



Reducing Excessive Self-Criticism Journey

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Step 15: Every Day It Begins Again

Chapter 15 concludes Part Five, which deals with the understanding that there is no freedom when there is excessive self-criticism. And as unclear as this may be, and as much as we are used to searching outside ourselves for what we lack, it is important to understand why learning inner leadership is so essential. Because the main things we need in life exist within us. This is not just a statement, it is not a cliché, it is a fact. This is how it works.

And as confusing as this is, we are deeply conditioned to believe that what we need exists outside of us, and that if we have not received it, we are deprived, frustrated, that something was taken from us, that we are being mistreated. And in doing so, we make a very basic mistake: we give up the understanding that our true assets cannot be taken from us by anyone except ourselves.

We ourselves place walls between us and the abundance within us, between us and the love within us, between us and the creativity within us, between us and our intuition, between us and our natural ability to adapt to changing situations. Freedom is here.

And as long as we remain under the illusion of external control, and as long as we lack inner leadership, we are indeed subject to external control. And then we suffer more, we become more restricted, less joyful, less fulfilled. Our vision becomes narrow, our possibilities become limited, and our relationships become weaker.

It is inside. This is not a cliché. And even if it sounds like one, when nothing is done with it, it remains only words. Within the “inside” there is work. Within the “inside” there is excessive self-criticism, which we want to learn to reduce.

And this is the current chapter: every day it begins again.

The struggle for freedom, which in some ways has been taken from us within the structure of life, sometimes with our own participation, and sometimes through people around us who have limited us, taken our time, our possibilities, and collaborated with parts within us, with excessive self-criticism that created in us a readiness to believe that we are not entitled to freedom.

So what is freedom?

Freedom is a connection to the inner voice and the implementation of its guidance. That is freedom. I am free to be myself. And the more I am free to be myself, no one can take that away from me. And even if someone tries, the “self” within me will find other ways to manage.

But as long as I am not free to be myself, it is easy for others to tell me how, when, and where, to limit me, because I am not connected to that creative inner voice that shows me the right path for me.

This is what happens when there is excessive self-criticism, and when it is cultivated at the family, educational, and social levels. It is cultivated from a young age. That is why we are here. Because we were taught to create excessive self-criticism within ourselves. And those who taught us were also taught. They do not even know that this is what they are doing. They operate within a system, within a culture that nurtures excessive self-criticism.

How many creativity lessons are there in first grade? In second grade? In university? How much learning is there about freedom? About connecting to the inner voice? Zero, or close to zero. And when it is not cultivated, it closes.

And when we are taught to believe that someone who gets high grades is “successful,” that someone who is wealthy is “successful,” we gradually move away from our freedom. We move away from our inner voice. Because the inner voice defines success in a completely different way.

Within the success defined by the inner voice, there is true success: calmness, flowing and authentic creative expression, connection with the right people, personal inner abundance, ease, courage, adventure. These are successes. Love is success.

Who determines my success? External criteria? For that, we need inner leadership. And I, within myself, am a leader. I determine within myself. Not my excessive self-criticism, which aligns with external criticism that tries to define where I should be and whether I am good enough or not.

If I am not leading within myself, if I am not defining my own authentic criteria for success, then very quickly I will internalize shallow external standards and become convinced that I am not good enough, because others said so, directly or indirectly, and because my excessive self-criticism cooperates with this.

And therefore, every day we begin again.

Every day we look for the tools to reduce excessive self-criticism, to challenge ourselves, to challenge the next change, to practice creativity, to practice courage, to question what

exists, to shake things a little, to take risks, to initiate, to play more, to laugh more, to participate more.

Every day it begins again.

And when we do not do this, it closes in on us. If we do not take actions that reduce criticism and increase freedom, creativity, and inner independence, excessive self-criticism grows automatically. This is how it works.

It is a kind of universal principle: when we do not cultivate the good, something else enters in its place, something that is like a negative mirror of it. There is no much of a neutral state. If I do not actively allow my inner voice to flow outward, it closes. It does not sit there waiting. If I do not open the taps, they close and fill with rust.

And therefore, every day we begin again.

Maybe it is writing. Maybe it is dancing. Maybe it is an initiative. Maybe it is one more smile to myself in the mirror. Maybe it is nurturing something I have just begun.

And of course, again and again, it is about identifying the moments in which I am not kind to myself, and stopping.

Stop. Placing a stop sign. No. I do not agree with this excessive self-criticism. It is not reasonable. It is not necessary. It does not suit me. It harms me. It is inner bullying.

To see it. To refuse it. And then to notice how it also comes through external people. And there as well, without being a victim, without unnecessary drama, simply to say: no.

To say no to figures that generate self-doubt within me. To say no to figures that make me feel uncomfortable with myself. To say no to figures that reduce my courage, that diminish my sense of well-being within myself.

And to ask:

Who are the people in whose presence I feel more hope, more self-compassion, more courage, more adventure, more willingness to play with life, more ease?

And who are the people with whom I feel the opposite?

Those who strengthen my excessive self-criticism, who distance me from facing my pain.

Every day, there is work to be done with this.

As I said, this is the most important entry ticket to true human freedom. And therefore, it is worth investing in it. It is worth working on it.

It is worth finding, each person for themselves, their own techniques for another layer of release from criticism, another confrontation, another beginning.

Because every day we live in an environment that nurtures it. We receive its messages constantly. Almost at every moment. In almost every form of communication.

And therefore, we must work every day anew.

The struggle for freedom may have been partially taken from us within the structure of life, but we have inner powers capable of creating tools, methods, improvisations, and innovations to challenge the dominance of criticism. And we succeed in this.

And if we are here, in this chapter, and if we have already walked some path, it is clear that we have progressed.

And every time we answer a question, write an exercise, respond, initiate, act, every small action like this slightly weakens excessive self-criticism.

And we can already begin to feel it.

Freedom begins to build itself from within.

It is possible.

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

1. Is this ongoing struggle with your excessive self-criticism difficult for you?
2. What happens if you do not stay alert and your excessive self-criticism attacks you without interruption?
3. Are you willing to develop a daily routine in which you stand before it with a smile and courage, and show it who is really in charge?
4. How far are you willing to go in the struggle for your true freedom?
5. What is the next action you intend to take to show yourself that you are serious about this?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share or write about regarding what you have read in this chapter? Experiences? Questions? Feelings?