

## DITCH YOUR INNER CRITIC

### Five Practical Ways to Stop Beating Yourself Up So your Inner Superstar is Free to Shine

*By Amy Ahlers, Certified Life Coach & Author*

“If only I were thin enough, rich enough, better-looking...THEN I could stop being so hard on myself.” Have you ever had that thought? If only your circumstances were different you could then magically shift your internal dialogue into an empowering, nurturing, loving one, right? After more than a decade of coaching people from every walk of life, I finally got it: we are hard on ourselves *despite* our external circumstances.

We beat ourselves up for both the big things and for the tiniest imperfections. And all this punishment isn't helping us become more successful or to feel more fulfilled or even to get more done.

And who can blame us for being so hard on ourselves? Women have a lot on their plates: careers, romance, kids, health . . . the list goes on and on. We're supposed to bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan, have incredible sex with our partners (never letting him forget he's a man — that is, assuming he is a man), get the laundry and housework done, have healthy, accomplished kids, and a tight butt and perky boobs to boot. And it's no easier for men. The demands of modern life make us feel like we're supposed to enjoy being pulled in a million directions at the same time. And that we're supposed to be as flexible as Gumby on muscle relaxers. But we're only human.

What would happen if we gave ourselves a break?

First, it is vital that you identify the critical, catty, judgmental voice in your head as your very own Inner Critic. And I've got news for you: Your Inner Critic is a Big Fat Liar! She/he tells you Big Fat Lies to try to maintain the status quo and keep you in your comfort zones - even if your comfort zones aren't all that comfortable.

If you want to take control of your happiness, it's time to take Your Inner Critic out of the driver's seat.

Try the five tips below to ditch Your Inner Critic:

**Tip One:** Identify Your Inner Critic's Top 10 List of places, situations, and environments where she/he likes to show up and criticize. Is it at work? Social events? In bed? Whenever you look in the mirror? Once you know what circumstances are likely to trigger Your Inner Critic, you can be better prepared to deal with that voice.

**Tip Two:** Draw, doodle or sketch a picture of Your Inner Critic. Is he pudgy with big glasses? Perfectly pressed in pink? A slob with a cigarette in one hand and a martini in the other? Don't worry if you think you can't draw. No one will ever see this but you, so go for it! Having a mental image of the voice that tortures you – particularly a funny image – can instantly take away some of Your Inner Critic's power.

**Tip Three:** Get to know Your Inner Critic on a deeper level. Notice what makes him louder, and notice what diminishes her power. What happens if you just yell “Shut up!”? What if you just look her calmly

in the eye and reassure her that everything is going to be all right? Maybe he needs a compliment every now and then? After all, Inner Critics need love too.

**Tip Four:** What are Your Inner Critic's favorite Big Fat Lies about you? What does he/she say to you over and over? Is it, "You're a Failure," "You're Unlovable," or "You're Not Enough?" Your Inner Critic will collect evidence to make the case that you're not good enough, even twisting things around when necessary. Your Inner Critic will do everything possible to back up those favorite punishing, disappointing, sad stories about you and your worth, so it's up to you to remember the good stuff about you, no matter how convincing she/he seems.

**Tip Five:** Do this powerfully simple three step process to see through Your Inner Critic's Big Fat Lies:

- *Step One:* Ask yourself, "What is my Inner Mean Girl/Inner Critic saying?" Give voice to the Big Fat Lies you are believing. Speak them – get them out of the darkness and into the light so they can be healed. Don't hold back here . . . rant! Let it out!
- *Step Two:* Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and ask yourself, "What does my Inner Wisdom know?" Sink into the land of your Inner Wisdom's Truth. This is the place that feels grounded. It feels like *home*. Really let the Truth wash all over you and disintegrate the Big Fat Lies. Ahhh . . . that feels better!
- *Step Three:* Lock in your Inner Wisdom's Truth by repeating it (aloud if possible) accompanied by a physical gesture that reinforces the message. My Inner Wisdom has me lightly touch my heart; I have one client who waves his hand as though he were testifying in church and another who touches her belly. This gesture becomes your touchstone, reminding you to step into Truth and feel better.

Shifting your focus to your Inner Wisdom will always bring you in line with your Truth and Compassion, and you will always feel better. As you practice this process more and more, you'll find your Inner Superstar coming to life.

**Here's the Truth: You are a Superstar.**

**And I know, because my Inner Wisdom told me so.**

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AMY AHLERS, the Wake-Up Call coach and cofounder of the Inner Mean Girl Reform School, is the author of ***Big Fat Lies Women Tell Themselves: Ditch Your Inner Critic and Wake Up Your Inner Superstar***. Visit her online at <http://www.wakeupcallcoaching.com/>

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