

WORKSHEET

THE 3R METHOD

"You have been criticizing yourself for years, and it hasn't worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens." — Louise Hay

The 3R method is a powerful technique for taming your inner critic and fostering your inner cheerleader. At its core, this method teaches you to Recognize, Respond to, and Replace your self-critical inner dialogue with a self-compassionate one.

Step 1: Recognize

Often, we are so used to our inner critic that we no longer notice its presence. It has almost become a part of us. That's why the first and most crucial step is to become more aware of your inner, self-critical voice. Consider questions like these and jot down your answers below.

Inner critic profile

- Where, when, and with whom does your inner critic usually show up?
- What exactly does it say? What is it most critical about?
- What's its tone of voice? Does it remind you of someone you know?

By learning to mindfully notice that our inner critic is present, we immediately gain some distance and stop being consumed by it.

Tip: Giving your inner critic a name (e.g., "Karen") can also be helpful since this creates some further distance between you and them. When Karen shows up, you can simply call her out and say: "Oh, there she is again, my dear Karen. What is it you're dissatisfied with today? Let me guess ...".

Step 2: Respond

Secondly, calm your inner critic by responding to it with compassion. Instead of beating yourself up for being so critical towards yourself (*hello downward spiral*), acknowledge the critical voice without judgment and respond to it with kindness.

Kristin Neff, a prominent self-compassion researcher, suggests something along the lines of *“Hello inner critic. Thanks for being so worried about me. I know you only want what’s best for me, but your harsh words are unhelpful and are causing me some unnecessary pain. Please stop.”*

Although this inner dialog might seem awkward at first, you’ll get used to it fast and will notice its positive effects soon.

What could you respond to your inner critic?

Step 3: Replace

The third and final step is to replace your critical self-talk with supportive, self-compassionate words from your inner cheerleader.

To find the right words, ask yourself questions like:

- *What would I say to my best friend if they were in my shoes right now?*
- *What would a very compassionate friend say to me in this situation?*
- *What do I need to hear right now?*

Kristin Neff’s research even suggests that gently stroking our arm or even “hugging” ourselves during our supportive self-talk enhances its positive effects because these practices have been shown to trigger the release of the “cuddle-hormone” Oxytocin.