

WBECS 2019

HELPING CLIENTS QUIET THEIR INNER CRITICS

WORLD BUSINESS AND EXECUTIVE COACH SUMMIT

Helping Clients Quiet Their Inner Critics

- Everyone grapples with the inner critic, but it shows up in different domains for different people – some may struggle with it more in the arena of work, others with body image, others with parenting, others in their creative life, and so on.
- There are 11 common (though not universal) qualities of the inner critic voice that can help us recognize the critic when it speaks up.
- We often confuse the critic with realistic thinking, but we can differentiate them through their different “tones” and way of approaching problems.
- When someone has worked or studied in environments where critical thinking is the dominant mode of working / processing information etc., she has often inadvertently strengthened the voice of her inner critic.
- The inner critic is an expression of our safety instinct – the part of us that wants to avoid any potential emotional risk or harm. However, this part of us tends to mislead us, because it is only concerned with avoiding emotional discomfort; it has no interest in our fulfillment, joy, or self-actualization.
- For that reason, our inner critics sometimes speak up most loudly and most vocally when we are considering (or taking) playing bigger steps that bring new levels of exposure, visibility, praise, potential criticism, etc. Sometimes an inner critic flareup is a sign of being on the right path!
- The inner critic may be informed and exacerbated by outer critics in our lives, but it is not “caused” by them – the inner critic arises in us even without the presence of critical others in our lives.

- We are not trying to get rid of the critic or graduate from having one – because we are all hardwired to have one! And self-doubt will continue showing up as we step into playing bigger. The goal is to learn how to hear the inner critic voice and not take direction from it.
- We need to shift our future, idealized vision of ourselves from “confident rockstar” to “wracked by self-doubt rockstar” who is moving forward anyway.

Working with Clients

Two ways to do this: proactive exercise/process, or organically when it arises.

Part of your job as coach is to recognize the IC voice when it shows up. You might pick that up from a client’s words, tone, body language.

WHAT NOT TO DO IN RESPONSE TO A CLIENT’S CRITIC (THE THREE A’S!):

- Arguing
- Affirmations
- Anger

INNER CRITIC TOOLS / PRACTICES

1. Label and notice.
2. Separate the “I” from the inner critic.
3. Create a character that personifies your inner critic.
4. Compassionately see your inner critic’s motives.
5. Look for the humor.
6. Remove your critic from the scene.
7. Pantomime putting all your inner critic thoughts into a vessel (a cup, bowl, box).
8. Picture the voice receding into space.
9. Imagine you can simply turn down the volume on the critic’s voice.

COMMON THINGS YOU’LL HEAR IN WORKING WITH THE CRITIC

That’s not the IC, that’s me!

- Help the client to separate out critic voice or reassure them that although the critic voice may have “taken over,” it is not “just who they are.”
- A more abstract or outlandish character may be particularly helpful here, or using an animal that represents the critic, rather than a person.

Multiple inner critic characters arising – that’s okay

Critic as family member or current colleague

- Normalize
- Help them to create a different character

Some may feel IC has been motivating

- Help them look at: what does the IC motivate them to do? Do they want to keep doing those things? If so, are there other, less fear-based, less stressful ways to be motivated to do those things? And what things do they not do when motivated by the inner critic?

This is making it worse!

- Yes, sometimes. But that's temporary.

Do both women and men have inner critics?

- Yes, but women and men have different kinds of social reinforcement for listening to versus overcoming self-doubt.
- Women tend to have self-doubt more in domains associated with masculinity in our culture – technical, financial, negotiation, leadership.

For more resources, check out the Playing Big book and the Playing Big Facilitators Training program.

If this content is valuable to you, be sure not to miss Tara in her live online coach session at **WBECs** in June, 2019. The **WBECs** Pre-Summit is a month-long, free learning experience taught by carefully hand-selected speakers covering the most important topics of 2019 in a variety of coaching disciplines.

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