

## What Stops Us from Becoming Better?

When we come into this world, we are – what some spiritual traditions refer to – our Core Self, Spiritual Self, True or Essential Self. The human part of our Core Self is the part that develops into our ego-personality.

We were not born with all of our personal, physical, emotional, psychological, and social problems around our feelings of worthiness, deservingness or value, around our fears and doubts about, "Can I become a better me?"

Our doubts and fears around becoming a better me surfaced when we separated from our True, Essential and Core Self.

Over time our Core Self becomes "hidden," like dust gathering on a light bulb and we begin to separate from our True Self, our Core Self. And in this process of separation, we take on beliefs that we are not "good enough, or we don't have value or worth. We might begin to feel small or invisible, or sad, angry, frustrated, enraged or hateful as we separate from our True Self. How does this "dust" form?

Beginning at birth, as we engage with "outsiders," first, our mother and father - or primary caregivers – and then with extended family and relatives, friends, teachers, clergy, the media and the like we experience their judgments and criticisms and slowly take on the belief we are "bad" or "wrong" in some way, shape or form. We begin to believe we are deficient – we lack value and worth. This is the root cause of our fear, doubt and resistance when it comes to "becoming a better you.

As a newborn and young child, we are not able to think for ourselves. So, we need to be seen and "mirrored" in order to grow, develop and mature. The only way this can be done is if we are seen (and given feedback) from the "outsiders." This mirroring from the outside supports us to know who we are.

In order for us to grow harmoniously and completely, we need those "outsiders" to see, acknowledge and reflect our True Self, our Core. Moreover, we need to be mirrored by the "outsiders" who come from their own True Self and Core Self as well. We need to be mirrored (seen) with a clear, objective, non-judgmental perspective –one that is completely loving, compassionate, intelligent, joyful, and peaceful, etc.

We need to experience those others consistently celebrating, loving, admiring and appreciating us – as they come from their own True Self, Core Self.

When this happens, we grow and mature fully and perfectly. However, when this mirroring comes from others who are not in touch with their own True Self, or Core Self, we grow less perfectly.

It's our less perfect self who begins to show up in the world; the less perfect self who is conflicted when it comes to "becoming a better you."

It's quite uncommon that a child's mirroring by others comes from this place of their True or Core Self. As a result, the child's True and Core Self is unreflected and the child grows up separated from his or her True or Core Self.

### How We Take on the Imperfect Mirroring – The Inner Judge and Critic

#### START HERE

The inner judge and critic is the force or voice in you that constantly evaluates and assesses (through judging and criticizing) your worth as a human being and thus limits your capacity to become a better you. This voice judges, condemns, criticizes, compares, blames and attacks you mercilessly and constantly.

The inner judge and critic is NOT you. Rather, it represents a composite of many of the judging, critical, blaming, and punishing authority figures in your life. Beginning at birth and on through childhood, the inner judge and critic is the voice of, first, your mother and father - or primary caregivers - and then your extended family, relatives, teachers, clergy, radio and TV personalities, and the like.

The inner judge and critic is created as a result of your experiences in the environment within which you grew up. Your Inner judge and critic *pretends* to be your conscience but rather it is a harsh judge and cruel source of punishment, which results in self-distrust and self-hatred.

This negative energy, and negative feelings and emotions you experience when you judge and blame yourself harshly are a destructive form of self-abuse. Your continual habit of negatively judging yourself with these acts of repetitive violence against your true nature is debilitating and self-sabotaging – in essence, keeping you from becoming a better you.

Some traditions refer to your true nature as your "True Self" a.k.a., "Essence," "Essential Nature," "Being" and "Soul." Whatever term you

choose to call your essential self, this is the real "you" who experiences your life — the one who perceives. This is the real "you" who experiences having a body, having thoughts, having feelings, and having an ego. It is the true "I" who you can experience when you are living in the moment, right here and right now...without the interference of mind chatter, without the mental chatter of the Inner judge and critic.

When you are in the moment, not engaged in mental chatter, not in dialogue with your Inner judge and critic, you are experiencing the True and Real "you", the "you who is not encumbered by the negative thoughts, feelings, emotions that result when you are being "attacked" by your Inner judge and critic.

When you are not engaged with your Inner judge and critic, involved in all the negative self talk and negative self-demeaning chatter, judgments, and criticisms, (the place of stillness that comes with being "present" or being in a meditative state), you can then access the voice of your True and Real Self.

The voice of your True Self is honest, truthful, kind, friendly, compassionate, loving, playful, accepting, inclusive and generous. On the contrary, the voice of your Super Ego is manipulative, harsh, cruel, fear-based, critical, judgmental, abusive, blaming, comparing, hostile, angry, hateful and separative.

So, one exercise is to practice being vigilant to your Inner Judge and critic, your Inner judge and critic. Listen to it. Notice what your inner voice is saying. Notice who's talking to you. This is to say, our Inner judge and critic is often the "voice" and judgments of those we were closest to when we were growing up, e.g., mother, father, teacher, older sibling, clergy person, etc.

So, it's important to be consciously conscious of what you're thinking and begin the practice of making the distinction between the voice of your True and Real Self, and that of your Inner judge and critic. (Your coach can support you with these practices).

One of these practices is to consciously note how your Inner judge and critic is "attacking" you. For example, when you hear the voice of your Inner judge and critic, and the judgments and criticisms, allow yourself to pay attention to "the judge" inside, and write down a description of how it's attacking you. For example, you might note what it/he/she is saying about "How you should be?"



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Practice — Anatomy of a Judgment:

Recognize the words spoken (the attack on your True and Real Self) For example, "You'll (I'll) never be able to change." "You'll (I'll) just keep repeating the same stupid mistakes over and over again." "You have such incredible potential." (The Judge's criticisms are heard as: "You're not/I'm not living up to my potential or I'm wasting my life.")

Recognize the energetic effect the Judge has on you. For example, Sam and his wife are on their way out for his birthday dinner and the phone rings. Sam wants to let the machine pick it up and his wife says, "I'm going to get it, it could be something really important." She answers the phone and has a fifteen-minute catch-up conversation with a girl friend. Sam's gut tightens up, his breathing becomes shallow, he feels as if there is a band tightening around his head and he can't feel the rest of his body. When the Judge grabs you, you often experience a physiological reaction in your body. It's part of the "attack" process.

Recognize how the judgment feels emotionally. For example, Mary's husband, a college professor, comes home from work each day with abundant compliments for a female co-worker, a single mom whose working on her doctorate. Christina who has been longing to go to chiropractic school for the past five years feels unappreciated, angry, resentful, hurt and defensive.

So, when you notice your Inner judge and critic is attacking you, it's equally important to be conscious of the emotions and feelings accompanying the attack. It's also important to identify the specific emotion or feeling you're experiencing. Not just "bad" but what exactly that particular feeling or emotion is.

Identify the particular quality of the feeling and who or what the feeling or emotion is connected to (person, situation, experience). Then, look to see how you experience the judgment — the words, the energetic effect, the intensity and range of the feeling(s) (for example):

I feel shame:

I feel guilt:

I feel selfish:

I feel small/invisible:

I feel unloved:

I feel inadequate:

### Stay Present and Stay Positive

The Judge gets all its juice from directing your attention toward the past (resulting in anger, resentment, guilt, shame, feeling small, invisible, etc.) and the future (fear, worry and doubt). By following a practice of mindful awareness, being 100% attentive to what is happening in you, right here and right now, locating what is going on in you in your body in the present moment, you can apply one of the best strategies for disengaging from the judge and connecting more deeply with your True Self.

To Cultivate Presence — Be Aware of:

1. External physical reality
2. Physical sensations of your body
3. The nature of your feelings, your emotional landscape
4. The nature of your thoughts, your mental landscape

The following states of consciousness empower your Super Ego/your False Self:

Pride, Anger, Desire, Fear, Grief, Apathy, Guilt, Shame

The following states of consciousness empower your True Self:

Courage, Neutrality, Willingness, Acceptance, Reason, Love, Joy, Peace, Appreciation and Gratitude

So, what is your Inner Judge and Critic saying, and who will you choose to listen to?

Empower your self with positive conscious language:

I can, I am, I will, I have, I choose, I create, I love, I enjoy!

Additional Inner judge and critic Defense Techniques

- ♥ When you recognize your Inner judge and critic talking to you, refuse to enter into a dialogue with it defend quickly and move away immediately
- ♥ Ask yourself how old you feel when the Inner judge and critic is talking; if you feel small and like a child, begin to feel adult and feel your age.
- ♥ Tell your Inner judge and critic that you are in control – “I AM IN CONTROL!!!!”
- ♥ Think thoughts of Joy, Appreciation, and Gratitude – Choose to choose your thoughts.
- ♥ Live in the moment, not in the drama of the past or the worry and concern about the future.
- ♥ Remember that worrying never solved a problem; only action can and get moving.
- ♥ Tell your Inner judge and critic that you don't need or wants its judgment.
- ♥ Take a few deep breaths into your belly and exhale slowly.