

Copyright © 2016 by Andrea Owen of Your Kick-Ass Life. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author.

This e-book (and audio) is not intended as a substitute for the medical advice of physicians or mental health professionals. The reader should regularly consult a licensed medical professional in matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.



Pssst! Did you know I wrote a new book and the ENTIRE first chapter is on this topic? Yep, all about the inner-critic. How To Stop Feeling Like Shit is available now, wherever books are sold. You can order it here.

You've opened up this e-book because either a) You have no idea what an inner-critic is but you're curious or b) you know what it is and you're ready to finally tackle this beast (there's actually a third reason, maybe you're a life coach yourself and wondering what I write about on this topic. If you don't know already I help new coaches. You're welcome).

If you fall into category A or B (or even C) here's your crash course in all things inner-critic...

YOUR INNER-CRITIC IS THAT VOICE IN YOUR HEAD THAT TELLS YOU THAT YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH, PRETTY ENOUGH, THIN ENOUGH, SMART ENOUGH, FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ENOUGH.

We all have one. I don't care how much personal development work you've done or you'll ever do, you'll always have it. The trick is learning to manage it.

Your inner-critic can vary. Sometimes it might simply be disempowering, telling you that the big thing you really want to do is too hard, too expensive, you're too old—in other words, it fuels your excuses. Or, it can be a downright nasty bully and tell you that you're fat, stupid, not worthy of love, success, or anything else you truly desire. Also, once we can battle through those voices and do whatever it is that our inner-critics tell us we can't do, we hear this voice: "Who do you think you are?" In other words, sometimes our inner-critics are total and complete assholes to us.

But, there's a reason. They're not just assholes for fun. This is actually a part of you that's scared. A part of you that wants to fly under the radar, wants to play small and wants not to take risks in order for us to avoid failure, criticism, judgment, shame, and any other hard emotion known to humans. Because no one likes to feel those things. But, when we let our inner-critic rule our lives, guess what we miss out on?

EVERYTHING.

We miss out on love, connection, joy, success, happiness; we miss out on LIFE. And please for the love of Jesus doing double dutch, don't let this happen.

The bulk of my work comes down to this. Helping you see that you are SO good enough to do and be and have whatever you want. And I've simplified the long process of the work I do into three steps, but I have to be honest: please don't think this is the end-all be-all answer to your inner-critic woes. This is just a start! So, here we go, onto the steps:

STEP 1: GET TO KNOW YOUR INNER-CRITIC INTIMATELY.

If you've taken the free 7-Day Challenge or my Gremlin Course, you know this is always step 1. There is never, ever a different step 1. If you're going to change the way you speak to yourself, you need to open your eyes (and ears and mind) and really see what's happening. And I'll be honest, this step isn't super fun.

Your first assignment is to answer the following questions:

In what areas in your life are you the hardest on yourself? (Relationships, body/appearance, work, parenting, the past, the future).

What does your inner-critic specifically say to you?

So, why in the world do I want to torture you and make you purge out all the mean things your inner-critic says to you? Because you can't clean things up if you can't see where they're messy. Awareness is half the battle here; that's why I want you and your inner-critic to get to know each other really well.

It's like a messy kitchen. If you keep the lights off, how will you clean it up? You won't know if the dishes are clean, you won't know where to sweep the floor, won't know where to put things away, even if you could find them to put them away. Turn the lights on and everything is in front of you. Is cleaning a kitchen super fun? Not for most. And this step in inner-critic work isn't fun for a lot of people, but it's ESSENTIAL if you want to learn how to manage it and learn a new way of being. So, do the exercise. I'll wait.

STEP 2: UNCOVER THE HIDDEN BELIEFS INSIDE YOUR INNER SHIT-TALKER

So now you know what your inner-critic says to you. Now I want you to take a look at these statements and pull out the beliefs there. What you might have in there is that your inner-critic tells talks to you about how much debt you have. Well, your debt might be a fact. But, what does your IC make up about you and that debt? In other words, what does your IC make it mean about you that you have debt? That you're an idiot for getting in over your head? That you'll never find a partner with all that debt? That you're destined for financial disaster?

Another example is when your IC compares you to other women. Maybe you think:

I'll never be as successful as her.

Her Facebook photos are amazing. Working out, great figure, happy husband, and kids. While my life continues to suck.

Jane got promoted. I'll probably still be making this crap salary ten years from now.

Or just an all-around feeling that other women are happier than you and really have their shit together when you're struggling at life. Sound familiar?

Again, what are the things that you can pull out of that that you have come to believe about yourself?

"I'll never be as successful as her" might have a belief that says: "I'm not good enough or smart enough to have success." Or perhaps, "I'm not deserving of success."



Really what I see over and over again is the underlying feeling and belief of NOT GOOD ENOUGH. (I've been doing this long enough where I can just fast-forward and tell you that). It's common, you're not alone, and the best part...there is hope.

STEP 3: CHALLENGE THOSE BELIEFS

I will never in a million years ask you—after doing those two exercises—to "think happy thoughts!" or "just change your beliefs, it's easy-peasy". Oh, hell no. First of all, no one walks around always thinking happy thoughts. And changing your negative beliefs is possible, with lots of therapy, inner-work, and developing a lifelong practice with it. (There's the bomb I just dropped-yep, this is a lifelong practice, ladies).

But, what I will ask you to do and what you absolutely are capable of doing, is challenging those beliefs.

Because the truth is this: these beliefs are not based on fact. They were created somewhere along the way. The reality of your life is based on what you intensely believe to be true about yourself. If you truly believe you are not good enough, most of your feelings will feel like shit and most of your behaviors will create evidence of this. For instance, if you walk into a difficult conversation with a partner or friend and you feel that you're not good enough as a human, most likely if the conversation even goes slightly awry, you'll start people pleasing, (ie bending and hustling to give them what they want in order to not make it more uncomfortable/make them like you/keep the peace), you might start lashing out (ie "fighting fire with fire"), you might start trying to control or manipulate the conversation to get what you want, or you may NEVER have the conversation in the first place (but continue to complain about it to anyone that will listen) and instead isolate and feel angry and resentful.

Did I just describe a typical day for you? We've all done these things to some extent. I used to be a master at all of these. And what all these behaviors have in common is that THEY FEEL LIKE SHIT when we're engaging in them. It doesn't feel good to people-please. It doesn't feel good to manipulate. It doesn't feel good to lash out, and it certainly doesn't feel good to isolate and not talk about what's bothering us.

But, why do we do it?

We do it because we're afraid of showing up and being seen in all of our messiness/human-ness, and we don't know how to be courageous and choose different behaviors. It's not your fault if you've never learned.

I've digressed here, but ladies, a big part of this and a great place to start to change this is with the way you speak to yourself.

So, for step 3's exercise, I want you to list your beliefs out on paper. Look at them. Be uncomfortable. And ask yourself:

What if this belief wasn't true?

If this belief wasn't true, how would I show up differently in _____ part of my life?

If this belief wasn't true, what different decisions would I make?

And there you have it.

Please for the love of all that is holy do these exercises. I mean, you've already spent a few minutes reading all of this, you might as well take a few more minutes and give it a shot. I promise you'll learn something, and if you keep repeating these three steps, your life can truly change.

If you liked this, you'd love The Kick-Ass Courage Project: 7-Day Challenge. It's free, and I run it a couple of times a year. You can find out when we'll start again and sign up. For the rest of my programs, including more in-depth on the inner-critic click here.

And if you're ready for deeper work, I help women create kick-ass lives in a very specific way. Click here to read more.

