

HANDOUT

Class I Handout

Introduction to Journaling: Recording Your Critical Inner Voices.

* (You may wish to Xerox several copies of this handout to include in your journal)

On the left-hand side, record any critical thoughts toward yourself that you experience during the day. **Be sure to state these negative thoughts in the second person, "you,"** that is, as though someone were talking to you. It is helpful to devote 10 to 15 minutes at the end of your day to recalling the negative thoughts you experienced that day. Just let these thoughts flow. Don't censor yourself. Give full expression to your negative thoughts. Remember that the voice is irrational and the thoughts often contradict each other. After you have finished writing your critical thoughts on the left-hand side of the page, take some time to go back over them.

Next, on the right-hand side of the page, in relation to each attack, try to express a more friendly, compassionate and realistic view of yourself, your qualities, and your reactions. What would a close friend or an objective observer say or see about you and about the situation? Write a more friendly view of yourself on the right-hand side of the page. Make sure to state this compassionate point of view in the first person, with "I" statements. This is not meant to be an exercise where you buoy yourself up with self-affirmative statements, but rather where you look at yourself from an objective but compassionate point of view that comes from the real you. How do you really see yourself?

Throughout the week, continue to keep a record of the negative thoughts you experience each day, writing them on the left-hand side of Exercise 1.3, with a more compassionate view of yourself on the right-hand side, as described above.

