

INNER CRITIC



It's worth putting criticism into perspective, especially for your own good, writes TARNYA DAVIS.

WE ALL have a Jiminy cricket on our shoulder, "always letting our conscience be our guide". But we also have another voice, too. This voice sounds more like mean critical Lord Voldemort inhabited your mind.

This inner critic speaks to us when we make a mistake or when we are worried and expresses criticism, frustration or disapproval. It's the "you're hopeless, you have no willpower, you always mess things up, you're an imposter" voice. A critical inner voice tells us we aren't enough and can cause us to feel shame, deficiency, low self-esteem, and self-doubt. Self-criticism can help us to learn from failure, but when self-criticism stops us from thriving, the inner critic can be harmful.

The inner critic can begin in our childhood, with parental overcontrol or a lack of warmth, leading to an internalised self-criticism. When parents encourage children to attempt things for themselves, and allow them to make mistakes, children are more likely to develop self-confidence and grow up with a sense of security about their choices.

It also is culturally normal to believe that criticism will motivate behaviour, but over time, critical comments internalise and become our "inner critic," the persistent negative self-talk that keeps us stuck (the opposite of what is intended).

Taming your inner critic can help you to cultivate positive self esteem, improve your relationships with yourself and others, foster positive emotions, and acknowledge your strengths, not just your vulnerabilities. It can help you be your biggest supporter, not your bully, harness your innate courage and confidence, and live a meaningful life, with inner peace and clarity.