



Emotion and the Critical Inner Voice

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1. Imagine a time when you experienced a core maladaptive emotion.

(i.e. "I felt shame when my partner turned down my invitation to come with me on a trip for work.")

2. Try to remember what it felt like to be in that moment. Were there thoughts attached to these emotions? On the left side of your paper, list any "critical inner voices," destructive thoughts and beliefs that were in your mind when you were having that emotion?

(i.e. "I am so foolish to have put myself out there. Even my spouse doesn't want to be around me. What a loser. I'll never ask again.")

3. Draw a line down the center of the paper. On the right side, change these "voices" from the first person to the second person. "I" statements should become "you" statements.

(i.e. "You are so foolish to have put yourself out there. Even your spouse doesn't want to be around you. What a loser. You should never ask again.")

4. What emotions arise when you write down these critical thoughts? Do they feel familiar or bring up any memories or associations?

(i.e. "I felt the same shame when my parent would say "no" whenever I asked for their time.")

5. Respond to your critical voice attacks with a compassionate, realistic point of view.

(i.e. "There was nothing wrong with me then, and there's nothing wrong with me now for wanting something. I just wanted to feel cared for and like I mattered. It's not bad to want something.")

6. Notice if answering back to your critical inner voice shifted your emotion.