

The Conflicted Self – Breaking the Cycle of Self-Blame

Many of us have an Inner Critic that blames, both self and others. Originally this critic might have had good intentions but eventually it becomes attacking and abusive. “The Conflicted Self” then becomes anxious or enraged and unreasonable with others. Relationships suffer and the person herself becomes depressed and withdrawn.



#1 The Inner Critic grabs, craps and criticizes. If left to run roughshod over one’s life and relationships, everything just gets worse (especially intimate relationships) and unhappiness runs rampant. The Inner Critic can be so abusive. It shovels crap – usually to himself but to others too. The words are always downward sloping.

The first step is to find out what The Inner Critic is saying in the exact words and the exact tone. It may be words like “you are just not worth it,” or “you will never succeed,” or “what a shit she is.” Familiar? These phrases mindlessly repeat.

What are the exact words you hear in your head – no approximates? The criticisms are usually short and mean. Stick them in the box below. It is the best place to dump them.

#2 The Defender when empowered, says, *“Your opinion of me is none of my business!”* I love that phrase. The Defender stops the judgements and shovels the crap. This takes time and shouldn’t be done “on the run.” This is hard work, but deep change requires it.

Start identifying, defining, defending and shoveling the crap. Once you know them, you’ve got them. These injunctions never change. They are blunt stupidities. Fight them.

Here is how you do it. Write down the blaming injunctions and then write down the response from The Defender. One blames, the other claims. Claims are like, “You have no right to treat yourself like shit,” or “I won’t try to please some parent I never had.” This will make sense as you go along.

The Inner Critic blames:	The Defender claims:
• e.g.: “You’re an idiot!”	• e.g.: “I am as bright as I need to be. Ask my kids.”
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

The thing to know about this is – there is a Defender that exists in your head. She fights the bullying. She holds up her hand and shouts, “No!” But a lot of folk don’t know this part of The Conflicted Self. This part of you has been underutilized and needs a workout.

#3 The Definer discerns the truth and tells it. It thinks. It is like The Defender, but it is not reactive to the Inner Critic. It is planful and looking outward. It is upward sloping. It is life affirming.

After the garbage has been dumped and shoveled, your right mind has to tell the truth and, thankfully, everyone has a truth-teller. This is what the brain does.

You might think of these truths as affirmations. They are upward sloping and they look for the best. They are future oriented. But they need to be true. This is not candy-floss or positive thinking. They are truth.

Here are some examples and you can add some of yours.

1. E.g.: “Sure, my life has been difficult. But I can handle it. I am doing okay.”
2. E.g.: “When I think about his criticisms, I can see his point. But it is not all of it. There is more than that.”
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

#4 is The Decider makes the decisions and plans for action. It listens to The Definer. For example, if you are overly self/other-critical and it circulates throughout your brain and life, then a behavioural change is necessary. You have figured out how to defend yourself and you have defined the truth. Implementation is the step that takes the wound out of the criticism. It is the part that changes The Inner Critic.

Here are a couple of recommended changes for your days. And you will have thoughts in addition to these.

- Every morning, read through this paper and make notes in sections 1, 2 and 3. Then decide one action that you will do differently as a result of 2 and 3.

- Do an evening “consolation / desolation” before going to bed. What the heck is that, you ask. It means to say out loud (or write down) what has consoled your soul (the good things) and what are the desolations (the challenges). You can read about this here: <https://tinyurl.com/yat779wt>