



Reducing Excessive Self-Criticism Journey

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Step 2: The Many Faces of Excessive Self-Criticism

Chapter Two is the second chapter in the first part, which focuses on getting as close as possible to an intimate familiarity with our excessive self-criticism. This is not a one-time familiarity, but a life-long task. Excessive self-criticism will always be there, to some extent. It is a cultural matter, a planetary matter, an energy that circulates among people and exists within us as part of the structure of human consciousness. It is an ongoing challenge.

Therefore, our goal is not to completely dismantle it. At least not according to what currently seems possible based on our understanding of the human psyche. But it is possible to do very meaningful work. To make very significant progress in reducing it. And each time we succeed in reducing excessive self-criticism, we open within ourselves gateways to freedom, gateways to creativity, gateways to self-fulfillment, and many other possibilities.

This happens in parallel. Everything we want to do, every change, every process of growth, development, expansion, problem solving, will always include the element of breaking down excessive self-criticism around that specific matter. It will always be there. And therefore, one of our central tasks in this part of the process is familiarity. Deep familiarity.

Although it is part of us, we can also step aside and observe it. To observe from a place of awareness, of compassion, of recognition, of tracking. Like becoming a kind of inner Sherlock Holmes, waiting for the moment to say: I caught you. I caught you. This is a very significant moment.

Because a large part of the power of excessive self-criticism lies in the fact that we do not notice it operating. And when we do not notice it, we believe it. And when we believe it, we begin to see reality through its language. When it tells us that something will not succeed, we feel that it will not succeed. When it tells us that we are not okay, we feel that we are not okay. We are wrapped in it.

But if we are able, even for brief moments, to step aside and say: this is only excessive self-criticism. This is not real. This does not truly represent who I am. This is too sharp,

too absolute, too general, too distorted. I am not interested in this. This is excessive for me.

In such a moment, distance begins to form. An inner dialogue begins. The possibility of negotiation begins. And from there, a path opens toward setting boundaries and reducing its influence. That is why it is so important to recognize it, to track it, to look for it, and to identify it the moment it appears. To say: here it is, excessive self-criticism has just appeared. I saw you. I am aware of you. Because the moment we are aware of it, it already has less power over us.

Chapter Two deals with the many faces of excessive self-criticism. One of its central tools is its multiplicity of forms. It has many forms of expression. Many. And no matter how many examples we give, there will always be more. It bypasses our mind. It appears unexpectedly, in many different ways, but ultimately it always delivers the same message.

A limiting message. A message that reduces hope. A message that reduces enthusiasm. A message that reduces passion. A message that reduces self-trust. A message that reduces playfulness, spontaneity, and boldness.

It can appear as a wave of pessimism. It can appear as a depressive mood. It can appear as excessive anxiety. It can appear as a distorted interpretation of something that did not work, accompanied by exaggerated feelings of guilt. And this is not real. It is not truly so. It is excessive. It colors reality.

Because in reality, there are always possibilities. There are always paths. There are always opportunities. There is always a way to look again. Very often, when we are dealing with a problem, the problem itself becomes much more difficult because of the excessive self-criticism surrounding it. We are not only dealing with the problem; we are also being attacked from within for having the problem. And we are not aware of this.

We are not aware that if we manage to reduce the excessive self-criticism surrounding the problem, it will be much easier for us to deal with it.

The same thing happens with dreams, with desires, with things we want to realize. Suddenly an inner statement appears, sometimes even in the voice of someone familiar from the past. But it is no longer that person. It is us, through that figure.

We can view excessive self-criticism as a kind of chameleon. It constantly changes shape. And it is responsible for almost every situation in which we do not meet ourselves from a place of freedom, ease, flow, joy, and spontaneity. If those qualities are not present, it is very likely that excessive self-criticism is there, behind the scenes, through statements that sound very logical.

And this is one of its main disguises: logic.

It explains to us that no one has succeeded. That it has already been tried and did not work. That it is too risky, too big, too far away, a waste of time, a waste of money. Many different forms. And therefore, it is important to understand that it has many faces.

In a certain sense, it represents our fears. Fears of growth, fears of freedom, fears of truth, fears of encountering pain. One could even say that all of our fears converge into one place and are translated into excessive self-criticism, which attempts to distance us from direct engagement with what we need to face.

The main thing to take from this chapter is that excessive self-criticism is highly present. It creates heaviness. It creates conflicts. It creates exaggerated hurt. It creates a distorted perception of reality rooted in self-pity. It sometimes creates obsessive thinking that repeats the same unnecessary and exaggerated messages again and again.

And ultimately, this is a negative relationship toward oneself.

It stems from many sources. Culture, education, childhood, parents. That is not the main point right now. The main point is to understand that it is there. That it is present. That it is a kind of inner adversary.

And we want to learn how to meet it. Not with brute force, but with sophisticated, emotional, creative, and intuitive approaches. There are ways. And we are here to learn them.

But if we do not recognize what we are dealing with, and if it continues to influence us before we identify it, and if we continue to be convinced that it is right, we will not be able to create change.

And so now, in the coming days, in the coming weeks, we are looking for it. We are looking for it, and we are catching it. And we say to it: I caught you. I saw you. Here you weighed me down. Here you gave me exaggerated messages. Here you made me doubt myself. Here you blocked me when I tried to create something.

I saw you before action. I saw you during action. I saw you after action.

I saw you.

And we begin to learn. Because it can be found.

And if we had only learned this from a young age, we would become very skilled at it. Not because we would eliminate it completely, but because we would place it in its proper proportions. And we would live with much more freedom, more self-expression, more ability to deal with problems, and more fulfillment.

Therefore, it is important to remember: it has many faces. It sounds very logical. Very convincing. But in most cases, it is excessive. It is distorted.

And from now on, we are after it.

We are looking for it.

We begin, in a certain sense, to move from being pursued to becoming the ones who pursue.

With a smile.

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

1. In which situations and forms does your excessive self-criticism prevent you from initiating, taking action, or daring to try?
2. What feelings does your excessive self-criticism evoke in you when it “speaks” to you while you are trying to do something new or different?
3. How far can you go into feelings of guilt or self-anger if you tried or did something and later realized that you made a mistake, missed something, overlooked something, or did not notice something?
4. Are you aware that procrastination and hesitation can stem from excessive self-criticism? Do you have examples from your own life?
5. Can you identify your excessive self-criticism when you are anxious, in a low mood, or simply in a place that does not feel good to you?
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?