



Self-Love Journey

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Step 24 :Self-Criticism Is the Real Mistake

This subject is not easy to explain logically, but it is essential to try and to advance understanding in this matter. What ultimately creates a full grasp of the principles presented here is the emotional development that arises from increasing self-love and establishing it in a person's life.

One of the main things our self-criticism is very occupied with is the error, the mistake. Excessive self-criticism presents to us, unpleasantly, what it considers to be the mistakes we made in the past and instructs us how to avoid similar mistakes in the future. The occupation of this part of our awareness is very large and seems as if its role is to warn us constantly and to prevent from us what is considered incorrect, imprecise, and unacceptable.

Moreover, it is necessary to mention the atmosphere that excessive self-criticism creates, because this is the severe component of the damage it causes. Excessive self-criticism does not serve as a helpful teacher who charts for us a right path to walk. The methods it employs, reprimands and the creation of an atmosphere of anxiety and fear of spontaneous initiative or taking risks, are not methods that encourage change and learning, they mainly create a feeling of contraction and a harmed self-image. Excessive self-criticism cannot help us because it places us in a paralyzed, ashamed, and fearful place.

Thus, without our noticing, that very component that criticizes us so much and that always watches us, and whose supposed purpose is to save us from mistakes and missteps, itself creates the greatest mistake, a mistake that can be corrected through self-love and additional tools, but only after prolonged practice and a change in consciousness. Until that change in consciousness occurs, there exists within us a routine mistake that is difficult for us to identify regularly and to point out. This mistake influences many planes and sets a narrow, fearful perception of reality that is less able to drive changes, to improve what exists, to release what is stuck, and to build things better than what there is now.

It is not simple to grasp that we are repeating precisely the same mistake day after day, especially when we strain our minds with questions about how not to make mistakes and how not to ruin what exists. It is not easy to point to such a familiar and daily part of our awareness, a part that sounds reasonable, responsible, and measured, and to present it as the central mistake, one whose influence and presence we should find ways to reduce. Are we ready for the real change, for parting from excessive self-criticism?

This is precisely the decisive point that generates the healthier and more helpful reality, the one that transforms the familiar concepts in our relationship with ourselves and that sets new standards, managed decisively by our growing self-love.

Here is how it works. The more we connect to self-love, the more we understand that what we need most are support, trust, appreciation, encouragement, empathy, understanding, recognition, holding, and courage to change and to develop. The more we learn to think in the terms of self-love, the less willing we are to tolerate self-condemnations and external condemnations, as well as the excessive pressures that come from both inside and outside.

As we internalize the standards of self-love, we become less tolerant of anything not connected to it or of anything that does not follow its path. When we love ourselves more, we no longer have a reason or a possibility to act against ourselves and to prevent from ourselves all the good that is possible for us. When this happens, we identify, and this can be a very dramatic identification, that the greatest mistake we habitually make is listening to excessive criticism and surrendering to its pressures.

To grasp, to understand, and to internalize these concepts, we usually must undergo a deep change. The prevailing social perception that overly supports the use of criticism at many points and processes of human life plants in us the problematic habit of granting broad permission to the inner critic to examine us and to give us grades and remarks in a quantity that does not add tools for improvement or progress, but rather fixes us in exactly the same place while we contract into a feeling of missing out.

Self-love is the rule, it is the foundation, it is the way, it is the support, it is the teacher, and it is the direction. There is no justification for any other style of self-relationship. There is no benefit in self-condemnation or in repeated remarks that cause us to feel that something is not right or not functioning properly in us. The recurring falsehood that causes us to feel that if we are not excelling, and if we are average in a certain domain, like most people of course, then we are not truly significant or important, blurs our truth and our uniqueness and causes us to perceive reality in a distorted and even irresponsible manner.

In a world of self-love, a concept like “mediocrity” has no value and no place. In a world of self-love, the very fact that a person tries, strives, searches, and acts according to their

ability is the true excellence and is the very thing that should be at the center of a person's attention, that they are truly and sincerely deserving of appreciation and encouragement for every effort, attempt, initiative, experience, and choice. And as obvious as this may sound, it is not obvious at all. We tend to repeat that fundamental and tragic mistake without noticing it, we surrender to the rule of excessive self-criticism that hides from us the truth about the real achievements that are our lot day by day and sometimes even hour by hour.

There is no benefit in a lifestyle in which the self-image is frequently harmed. There is no benefit in a lifestyle in which we receive too much accounting for what we did not do right and too little information about what we did do well and worthily, which apparently became self-evident.

It is not simple to be a mature and responsible person in the times and spaces in which we live. The ongoing demands on every person are many and sometimes impossible. It is not easy to be a parent, to be a manager, to be a worker, to be a neighbor, to be a citizen, to meet payments and taxes, to deal with family and environmental tensions, to absorb the lack of justice and the lack of consideration in many places, as well as to absorb the tension, the danger, and the possible hazards on the roads and sometimes even at home. The very fact of our lives and the dealing with them, including the success to extract from them from time to time a special taste and joy, deserve praise and admiration. This is the truth.

A person does not have to be number one in every matter to deserve a lifetime achievement award. The very fact that they are here and that they try to do their best is already a notable achievement. Excessive self-criticism will not tell us this. Self-love will proclaim this to us. We have already succeeded. We have already done it. Of course we can do more and improve what exists, but not through repeated, impatient, and demanding condemnation, but rather through appreciation and encouragement for what there is, for what we managed, for what we touched, and for what we influenced.

Let there be no doubt, excessive self-criticism will never know satisfaction. It cannot be appeased or calmed. It will always find a reason to cause us to feel discomfort. It does not matter what our achievements are or where we reach in any ranking. Until we help self-love to occupy most of the space, and until we understand that excessive self-criticism is the greatest mistake and is the reason for our problems and for our states of stuck-ness, we will be slaves to its whims. Excessive criticism is a mistake. Self-love is the correction. The mind sometimes does not understand this, but the heart knows well what is at stake. And that heart is ready and prepared to help us shut down this traditional mistake and learn to enjoy more of what we already have, out of great and sincere love for ourselves.

:Practice Questions (Answer in handwriting or share in a practice group)

1. Does your self love currently allow you to be more tolerant of your mistakes?
2. Do you sometimes recognize that you were mistaken when you did not appreciate yourself or support yourself?
3. In which areas of your life would it be beneficial for you to focus more in the near future in order to reduce self criticism and instead create a loving and patient space?
4. What is a good and intriguing mistake you would like to make soon?
5. Can you now turn, at least some of your mistakes, into humor, laughter, and a playful attitude that softens and neutralizes excessive seriousness?
6. Anything else you would like to share? Feelings, thoughts or questions about this step?