

Self Talk & Confidence

Whether you call it your inner critic, gremlin, saboteur or monkey-mind, we all have that negative voice inside our head. It's seemingly trying to protect us from getting hurt or failure, with a positive intention hidden underneath its comments. And at one time, it may have actually served a useful purpose. But today, it's really just holding you back from greatness and preventing you from moving forward in your life. It's the voice of not enough's – not smart enough, not pretty enough and just plain not good enough. The saboteur is particularly known for showing up when we're on the verge of major changes and looks a lot like fear and self-doubt. Some of the excuses it makes include "I'm tired", "I'm too busy" and "I'm not ready".

So, you're a grown-up now and you're an intelligent person. You wouldn't tolerate verbal abuse and judgement from your friends or families, right? Stop tolerating it from yourself.

Easier said than done, yes. But here are some tips to get you primed:

- Expect and accept it. Your inner-critic is actually here to stay and not going anywhere. The sooner you learn this lesson the better. Treat it as a buddy or familiar face always at your side and then proceed to simply greet it when it shows up and politely ignore it!
- Some experts say that emotional patterns are ingrained in our gray matter as neurochemical memories. They will be triggered again and again under similar circumstances, so again it is a choice to just accept the monkey-mind and then defuse from and step over such feelings in service of self-growth and change.
- Your mind is your brain in action. It is your thoughts and feelings, making up your story, but not actually you. With this realization, you may be able to separate from it more easily.
- The brain can change the mind and the mind can change the brain. There's a popular saying in neuroscience that what fires together wires together. What this means is that the more often you think a certain way, the more that route becomes the default/strongest pathway in your brain. The converse is true too.

How to Separate

Creating mental distance from negative thoughts is the key to separating from/neutralizing them. This is how you can see them for what they are – just words with little or no effect.

Try these easy tricks: (taken from Russ Harris' The Confidence Gap)

- Simply notice your thoughts instead of judging them as good or bad;
- View another person saying the thought;
- Sing it or say it in a silly voice;
- Imagine it typed across a computer screen;
- Imagine hearing it as a radio broadcast;
- Visualize it as graffiti on a building, a caption on a greeting card or movie credits on the big screen.