



Reducing Excessive Self-Criticism Journey

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Step 6: It is Not a Fate

Chapter Six is the third chapter of Part Two, and it brings with it perhaps one of the most important messages in this process. Excessive self-criticism is not fate. It is not a finished fact. It is not something fixed that we will have to deal with forever at the same intensity.

It is something that can be changed. A significant change. A very significant one.

It is in our hands. It is within our potential. We have the ability to reduce this burden. Perhaps a small part will remain, but it will be far less disturbing, far less limiting. And when it is barely there, our creative possibilities will expand, our flexibility will increase, and we will not always even realize how much this is connected to the fact that there is far less excessive self-criticism within us.

It is possible. That is why we are here. Because it is possible.

And I repeat this again and again, because excessive self-criticism has a tendency to create the opposite impression. It creates the feeling that it cannot be reduced, that it cannot be negotiated with, that it cannot be overcome, that it cannot be calmed, that it cannot be regulated.

This is the impression it creates. And it does so through its language. A binary language. An absolute language. A language of black or white.

A language that generates anxiety, that generates guilt, that speaks with drama, with decisiveness, as if it were an unquestionable truth. “Never,” “this is terrible,” “how did you not see,” “how did you do that,” “how did you miss it.” An atmosphere that is very difficult to argue with.

But this is not the truth. And this is exactly what we are learning here. We can reduce excessive self-criticism. I can. You can. We can.

And it begins with awareness. I am aware of it. I am attentive to it. I identify it when it appears and when it generates an unpleasant inner experience within me. And מתוך this

awareness, I begin to update myself, again and again, that I can, over time, reduce its presence.

This is the central message of Part Two. It is possible. This is a key phrase.

Because this is exactly what excessive self-criticism does not want us to see. It wants to place us with our backs against the wall, in a state of no choice, of finality, of “this is how it is, and that’s it.”

But the healthy, healing, transformative message is different. It is possible. I can. You can. We can reduce excessive self-criticism.

Because we have the tools within us. Because there is an inner space within us that knows how to function in a much healthier, much more abundant, much more creative way when there is less excessive self-criticism.

It is possible. And we are also ready for it. And what remains is to move toward it, to do the work, to use the tools, to begin to reduce.

And here Chapter Six adds another important emphasis. We are in a struggle. This is truly a struggle. Excessive self-criticism is a kind of attack on our inner child, on our spontaneous creativity, on our freedom, on our spirituality, on our ideas.

It is an attack. And it is important to use these words. Because when we understand that this is an attack, we also understand that we need to defend ourselves against it, that this is our responsibility toward ourselves, that this is our commitment to ourselves.

To be there. To be present in this struggle. For the sake of that soft, creative, even brilliant part within us.

And in order to do this, we need information, we need tools, and we also need to keep reminding ourselves, again and again, of what Chapter Six emphasizes: these are lies. And a distortion of reality.

Look for a moment at another person. A friend, a colleague, someone you know and perhaps even appreciate. Someone you are impressed by. Their actions, their personality, their initiative.

And then you hear them speak about themselves. And suddenly, excessive self-criticism emerges. A lack of tolerance toward themselves. A lack of compassion. Exaggerated disappointment.

And you are surprised. How can this person, whom you see as having so many abilities, so much value, speak about themselves this way? You may not even understand how much this limits them, how much more they could be if they reduced their excessive self-criticism.

And then a point becomes clear. This is not reality. It is a kind of lie. This person stands before themselves, speaks in a convincing, confident, absolute way, and lies to themselves.

This is deception. Self-deception. And we do this to ourselves as well. It is important to use these words. Because excessive self-criticism creates emotional manipulation. It causes us to believe things that do not exist. It creates doubt where there is no need for doubt. It creates negative evaluation where it is not appropriate.

And it also focuses us on what did not work, and does not allow us to see what did work.

This is a lie. A lie with an agenda. An agenda whose purpose is to reduce us. To cause our free and creative part to become contracted, ashamed, hesitant, afraid. And this agenda exists within us. It is part of us. And it is based on lies and on a distortion of reality.

The word lie is a strong word. A difficult word. But here it is accurate. Because when a person tells themselves that they cannot, when in reality they can, this is not just inaccuracy. It is a lie.

And this lie has consequences. It creates depression. It creates anxiety. It can harm relationships. It can stop entire lives.

And therefore, we begin to stand in front of excessive self-criticism and say to it: you are lying. Not only are you exaggerating. You are lying. This is not true. This is the opposite of reality.

I can. I am creative. I am worthy of appreciation. I also see what I have done. And I continue to try, even if I failed. And perhaps it is good that I failed, because failure is part of the path. One of the most important learning materials. Those who succeed are those who do not surround their failures with excessive self-criticism, but continue.

But if we allow excessive self-criticism to take over, it will stop us after one or two attempts, and it will tell us a false story: I cannot, this is not for me.

And therefore, we raise the intensity. From a certain point, we do not only stop it. We also attack it back. We say: this is a lie.

And we do not say "I am lying to myself," but we turn to it. We momentarily make it an object. And we say to it: you are lying. And when we do this, we begin to dismantle its legitimacy.

Because we do not believe a liar. And this is much stronger than saying that it is only exaggerating or afraid. It is giving incorrect information. There is no reason to believe it. And the more we repeat this, the more we begin to believe a new version.

That excessive self-criticism does not speak the truth. That it is distorted. And that there is no reason to believe it.

This is an emotional drama. And we will not always succeed in doing this in real time.

But the more we practice this, especially in calmer moments, we will begin to recognize that the negative, heavy, convincing messages are not truth. They are lies. And if they are not expressed in a gentle, balanced, constructive way, they are incorrect information.

And incorrect information, we reject. We do not adopt it. And this is already the beginning of a very deep change.

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

1. What immediate emotional reactions arise in you in response to the word “lie”? How do you feel about the atmosphere of this word?
2. Are you willing to consider the possibility that you are, in fact, lying to yourself through excessive self-criticism, quite often?
3. If excessive self-criticism is, for the most part, false, what is the truth that is not being said in its place?
4. How do you feel when you discover that someone is lying to you? And how does this connect to the fact that you also do this to yourself, without noticing?
5. Are you willing to forgive yourself, even a little, for allowing your excessive self-criticism to lie and even convince you with its lies?
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?