

RECOVER ARRIVE BECOME

CLINICAL THERAPY PRACTICE

THE VOICES IN OUR SELF-TALK

UNDERSTAND • GET CURIOUS • CHECK THE STORY • CHOOSE

Sometimes we believe a healthier thought and still hear an older, harsher voice. The goal is not to fight that voice, but to understand what it is trying to protect and choose what fits now.

A SIMPLE FREUD REFRESHER

- Freud described the id, ego, and superego as parts of a theory about inner conflict - not separate parts of the brain.
- Id: urges, wants, comfort, pleasure, and immediate needs.
- Superego: internalized rules, ideals, expectations, and judgments about what we 'should' do.
- Ego: tries to work with reality, balance competing demands, and make workable choices.
- Modern psychology uses many other models too; this can simply be one useful way to picture competing inner messages.

THE OLD CRITICAL VOICE

- You might call it the inner critic, old rulebook, protective voice, worry voice, or simply 'a part of me.'
- It may repeat messages learned from family, relationships, culture, school, trauma, or earlier experiences.
- You can intellectually believe a new thought while an older belief still feels emotionally familiar.
- That does not mean the healthier thought is fake or that your work is failing.

GET CURIOUS INSTEAD OF FIGHTING

- Try asking: "What are you afraid would happen if I stopped believing this?"
- "What do you think you are protecting me from?"
- "When did this rule first become useful?"
- "How old does this fear feel?"
- "Is this warning about what is happening now, or what happened before?"
- Curiosity can create room between hearing a thought and automatically obeying it.

WHAT MIGHT THE FEAR BE?

- "If you become confident, people will criticize or reject you."
- "If you are assertive, someone will become angry or leave."
- "If you succeed, expectations will rise or people may resent you."
- "If you trust yourself, you could make a mistake."
- "If you stop pleasing everyone, you may lose belonging."
- These are possibilities to explore - not assumptions about why every negative thought occurs.

ANSWER FROM YOUR PRESENT SELF

- "I understand why you learned to watch for that. I have more choices now."
- "Being assertive is not the same as being unkind."
- "Confidence does not require believing I am better than anyone else."
- "Making a mistake would be uncomfortable, not proof that I am a failure."
- "I can appreciate the warning without letting fear make the decision."
- The aim is a believable response, not forced positivity.

CATCH • CHECK • UNDERSTAND • CHOOSE

1. CATCH: What did the old voice just say?
 2. CHECK: What evidence supports it? What evidence does not?
 3. UNDERSTAND: What might this thought be trying to prevent or protect me from?
 4. UPDATE: Does that old rule fit my life and circumstances now?
 5. CHOOSE: What thought and action better reflect my current values, evidence, safety, and goals?
- Sometimes both thoughts are present. You can choose the healthier action before the old feeling completely disappears.

You do not have to silence every old thought before you can choose a new direction.

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