

HEAL YOUR
Inner Critic
with the IFS Model



JOURNAL PROMPTS

Use these prompts to take yourself through the process of hearing and healing your inner critic using my interpretation of the Internal Family Systems Model.

Take your time, and write the answers to these prompts (or record whatever feelings come up for you during this process) in your own journal.

Don't force your answers. We aren't using the "thinking" mind here, we're responding to whatever arises. If you don't naturally come up with a response, just skip the prompt for now. Be gentle with yourself.

Q1: Focus on your Inner Critic. Can you find it in your body or around your body? Where does it seem to live in your body? There might be an energetic sensation around the body somewhere, maybe the feeling of blockage or tension.

Q2: And as you notice the places where you feel this stuck energy, how do you feel toward them? How do you feel towards your inner critic?

Do you feel resentment, confusion, frustration, shame? Do you feel mixed emotions or ambivalence? Do you feel exhausted, in pain, shortness of breath?

Q3: Ask the parts of you that feel negatively about your critic to give you space to be alone with the critic. Ask if they'll take a nap or amuse themselves away from you and the critic and allow you to listen deeply to your critic's voice alone.

Q4: And how do you feel toward the critic now that the parts that feel negatively effected by your critic have stepped back?

Do you feel more open, calm, generous, or able to receive the critic's perspective?

Q5: Right now, let your critic know that you appreciate it trying to protect and support you in the way it knows how. Ask what it wants you to know about itself. Don't try to

“think” of the answer. Allow the answer to arise from inside you. If nothing comes up, that’s okay.

Q6: Did you receive an answer? If so, how does it feel to hear that answer? If not, continue to sit with your critic for a moment longer, then continue.

Q7: Let your critic know that you see their perspective. Then gently ask it why it has to be so harsh and demanding, why it feels nothing is ever good enough. Ask what the source of these drives is about. What is it afraid would happen if it let up on the intensity?

Q8: How do you feel toward them now? Are you developing a deeper understanding of their needs and feelings, what they care about, and why they do what they do?

Q9: What is your inner critic afraid would happen if you didn’t meet those standards? What would be bad about that? What would happen? How would you feel about yourself?

Q10: Do you have any idea where you got this idea originally or when you first felt this feeling? If nothing comes, it’s okay. Let it flow as it will.

Q11: Does your inner critic’s voice sound familiar to you? Do you know what it fears, what it wants, who it is protecting based on these fears?

Q12: So how are you feeling toward this part of yourself now? Do you feel you understand your critic better? Knowing why they believed they had to be so harsh, do you feel compassion for them?

Q13: Ask the critic one last question. What could you do for the critic that would make them feel safe and be able to relax a bit? Ask them if you could speak with your inner child, the one the critic is likely protecting. Ask the critic if you could now listen to the child and help them feel heard too.

Q14: Have your critic visualize what their role would look like if they could relax. What would change if you no longer felt so threatened by the idea of failing or being misunderstood?

Please credit Ella Birt when repurposing this worksheet. Thank you!

Many thanks to Thomas Hübl and the [Collective Trauma Summit 2019](#) for featuring the conversation with Dr. Richard Schwartz, Ph.D. and Terry Real on using the IFS Model for personal healing. These prompts were inspired by that transformative exercise.