

Week 2: The Mastery of Self Chapter 2: The Parasite and the Ally

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 2 of The Mastery of Self, Don Miguel Ruiz Jr. introduces two powerful inner forces: the Parasite and the Ally. These are not literal entities but symbolic representations of the voices in our minds. The Parasite is the internal critic that thrives on fear, shame, and judgment. It was born out of domestication - the process of being conditioned to follow rules and expectations as children. Every time we self-punish or belittle ourselves, the Parasite grows stronger.

The Ally, on the other hand, is the voice of love, compassion, and truth. It is our authentic self reminding us of our worth. While the Parasite seeks control through punishment, the Ally offers freedom through awareness and forgiveness.

Ruiz emphasizes that the Parasite cannot be destroyed by violence; it weakens when we stop feeding it with self-judgment and fear. Every time we choose kindness over criticism, we strengthen the Ally. Self-mastery is not about perfection its about reclaiming our freedom from the voices that were never truly ours.

Reflection Questions

1. How does your inner Parasite typically speak to you? What phrases or criticisms show up most often?
2. Where do you think this inner critic learned its rules about what is 'good enough'?
3. When was the last time you heard your Ally's voice? What did it say?
4. What situations trigger your Parasite the most relationships, work, self-image?
5. How might your life change if you started listening to your Ally more than your Parasite?

Journal Prompts

Write a dialogue between your Parasite and your Ally. What does each voice say?

Complete this sentence: 'When I believe the Parasites voice, I feel _____. When I listen to my Ally, I feel _____.'

Describe a time when self-judgment held you back and imagine how your Ally would have handled it differently.

If your Ally had one message for you today, what would it be?

How can you practice starving the Parasite this week? List three specific actions.