



hunger
hope &
healing

Kindness in Self-talk

Many women over the decades have shared how tormenting and taunting their inner critical voice can be. They often refer to it as their inner critic. And, frequently, we assume that it's there to stay. There's also an assumption that this inner voice is somehow helpful or accurate or has something meaningful to offer. But, this is worth questioning!



Imagine your voice being broadcast outloud. Imagine it being the voice of a human who accompanies you throughout your day. It's a voice you have to listen to.

- How does it affect your mood?
- How does your body feel when this voice is being broadcast to you all day?
- How does it influence your commitment to yourself and your recovery?
- What are some of its favorite phrases? Are these taunting or critical?
- What do you say back to it?



This voice can often go on incessantly, like a radio broadcast that we are not able to turn off. However, it is possible to change the station!! Ask yourself:

- How would you like the inner voice in your head to sound?
 - Would it be warmer, slower, or more kind?
- How can you transform self-critical phrases into phrases of self-kindness (rather than robotic self-critical talk)?

Consider this:

- If this voice really had your best interest at heart, it would offer you empathy, clear direction, and non-punitive support for all of the bumps and triumphs in the day.
- This voice is far less easy to train when you are under the influence of your trigger foods, substances, and activities. For example, if you try on clothes and hate how you look and you damn yourself for it, keep in mind that trying on clothes is an activity that triggers your voices.





Focus on acknowledging yourself for the many things you are doing in any one day related to your self-care or your recovery. Such as:

- Anything that you do on your Body Dashboard (see the Body Dashboard Handout).
- Non-postponing a personal need (like hydrating, peeing, getting up from your desk, going for a walk, not holding your breath, not pushing off food until your blood sugar is crashing and you're "Hangry", etc).
- Pausing to check in with yourself.
- Reaching out to a recovery buddy.
- Getting on your yoga mat.

Rewrite

your inner critic's phrases!

For example:

- **“You’re so dumb.”**
 - “I’m making an effort. And, I’m on my own team.”
 - “I’ll make mistakes sometimes. It’s not a moral failing.”
 - “I’m smart enough and I am willing to keep learning.”
- **“What were you thinking?!!”**
 - “Stress took over and I made a reflexive choice. I probably needed [rest, connection, a time out, hydration] instead. I can choose that next time.”
 - “I must have been anxious or disconnected from myself (just enough to do that impulsive thing again). I’m learning not to punish myself for this, but rather, to regain my connection with myself.”



- **“You’re not good enough.”**
 - “You’ve been telling me that for years. I realize now that it’s never been true. You don’t get to declare that over and over again. Besides which, it’s not helpful. You’re only saying it to be mean to me. And, you’re overlooking all of the ways in which I am enough and the ways in which I am making an effort to have a healthier relationship with food and my body and my life. So, you’re no longer welcome here in my head!”

Now try a few phrases of your own.

Sometimes it will be easier to write out what you want to say, freely, as in a journaling activity.

Any time that you can add perspective and consideration into the dialogue, you will be engaging your neo-cortex, your wiser mind. You'll also be "right-sizing" your limbic and reptilian brains (the emergency response brains).

Seeing yourself in the context of your life, your journey, and the present moment, will also bring your neo-cortex back online.

This is very important in regaining your **WHOLE BRAIN**, so that you're not under the constant siege of the bio-chemistry of false inadequacy (AKA that which the inner critic is broadcasting to you all the time).



Once you've journaled through the process, then explore how you can simplify your new perspectives and dialogue into short phrases that you can use as tools against the inner critic.

For example:

- "You're so dumb."
 - "I'm making an effort."
 - "I can do hard things."
- "What were you thinking?!!"
 - "I got stressed. I'll be more pro-active next time."
 - "I wasn't thinking. But, I am now. You can go away."
- "You're not good enough."
 - "That's not true."
 - "Stop taunting me."

Those are your phrases to “ward off” the inner critic, the shame monster. In the space this will create in your mind, you get to consider the next step:

Declaration!

A DECLARATION of SELF-KINDNESS:

Now, what would you prefer to be hearing in your head all day?

- “I see you.”
- “Thanks for making an effort.”
- “You can do this.”
- “You’re worth caring about and caring for.”
- “Every effort, small or large, matters.”
- “Your needs matter.”
- “You’re in process. Keep going.”
- “You don’t need to be perfect. You’re always evolving.”
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