



TRUE NORTH
COUNSELING & WELLNESS

A KINDER RELATIONSHIP
WITH YOURSELF IS POSSIBLE.



Getting to Know Your Inner Critic

A gentle IFS-inspired exercise for
understanding the voice that
judges, pushes, and criticizes.

*What if the critical
voice isn't the enemy,
but a part that's trying
to help in its own way?*

Every part has
a positive intention,
even when its methods
are painful.



CURIOSITY
CREATES SPACE.
AND IN THAT SPACE,
HEALING BECOMES
POSSIBLE.



1. Before You Begin

Think of a recent moment when you noticed yourself being critical of yourself. Choose something relatively manageable rather than something intensely painful.

It might be a situation where you made a mistake, procrastinated, felt awkward, didn't accomplish what you intended, or simply noticed the familiar critical voice show up again.

*Approach with
curiosity, not
judgment.*



What situation or experience would you like to explore?



2. Listen for the Critic

Notice what the critical voice actually says. Don't correct it yet. Don't try to make it kinder. Just listen.

What does your Inner Critic say?

How would you describe its tone?
Harsh? Disappointed? Anxious?
Sarcastic? Demanding?

Awareness is the first step toward understanding.



3. Notice How You Feel Toward It

Now shift your attention away from what the critic is saying and toward how you feel about the critic itself. Maybe you hate it. Maybe you're exhausted by it. Maybe you're ashamed that you have it. Maybe part of you wants to yell, "Would you please just leave me alone?"

How do you feel toward your Inner Critic?

There may be other parts of you here, too. See if those parts can give you a little room to become curious about the critic.



4. Let Yourself Become Curious

If you can find even a little curiosity, turn toward the critic and ask:

What are you trying to accomplish by talking to me this way?

Then wait. Try not to answer for it. The response may come as words, an image, a memory, a feeling — or simply a knowing.

What do you notice or imagine your critic might be trying to accomplish?

Curiosity softens what fear keeps tight.

5. Ask What It's Afraid Would Happen

Now try another question: What are you afraid would happen if you stopped criticizing me? This is often where things get interesting. Your critic may believe it needs to keep you safe from:

- Becoming lazy
- Making mistakes
- Embarrassing yourself
- People not liking you
- Failing
- Letting people down
- Being someone nobody respects
- Getting hurt
- Disappointing others
- Being unprepared
- Losing control
- Something else

What is your Inner Critic afraid would happen?

*Understanding
its fears can help
you see it in a new
light — not as an
enemy, but as a part
trying to protect you.*



6. Ask Where It Learned Its Job

If it feels comfortable, you might gently wonder:

How long have you been doing this? or Where did you learn that I needed this?

Don't search through your history. Let whatever comes, come.

What do you notice about where your critic may have learned its job?
