

2.4 EQ – recognising the inner critic

Slide 1

We will never be able to completely get rid of the voice of our inner critic. And very occasionally it might be useful to listen to it or to notice what it is warning you.

We need to find ways to learn to live with it, and the first step in doing that is to clearly recognise when it is your inner critic advising you, rather than your optimistic and positive self (or the voice of your future self, whom you may have met if you have watched the presentation on optimism and future focus).

Once we can distinguish the critic's voice, we can start to view it as a separate person, with very different intentions for us. Remember that the intention of the critic is to keep you in your comfort zone, protected from stretching experiences and opportunities.

Slide 2

Something that can help us to separate out the voice of our inner critic is to learn the types of things it says to us. What is on its regular script.

Everyone's inner critic reads from a slightly different script as we have all had unique developmental experiences, beliefs and vulnerabilities.

Here are some examples of other people's critic scripts. You might recognise some of the things this person's inner writing critic says – when we are writing about research, our inner critic can really stifle our productivity and creativity.

Another classic place for the critic to show up is in meetings and when giving presentations. This person's critic questions what value they will be adding to their colleagues. They are also a tough task-master – criticising this person for not being productive enough.

Have a go at writing your own script. Once you have written them down, you might be more likely to notice the phrases when you encounter them.

Slide 3

The next stage on, or an alternative to writing the script, is to keep a diary of when your inner critic shows up – is there a pattern? What do you notice them saying?

From this, you can start to build a picture of the critic. Have a think and see if you can identify what kind of character or person would say or believe these types of things. Our inner critics are sometimes referred to as our Gremlin. But yours might be more like someone you once knew or a famous person or character from a film or book.

Draw a picture, give them a name, a voice. Understand their persona. The more detail you can add the better because then you will distinguish them more and find it easier to choose not to listen to them.

If you lack inspiration, take a look at the 'Taming Your Gremlin' website which has blogs and podcasts giving advice on taming your own. You will find a link in the resource list.