



Reducing Excessive Self-Criticism Journey

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Step 13: True Freedom

People love to talk about freedom. Throughout history, people have spoken about freedom, demanded freedom, protested when it was taken from them. Revolutions, slogans, cries of freedom, freedom, freedom.

But a basic question arises here: why does a person have to struggle again and again for their freedom? Why is it not natural? Why is it not simple? Why is it not self-evident?

Why is a person not free?

We tend to explain this by saying that there are external forces that limit us, that there are interests of others to control, to take freedom, to dominate. But if we look more deeply, something here does not make sense. It is not reasonable that a large number of people would give up their freedom for a small minority.

We cannot always blame others. Something is happening here within us as well.

Why does a person not wake up in the morning and choose to be more free? Why do they keep telling themselves that there are constraints, that there are reasons, that there are things they must do, and therefore they cannot be free?

- At any given moment, here and now, who is supposed to grant me my freedom?
- Is it really dependent on the state, on laws, on frameworks?
- Do I even know what freedom is?
- Am I ready for freedom?
- Do I know how to grant myself freedom?

And here the story begins. And this is also why it often does not work on the social level. As long as we do not understand that within ourselves we are reducing our own freedom, we are not able to truly taste freedom.

It is true that every person deserves rights. Freedom of movement, freedom of choice. Of course. But freedom begins from within. Within us there is a warden. A guard. Who

places us inside a small, restricted cell. Telling us again and again: forbidden. Not okay. Not right. And this is how we live.

And it seems to us that this is “normal.” That it is acceptable to live this way. With excessive self-criticism, with excessive self-punishment, with excessive self-judgment, with little self-love, with little self-compassion, with fear of creative freedom, with fear of free expression.

No. We do not truly understand what freedom is. And yet we go out to fight over the fact that someone has taken something from us. And that is true. It does happen. But it is easy to take freedom from someone who does not know how to generate freedom within themselves. From someone who does not find freedom within themselves. From someone who does not understand where they themselves take away their own freedom.

And so we are learning here to reduce excessive self-criticism. We are learning, first of all, to see how we limit our own freedom. To open our eyes. Because this is happening all the time.

Our fears are the heaviest weights that prevent us from being free. People can allow themselves much more freedom, but they do not do it. They are afraid of change. Afraid of initiative. Afraid of reactions. Afraid of failure. Afraid of mistakes. Afraid of letting go of what they have. And so there is no freedom.

And who manages all of this? Excessive self-criticism. It is the true authority. And as long as we are not aware of it, do not face it, do not reduce it, we do not truly expand our freedom.

There is no freedom when there is excessive self-criticism. True freedom is connected to listening to the inner voice and implementing its guidance. And whoever wishes can deepen this in other places as well.

But already here it is clear: freedom is not a simple matter. Freedom is not self-evident. It is not lying on a beach and doing “whatever we want.” Because at some point the vacation ends. We need to act, to create, to engage with reality, with people.

And then the truth is revealed. I am not truly free. The external image, the feeling that I am free, does not hold over time.

Because to be truly free is to be able to connect to the inner voice. And this is not simple. Because the inner voice is wrapped in many layers: criticism, fears, hesitations, limiting beliefs, lack of self-trust, doubt in our intuition.

This is a journey. It is a practice. To learn to listen through the body, through deep sensations, through instincts. To remember. To train. Because these capacities were taken from us within the culture in which we live. And we cooperate with it. We cooperate with this mechanism that takes away our freedom.

And when we speak about freedom, we can see that within the word itself there is a hint: search. Search for your inner voice. Do not take it for granted. There are confusions around it, fears, inner distortions, lack of trust.

And we want to learn to practice it. To search for our intuition. To trust it. To try it. To experiment. To listen to the inner voice and to implement its guidance.

And this is already a much bigger step. It is not only to feel. It is not only to recognize the impulse. It is also the courage to act. The courage to move toward the unknown. The courage to take an unclear step.

And how much excessive self-criticism will appear there. How many warnings. How many objections. How many external voices that will say: No! Not advisable. It is dangerous. Do not do it. Better stay where you are...

The challenging task that appears here, the true task of freedom, is to listen to the inner voice beyond all this noise. Because excessive self-criticism is located exactly there, in the zone of listening.

And therefore courage is required. The courage to believe in the inner voice. The courage to practice implementing its guidance. To follow it. To walk into uncertainty. To initiate one thing, just because something inside told me.

“I do not know how, but I begin.”

And then excessive self-criticism will appear. And it will say: not advisable. This is not right. How do you know? You do not have a plan.

And perhaps it will indeed not succeed. And then it will say: see, I told you. Stop. Quit. What are you doing?

And we continue. We do not stop. We want to create freedom. And this freedom is work. We continue to walk in the direction of the inner impulse, despite the criticism.

And we say to it: “I heard you. And still, I continue. I do not believe you. You are exaggerating. You are disturbing me. You are closing me in. I am not willing for you to interfere anymore. I continue to move. Even if it is not clear. Even if it is frightening. Even if it is confusing. I want to explore. I do not want to give up after one attempt. I want to learn as I go.”

And we continue: “I want to understand what the inner voice truly asked of me. And I do not want to continue telling myself stories that diminish me. That tell me: leave it. It is a waste of time. Stay where you are. No. I continue. I am capable. It is not that complicated.”

There, true freedom is revealed. True freedom passes through fear. Through criticism. Through the conscious choice to say to the criticism:

“I heard you. You tried to stop me. Thank you. But this is not relevant now. I listen to my inner voice. I learn to trust it. I learn to clear it. And I begin to act. Through trial and error. On the path to its realization.”

This is how excessive self-criticism is reduced. And this is how the sense of freedom expands, along with the deep pleasure of expressing it in physical reality.

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

1. What is something your inner voice is suggesting you change or do, but your excessive self-criticism does not allow?
2. Which ideas, thoughts, or inner sensations that arise within you are difficult for you to believe in or accept as valid or “serious”?
3. What happens when you place the concept of “freedom” in front of your excessive self-criticism?
4. What is something you most want to release right now from your life or within your life?
5. What kind of deep, emotional, or spiritual freedom do you feel you have not yet fully experienced, or not in the way you truly wish?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share or write about regarding what you have read in this chapter? Experiences? Questions? Feelings?