



Reducing Excessive Self-Criticism Journey

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Step 12: The Concept of “Mistake” Is Flawed

For quite a few people, the learning process involved in reducing excessive self-criticism can be difficult, and at times very challenging. One could even say that, to a certain extent, this subject is experienced as “negative,” because it deals with our problems with ourselves, with something we tend not to notice.

And it is understandable why.

Because it is not pleasant to encounter these parts within us.

We tend not to notice that there are problematic parts within us. We often prefer to deny it. This is almost built into the culture at present, at least until we learn to change it.

It is a deeply ingrained habit from an early age. There is a part within us that attacks us. There is a part within us that is excessive, that very often is not truly necessary, and whose activity is connected to the reduction of our freedom and the reduction of our familiarity with ourselves.

It can be a disturbance. It creates background noise. And it can be especially frustrating for a person who feels they have already progressed in self-awareness, found some inner peace, and now wants more tools in order to feel better, to deepen harmony, to expand and to heal.

And so it is less appealing to deal with this part, a part that contains expressions of attack, expressions of a kind of inner violence. We naturally prefer not to look at it.

And here, another kind of energy enters the space. A masculine energy entering a space that is primarily feminine, a space of inner leadership. This is one of the problems. When inner control or inner criticism is not properly balanced, when it is not properly regulated, it does not serve us. There is an entry of masculine energy in an unregulated intensity into a feminine space.

And this is also what sometimes creates resistance to even studying this subject, to opening it, to recognizing it.

It is important to say: self-criticism in itself is important. We cannot exist without it. But it is meant to be in the right dosage, in the right place, and with the right influence. And then it is beneficial.

If my self-criticism reminds me daily to take actions that support my well-being, reminds me of what matters to me, activates a kind of internal regulation in places where I tend to avoid or become lazy, then it serves me.

If it sets boundaries that help me not lose myself, not disconnect from myself, if it reminds me of goals and targets that I have grown tired of and started to abandon without real reason, then it is helpful.

When it does not become self-punishment, when it does not generate guilt but instead cultivates responsibility, when it creates inner order, supports routine, focuses intention, and helps guide action toward growth and healing, then it is a necessary form of self-criticism.

But this is not what we are speaking about here. We are speaking about criticism that comes from the roots of fear. Fear exists in the world. Darkness exists in the world. And also within us. And this is not easy.

It is not easy to enter these inner dark areas. And it will continue not to be easy. But we enter this space because it influences us, penetrates us, and significantly interferes with the way we lead our lives.

And part of choosing to cultivate a new and more effective form of inner leadership is to set boundaries. To protect ourselves within this sacred inner space from excessive self-criticism, which tends to enter, among other reasons, because we allowed it to, because we did not recognize it, because we avoided dealing with it.

And now, after this important introduction, we arrive at the heart of the chapter.

This chapter is the third in the topic of the great importance of mistakes. And it brings a deep idea: perhaps the concept of “mistake” is fundamentally flawed, and was created out of excessive self-criticism.

In other words, from the very beginning, we constructed within ourselves a flawed concept.

And therefore, very often, the right thing to do is to reconsider this concept. Even to turn it into something lighter, more humorous, more playful.

In order to develop creatively, I must do things that appear to me as mistakes. Otherwise, I do not discover new landscapes. Otherwise, I do not open doors. Otherwise, I do not reach the places I need to reach in order to expand. If everything appears to me as a mistake, and I avoid mistakes, I simply do not move.

And so we want to return to the beginning. To re-examine our standards. Our values. And to discover that under the influence of excessive self-criticism, personal, familial, social, systemic, and educational, a highly exaggerated and fundamentally flawed concept was formed, which we call “mistake.”

And this concept itself is, in many ways, a mistake.

Because if the higher values of human life are growth, development, expansion, healing, abundance, joy, fulfillment, harmony, relationships, and health, then the excessive use of the concept of “mistake” works against these values.

Simply so. It works against us.

And therefore, perhaps the first step is to redefine our priorities. To place inner leadership, love, compassion, creativity, and growth at the center.

If we look at the world around us, we see that this is not always clear. Large parts of the world still operate out of survival, out of fear, out of dependency, out of a lack of listening to the inner voice, out of a lack of inner leadership, out of excessive self-criticism and a lack of compassion.

This is a problem. A significant problem that reflects the current stage of human development. But we are here to place priorities differently. Love, relationships, compassion, creativity, development, self-realization, healing, fulfillment, harmony, learning, expansion.

All of these depend on not living in an excessive fear of mistakes.

Such excessive fear is a survival state, as if we are in a jungle, where every small movement might bring danger. But we are not meant to live in such a consciousness. We are not here merely to survive.

And therefore, in order to reduce excessive self-criticism, there are many things we can do. But here I propose one clear step:

To redesign our relationship with the concept of “mistake.”

To smile at it.

To observe how we relate to the mistakes of others. Of friends, of children, of parents.

What is our first reaction?

Is it to become angry? To punish? To cancel? To stop?

Or can we pause and say: wait. A mistake is part of life. Sometimes a blessed part. Sometimes a critical part. How many important things in the world happened because of mistakes? Discoveries? Breakthroughs? Massive changes?

We cannot allow creativity to flow through us without mistakes. Because mistakes release us from excessive rational control. And when we release this excess of control, the inner voice becomes clearer.

And therefore, yes, it is worthwhile to make quite a few mistakes.

Not dangerous mistakes. But to allow more experience and exploration within a wide range of “mistakes” that we simply fear, hesitate around, and delay.

And so we are here to reshape this concept. To understand that, in many ways, it was constructed incorrectly. That it does not align with the higher values of the human being. That it stems from excessive self-criticism.

And we are here to reshape it.

To make it less frightening.

And to discover that it is, very often, a tool.

And even an opportunity.

Questions for Self-Reflection (it is recommended to answer in writing):

1. Think about the central “mistakes” in your life, go far back into your past. What happens when you wrap them in deep compassion?
2. What alternative words or expressions can you offer instead of the word “mistake”?
3. If we reach the conclusion that there is not really such a thing as a “mistake,” what would that do to our lives?
4. What currently scares you most about your future mistakes?
5. Can you wrap your upcoming “mistakes” with love, and even gratitude, as they lead you to places you currently cannot imagine reaching?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share or write about regarding what you have read in this chapter? Experiences? Insights? Questions? Feelings?