

# Developing Awareness of Self-Talk Negative Self-Talk

## Triggers

### **1. Self-Limiting.**

What do you hear your inner critic say that sounds like an excuse? Why does it say you can't do something? What does it say when it is shutting down possibilities?

### **2. Assumptions.**

What does your inner critic tend to assume? When does it tend to think it can read people's minds? What does it tend to assume other people will think about you? What stories does it tell you that probably aren't even true?

### **3. Re-runs.**

What repetitive, automatic thoughts have you been thinking for a long time? What memories do you tend to replay in your mind repeatedly? What stories from your past or about yourself do you tend to talk about? What phrases do you repeatedly say to yourself or others (especially when you're judging yourself)?

*For example: "I'm always tired," "I'm selfish" "no one appreciates me" or "no one knows what I go through."*

### **4. Others' Thoughts.**

Who's voice do you regularly hear in your head? What do they say? What do you tell yourself you "should" do?

Do you believe that you "should" do this?

*(Hint, if you're feeling a sense of guilt, it's probably not your own, original, belief.)*

## What's Your Inner Critic's Personality

**The worrier:** Points out everything that can go wrong. Stirs up emotions of anxiety and fear by imagining disasters, expecting the worst, and overestimating the odds of something bad happening. It tends to say, "What if"?

**The critic:** Constantly judges and evaluates your behavior and points out your flaws. Jumps on any mistake you make and reminds you of past failures. Compares you to others and assumes they will judge you. It even minimizes your accomplishments! It tends to say, "You're an idiot."

**The victim:** It tells you you're hopeless, not making progress, or it's too hard. It tells you something is wrong with you, you are incapable, unworthy. You're not smart enough. There are too many obstacles in your way. It's not your fault. It tends to say, "I can't."

**The perfectionist:** It pushes you to do better, but even when you do better, you still feel like you're not good enough. There is always more you should be doing. Mistakes and setbacks must be avoided or quickly moved past. It pushes you to seek external validation, achievement, and status. Acceptance by others is of the utmost importance. It probably stops you from taking action because you're afraid to fail. Tends to say, "I need to do better" or "I'm not good enough".

**NOW, give this inner critic a name.** (I used to call mine Ed when I struggled with my eating disorder, so my inner critic is still Ed, sometimes Edward!)

### Take Your Power Back!

Now that you know what to look out for so you can notice your inner critic in action, go out into the world and practice observing it.

