

Catching Your Critic

It is necessary to catch the critic to build and maintain self-esteem. It requires vigilance, especially when meeting strangers, people you find attractive, situations where you have made a mistake, and where you risk failure or rejection (McKay & Fanning, 2016).

The following worksheet can help with recognizing that inner critic:

- **Day 1** – keep count of the number of critical statements you say to yourself.
- **Day 2 & 3** – make a note of each critical statement throughout the day in the table below:

Thought number	Time	Critical statement
For example, N	09:30	My boss must be fed up with my endless questions.

Review the list and complete the following table at the end of the day.

For each critical thought, reflect and write down the purpose of that thought:

- *Does it have a positive or a negative impact?*
- *Does it allow me to do something good (positive) or avoid something unpleasant?*

Thought number	Helps me <i>feel</i> or <i>do</i>	Stops me <i>feeling</i> or <i>doing</i>
For example, N	Motivates me to ask the <i>right</i> question.	Stop me asking unnecessary questions. I avoid my boss.

After two days of recording thoughts, review the list.

- *Are there any basic themes?*

- *Do they typically drive higher performance and achievement?*

- *Do they discourage me from doing what I want to do?*

You should begin to understand when you are most critical and challenge or reign in your inner critic.

References

- McKay, M., & Fanning, P. (2016). *Self-esteem*. CA: New Harbinger.

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