

Who Is The Inner Critic?

 by: Skye Thomas The inner critic is that voice inside your head that tells you that you aren't good enough, smart enough, talented enough, pretty enough, or strong enough. It nags and natters at you to the point that your self confidence and sense of bravery is destroyed. You are convinced that the voice is correct and that you really don't have what it takes to live out your wildest dreams. As time goes on, you quit setting meaningful goals. You become resigned to a life of mediocrity and dullness. The inner critic typically begins during childhood. Unfortunately most of us have had parents, siblings, teachers, friends, and enemies tell us that we aren't good enough. They laughed in your face when you told them your childhood dreams. It's not always said directly to our face. Sometimes it's a subtle undercurrent. Maybe you lived in the shadow of a perfect older brother and your folks forgot to cheer on your successes too. Maybe your folks did everything for you as if you weren't capable of doing anything for yourself. Maybe you lived under the rule of a perfectionist, so everything you did was critiqued with a cold critical eye and never quite cut the mustard. However it starts, the inner critic gathers proof that it is doing the right thing by protecting you from making foolish leaps of faith. It will find proof of your lack and inability to shine. Every time you give up and quit, the inner critic files that away in it's memory as proof yet again of your smallness. Years and years of layers of proof and validation coupled with the lack of a strong support system of cheerleaders strengthens the inner critic until it overpowers your own sense of drive and purpose. Your fears now rule your life. Critics are not necessarily bad. They analyze and report back the results of their critique. The inner critic believes that he is protecting you. It's his job to keep you from doing harmful or foolish things. In the caveman days, he would have told you that you couldn't outrun the lion so you'd best leave it alone. He would have told you not to try jumping off of that cliff because you don't have wings like a bird so you're not going to be able to fly. The inner critic is supposed to analyze your talents, traits, and abilities and then determine whether or not you've got what it takes to accomplish whatever whim you're entertaining. At an enlightened balanced level he keeps you safe and out of trouble. In overdrive, he immobilizes you and keeps you from doing much of anything interesting and adventurous. Look at the most common phobia in America - public speaking. Now seriously, this is feared more than dying! How can that be? What is it we're afraid of? People will laugh at us? People will think we're stupid? People will be so bored that they'll fall asleep and snore through the speech? We'll forget what we were going to say and just stand there with a blank look on our face? To stand up and speak one's mind is the ultimate test of self confidence. Do you really truly believe in yourself, your knowledge of the subject matter, your ability to form words and sentences that make sense to the audience? I can relate completely to this fear, but what I have to do is look realistically at myself from a third party objective viewpoint. I hear my own inner critic worrying that I'm going to make a fool of myself on stage because I'll forget what I'm going to say. The truth is, I have a gift of gab. I'm a talkaholic. I have no historical evidence of forgetting what I was going to say. Quite the contrary, I typically add so much more than I had originally planned on saying. If I'm honest in my evaluation of myself then I'd realize that I have so much information, opinions, and stories that even if I do forget what I was going to say, I could 'wing it.' Everything I do comes back to trying to teach people how to be happy. I'll find my way back to that goal even if I ever did forget. So, in a logical analysis, I would have to say that it's an invalid fear. There's no reason at all to listen to my own inner critic when it's nagging at me not to get up on stage to speak. For me, there is no real danger involved. It would be a shame if I let an invalid fear stop me from doing what I love most, reaching out and helping people to make positive changes in themselves. You may decide that your inner critic is telling the truth, you really aren't capable of doing what you've set out to do. You want to own a restaurant but you're afraid of failing. Upon evaluation you come to realize that you don't know anything about running a business or even cooking for that matter. Okay great, so get lessons. Educate yourself, make solving the fears your first steps. Just because you don't have all of the tools today doesn't mean that you're never ever going to be able to succeed. Your inner critic makes an evaluation about you based on mental programs and beliefs that has been fed into it over the course of your life. If you have a history of support and success, then your inner critic is probably balanced and logical. If you have a history of being ridiculed and of failure, then your inner critic is probably doing its best to save you from any further pain. You are so much more than your inner critic's opinion of you. You are forever capable of growing, learning, training, expanding, and contributing your unique beautiful self. Don't let your inner critic keep you from giving your gift to the world. Adapted from Beyond the Inner Critic, copyright 1999, Skye Thomas, Tomorrow's Edge

About the Author

Skye Thomas is the CEO of Tomorrow's Edge, an Internet leader in inspiring leaps of faith. She became a writer in 1999 after twenty years of studying spirituality, metaphysics, astrology, personal growth, motivation, and parenting. Her books and articles have inspired people of all ages and faiths to recommit themselves to the pursuit of happiness. After years of high heels and business clothes, she is currently enjoying working from home in her pajamas. To read more of her articles, sign up to receive her free weekly newsletter, and get free previews of her books go to

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