

Challenging the Thoughts of the Inner Critic

The Inner critic can be a healthy emotion at times, forcing us to focus in on our emotional problems and then work hard to challenge them. A lot of the time, inner critics grow out of control, digging our self-confidence a deeper hole. It cripples our ability to like who we are and make a change on our perceptions. When this happens, irrational thoughts play a role.

We will practice catching our irrational thoughts, and replacing them with rational alternatives. With enough practice, this will become a natural process that can help you manage your inner critic.

Describe a common situation that triggers your inner critic: example: “delivering a presentation” or “driving in rush hour traffic”

The Inner critic encourages our self-esteem to be unchangeable, encouraging us to see the negative in our capabilities and imagining the potential consequences as worse than they really are. Sometimes, just taking a moment to think about these facts can help us recognise our irrational thoughts.

Imagine you are faced with the inner critic situation from above. Describe the...

Worst outcome:

Best outcome:

Likely outcome:

Imagine the worst outcome comes true. Would it still matter...

1 week from now:

1 month from now:

1 year from now:

Usually, the inner critic thoughts focus on the worst possible outcomes for yourself, even when they aren't likely. For example, a person whose inner critic is fully engaged when giving a presentation, might think “I'm going to forget everything and embarrass myself, I'm not able to do this, it's going to go wrong and I'm not going to be able to live this down!”

As an outside observer, we know that an alternate, more rational thought might be “my presentation might not run perfectly, but if I do mess up, everyone will forget about it soon enough.”

Using your own “worst outcome” and “likely outcome” from above, describe your...

Irrational thought:

Rational thought: