If possible, gather in your mind a COMPASSION CIRCLE. This could be a number of people that make you feel better through talking or interacting with them. Lean on this circle in time of need.
- It can even help to let them know that they are part of your circle and what you need from them when you speak with them.

*I hope everything I have shared with you is useful to you. Please feel free to get in touch or use the other services available at Jonathanestwick.com. In the meantime, take care of yourself.

- Jonathan