



Transforming Your Inner Naysayer to Your Inner Cheerleader

One of the most powerful exercises for retraining your inner naysayer is to teach it to tell you the *whole* truth. To transform your inner naysayer into your inner cheerleader, you must understand a core principle. Most self-criticism and self-judgment is motivated by love. Part of you is trying to motivate the rest of you to do something for your own good. Just like your parents, your inner naysayer really has your best interests in mind when it is criticizing you. It wants you to do better because it wants you to get the benefit of the better behavior. The problem is that it only tells you part of the truth.

When you were a little kid, your parents may have yelled at you and sent you to your room after you did something stupid like run out in front of a car. Their real communication was, "I love you. I don't want you to get hit by a car. I want you to stay around so that I can enjoy watching you grow up into a happy and healthy adult."

But they only delivered half of the message. "What's wrong with you? Were you born without a brain? You know better than to run out into the street when there are cars coming. You're grounded for the next hour. Go up to your room and think about what you just did." In their fear of losing you, they only expressed their anger. But underneath the anger were three more layers of message that never got delivered — fear, specific requests, and love. A complete message would look like this:

Anger: "I am mad at you for running out into the street without looking to see if any cars were coming."

Fear: "I am afraid that you are going to get badly hurt or killed."

Requests: "I want you to pay more attention when you are playing near the street. Stop and look both ways before you walk or run out into the street."

Love: "I love you so much. I don't know what I would do without you. You are so precious to me. I want you to be safe and healthy. You deserve to have lots of fun and stay safe, so you can always enjoy life to its fullest. Do you understand?"

What a different message! You need to train your inner naysayer to talk to you the same way. You can practice this on paper or as a verbal exercise in which you talk to yourself out loud. I usually imagine talking to a clone of myself sitting in an empty chair opposite me.

Make a list of all the things you say when you are judging about yourself. Include all the things that you tell yourself you should do that you don't do. A typical list might look like this.

- You don't exercise enough.
- You're gaining too much weight.
- You're a fat slob — a real couch potato!



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- You drink too much alcohol and eat too many sweets.
- You need to cut down on the carbs!
- You need to watch less television and go to bed earlier.
- If you got up earlier, you'd have more time to exercise.
- You're lazy. Why don't you finish the things you start!?!]
- You start an exercise program, but you never stick with it!]
- You're irresponsible. You don't keep your word.

Once you have completed your list, practice communicating the same information using the same 4-step process outlined above: (1) Anger, (2) Fear, (3) Requests, and (4) Love. Spend a minimum of one minute on each step. Make sure to be very specific in the requests stage. State exactly what you want yourself to do. "I want you to eat better" is too vague. Be more specific, such as "I want you to eat at least four servings of vegetables every day. I want you to cut out French fries and desserts. I want you to eat fruit for breakfast every day. I want you to eat whole grains like whole wheat and brown rice rather than white flour." The more specific you are, the more value you will receive from the exercise. I recommend you do it out loud with as much emotion and passion as possible.

Here are examples of what it might sound look like using the list of judgments listed above.

Anger:

"I am angry at you for not taking better care of your body. You are such a lazy slob! You drink too much, and you eat too much. You don't have any self-discipline! When are you going to get it together? You're lazy! All you do is sit around and watch TV. I can't stand how lazy you are. You just get fatter and more out of shape every year. Your clothes don't fit, and you don't look good. You disgust me!"

Fear:

"If you don't change, I am afraid you are going to keep gaining weight until your health is really at risk. I am afraid your cholesterol is going to get so high you might have a heart attack. I'm afraid that you could become a diabetic. I am afraid that you are never going to change, and then you are going to die young and never really live out your destiny. If you keep this up, you're never going to fulfill your dreams. I'm afraid that if you don't start eating better and taking better care of yourself, no one is going to be attracted to you. You might end up living alone for the rest of your life."

Requests:

"I want you to join a health club and go at least three days a week. I want you to go for a 20-minute walk the other four days. I want you to cut out one hour of television a day and devote that to exercise. I want you to stop eating fried foods and start eating more fresh fruits and vegetables. I want you to stop drinking sodas and start drinking more



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water. I want you to limit drinking alcohol to Friday and Saturday nights.”

Love:

“I love you. I want you to be around for a long time. I want you to have a wonderful relationship. You deserve to look good in your clothes and to feel good about yourself. You deserve to have all your dreams come true. I want you to feel alive and energetic rather than tired and lethargic all the time. You deserve to live life fully and enjoy every moment of it. You deserve to be totally happy.”

Whenever you hear a part of you judging yourself, simply reply:

“Thank you for caring. What is your fear? ... What specifically do you want me to do? ... How will this serve me? ... Thank you.”

STORY AS EXAMPLE – JESSICA'S PERSONAL STORY:

The first time I experienced this Inner Naysayer to Inner Greatest Cheerleader process 30 years ago, and it changed my life. After quitting my job at Fortune 500 company, I had been working as a consultant and psychometrist, but what I really wanted to do was start my own rehabilitation company, serve the under-served in the community, train other professionals, open offices in other cities and make a huge difference in the world. But it seemed like such an overwhelming commitment, and I was afraid of failure. What's worse, I had been regularly beating myself up for not having the courage to take the leap.

After completing the exercise, something shifted. I went beyond beating myself up to realizing how much I was missing out on by not taking the leap. I told myself clearly what I needed to do, and the following day, without any formal business experience, no money or resources, scheduled a meeting to draw up the incorporation papers, and began designing the letterhead.

Less than three months later, I had a fully staffed office of several professionals, we were known in the community as advocates for the minorities, and before the year was out, we had three offices across the province of Ontario and over 100 employees.

By turning my inner naysayer into an inner cheerleader, I was able to stop feeling like a failure and start engaging in the activities that made my dream a reality.

I was able to move from someone who was using my energy against myself to someone who was

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using my energy to create what I wanted.

Do not let the seeming simplicity of this technique fool you. It is very powerful. But, like everything else in this class, to obtain the value, you must use it. No one else can do it for you. Take twenty minutes now to turn your inner naysayer into an inner cheerleader. Get all of you on your own side—working together for the greater good of your dreams and aspirations.