

# Silence Your Inner Critic with Compassionate Reframing

## Objective

To act with compassion toward yourself by learning how to reframe your negative thoughts.

## You Should Know

Self-criticism is a common, and people often report that their negative thoughts act as an inner critic who constantly berates and bullies them. This negative emotional process becomes automated to the point where you are unaware of how much your definition of yourself remains rooted in criticizing yourself for your perceived weakness.

Instead, commit to being self-compassionate. Self-compassion means extending kindness to yourself in the face of personal failures, problems, or other disappointments. Silence your inner critic by reframing your negative thoughts with compassion. Allow this expanded interpretation to take root, to make room for a more nuanced and balanced approach to defining yourself in ways that open you up to other possibilities.

Pledge to being just as kind and understanding to yourself regarding your own self-perceived inadequacies or mistakes as you would to someone else who was going through a difficult time or feeling bad about themselves. Realize that no one, including you, is perfect! Cherish and celebrate your imperfections; they are what make you part of the human race. Know that you will fall short of your ideals, you will be frustrated with yourself and disappointed at times, but this is true of all of us.

Compassionate reframing can:

- help you unlock new opportunities and explore other possibilities that might be advantageous;
- be more closely aligned to your value and belief system;
- allow your thinking to be framed with choices and hope;
- provide you with a “focus” that encourages you to be present and that will help and not hinder your progress.

## What to Do

It's important to recognize what words you use when you are being critical of yourself. This could be difficult, as your inner critic might be so ingrained in your daily experience that you perceive it as normal and commonplace.

In the column on the left, circle the words you use to negatively describe yourself. For example, do you find yourself using the same phrasing repeatedly, such as, "I am so clingy," or "I am so disappointing"? In the blank spaces provided, add other words and phrases that you also find yourself using.

### Self-Criticism

demanding  
disappointing  
clingy  
embarrassed  
a planner  
fearful  
anxious  
dependent  
different, weird  
oversensitive  
uncomfortable, intense  
impulsive  
indecisive  
out of control  
loud  
perfectionist  
quiet  
rigid  
shy

---

---

---

### Self-Compassion

leader, organized  
honest, true  
loving, concerned  
perceptive, self-aware  
detail oriented  
profound, sensitive  
eager, enthusiastic  
determined, loving  
unique, special  
sensitive, subtle  
perceptive, observant  
spontaneous  
careful, considerate  
spontaneous  
assertive, positive  
precise, exact  
discreet, respectful  
standards, ethics  
inner directed

---

---

---

As you read the words aloud or imagine yourself using the words you have chosen, what tone of voice are you using? Is it cold, harsh, loud, piercing, pounding? And how does that tone influence how you feel when you use the words?

---

---

---

In what ways do the words you use to describe yourself uplift you or bring you down?

---

---

---

How do the words you use to describe yourself reflect or dispute your values?

---

---

---

How might your feelings be different if you chose to use more positive words to describe yourself?

---

---

---

### Create Your Own Compassionate Reframe

Using the more compassionate descriptions listed in the column on the right, reframe the words and phrases you have circled. Expanding on these negative words to include a more well-rounded and nuanced description of your behavior will allow you to be more accepting of and at peace with yourself.

An example has been provided to get you started.

<b>Self-Critical: <i>perfectionist, embarrassed</i></b>	<b>Self-Compassionate: Reframe: <i>careful, perceptive</i></b>
<i>I am <b>perfectionist</b>, and I am <b>embarrassed</b> and worry that the correspondence I write is full of mistakes that make me look stupid. I am obsessed with checking my work over and over.</i>	<i>I value the quality of my work and am very <b>perceptive</b> of how my work defines me. I am <b>careful</b> to make sure that my work reflects my respect for my personal goals and expectations.</i>

<b>Self-Critical:</b>	

<b>Self-Critical:</b>	<b>Self-Compassionate Reframe:</b>

<b>Self-Critical:</b>	<b>Self-Compassionate Reframe:</b>

<b>Self-Critical:</b>	<b>Self-Compassionate Reframe:</b>

How did this exercise help you unlock new opportunities and explore other possibilities that might be advantageous?

---

---

---

In what ways did the exercise help you become more closely aligned to your values and belief system?

---

---

---

How did the exercise facilitate your ability to frame your thoughts in choices and hope?

---

---

---

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?

---

---

---