



Growth vs. Survival: Meet Your Inner Coach

Moule One, Session Two

Remember that we are equally as hard wired for survival as we are for growth. In this session I'm going to talk more about this internal dilemma and how it can mess with your mojo if you don't understand and work with it.

We all have a powerful voice in our heads that urges us toward the status quo.

This "Inner Critic" voice or your "Itty Bitty Shitty Committee" spends a lot of time telling you you're not ready, not good enough, or not doing as well as others. This voice is highly skilled at making excuses, putting things off and making up stories to keep you from owning your competence, talent or self-worth. The Inner Critic is risk averse and very concerned with keeping you from failing or making a fool of yourself.

Your Inner Coach voice, on the other hand, is the voice of your ambitions, your dreams and your self-regard. This is the voice that sets goals, is willing to take risks and stands for your true self and your wisdom.

If you've ever had something that you really want to accomplish but every time you get close to it, your mind starts to make excuses, put things off or doubt your abilities, you have been visited by your Inner Critic. If you've ever been in the ring and found yourself thinking, I don't belong here. Or I'm not as good as these other riders. Or I'm too old or too fat or too nervous- you have been visited by your Inner Critic. If you find yourself dwelling on past mistakes instead of looking forward, your Inner Critic is involved. If you've ever been paralyzed by "what-if" thoughts, you have experienced the Inner Critic at work. We all grapple with this voice in one form or another.

A while back, one of my clients was telling me about an opportunity she was presented with. She'd been invited to travel to Europe and train with a coach she's long admired.

She was over the moon. She sounded excited and confident. We began to discuss the logistics of the trip and what she would need to do to prepare. Quite suddenly, her tone changed. She became hesitant and questioning. She started talking about why she wasn't ready. She listed the things she really should accomplish first and the reasons that she wasn't actually good enough to train with this coach. Her Inner Critic had taken over. It was doing its job- trying to prevent her from risking failure.

When you were younger, your Inner Critic voice served you well. It kept you from touching a hot stove or crossing the street in traffic. Maybe, at some point, it kept you from making a big mistake. The problem is though, that as this voice persists into adulthood, it often keeps you from taking risks you need to take in order to accomplish your goals. If you never fail, get criticized or experience taking a big risk, you're missing out on so many things!

Take a few minutes to write down some of your most common Inner Critic thoughts. What comes up in your mind when you're in the warm up arena, contemplating taking on a new experience or setting a big goal. "I'm not ready." "I don't deserve that." "People might think I'm cocky." "I might be wrong." "I might fail." "I'm not talented enough, important enough, or good enough." These are all examples of Inner Critic talk. Even, "I can't because it's raining." And "I don't have time." And "I can't afford it." can be driven by your Inner Critic. Anything to help you get out of challenging stuff or avoid change!

Think about how you treat your friends when they're under pressure or need support. Do you tell them how much they suck compared to everyone else in the ring? Do you remind them of all the low dressage scores they've received in the past? No! Of course you don't. Try thinking of yourself as a dear friend. What would you say to yourself in order to help YOU succeed? You have the power to inspire rather than disempower yourself with your thoughts.

Your Inner Critic will never leave you. I promise. He or she will hunker down and continue to show up anytime you're faced with pressure. The key is to identify this voice as "not you". It is incredibly liberating to realize that the voice that tells you you're not good enough is NOT YOU.

I'm going to say it again. Your Inner Critic voice is NOT YOU.

It's a mechanism for self-preservation that we all have. And we all have the ability to negotiate with it and relate to it in a productive way.

The key to quieting your Inner Critic, is to access, what I call, your Inner Coach voice. The Inner Coach is the voice that speaks for your wisdom, your dreams, and your self-trust. Your Inner Coach knows what you are capable of and inspires you to go for it. During TPP, I'll be asking you to create a vision and set a powerful goal. You'll be strengthening your Inner Coach voice and quieting your Inner Critic. When you're setting goals, and you lay out clearly what you want and how you want to feel, you're strengthening your Inner Coach voice. This is a powerful way to begin to get ahead of whatever fears have held you back in the past.

Your Inner Coach believes in your strengths, your courage, and your ability to learn and grow from adversity. My friend and client, Christine created a mantra to quiet her Inner Critic. Her mantra is, "I am the storm." This mantra took her from being a jumble of self-doubt to qualifying for and riding in the national dressage championships in Kentucky. It anchored her as she conquered a serious cancer diagnosis at the same time. Her Inner Coach voice reminds her again and again that she cannot be taken out by the storm when she is the storm. The internal chatter of her Inner Critic was all about not being good enough, not having the right horse, wondering if she could afford it, feeling guilty, and ultimately wondering if she should give up in the face of breast cancer. But her Inner coach voice kicked in and took a stand for her dream and who she knew she needed to be. Ultimately, strengthening her Inner Coach voice helped her cultivate the courage to quit a job that was no longer serving her and start her own business. She has been able to travel, spend time with her family and live the life she wants rather than the one she thought she had to live. "I am the storm." She now has that tattooed on her arm.

Your Inner Coach is about your aspirations. In the case of my client headed to Europe, once her Inner Critic got it all out, I had her talk about her vision, her goals, and what this experience would mean to her in her life. We talked about how it was aligned with her dreams and what the payoff would be for her if she went on this journey. In this way, she was able to access her Inner Coach voice. She made powerful decisions that were connected to her goals and her vision rather than based on fear and on the insecurities of her Inner Critic.

So, how do you tell if you Inner Critic is getting in your way or if you're just being realistic? This is a great question that people ask all the time. Here's the thing: Your Inner Critic voice is opinionated and not interested in facts. It's repetitive and prone to sweeping generalizations. Your Inner critic voice is not interested in compromise or finding solutions. It's into complaining and making judgments. Your Inner Critic voice is all about black and white thinking.

Your Inner Coach, on the other hand, is calm and interested problem solving. Your Inner Coach voice is cool with doing hard things and trusts that you will find a way. Your Inner Coach voice is OK with ambiguity where your Inner Critic voice uses uncertainty as an excuse to bail on things.

"There is nothing more important to true growth than realizing that you are not the voice of the mind - you are the one who hears it."

— **Michael A. Singer, The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself**

Begin to pay attention to how you listen and don't be afraid to let your Inner Coach get down and dirty with your Inner Critic- starting now!