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Using Anger To Thought-Stop The Critic

Thought-stopping is the process of using willpower to disidentify from and interrupt toxic thoughts and visualizations. Sometimes visualizing a stop sign at the same time can help strengthen thought-stopping.

Since traumatizing parents cripple the instinctive fight response of their child, recovering the anger of the fight response is essential in healing Cptsd. We need the aid of our fight response to empower the process of thought-stopping the critic. I cannot over-encourage you to use your anger to stop the critic in its tracks. We can re-hijack the anger of the critic's attack, and forcefully redirect it at the critic instead of ourselves. We can then silently and internally say "No!" or "Stop!" or "Shut Up!" to short-circuit drasticizing and perfectionistic mental processes.

Angrily saying "No!" to the critic sets an internal boundary against unnatural, anti-self processes. It is the hammer of self-renovating carpentry that rebuilds our instinct of self-protection. Furthermore recovery is deepened by directing our anger at anyone who helped install the critic, as well as at anyone who is currently contributing to keeping it alive.

I recently received this e-mail from a website respondent who read some of my writing about angering at the critic: "Another explanation I really liked is for people that don't have much of the FIGHT response to start using it to stop the inner critic. I am a huge fan of self-compassion which has really helped me recently (loving-kindness) and I continually just accept all the messages and just let them flow by.





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When I heard your comments about saying NO and rejecting them, I was like 'Yeah- I guess Pete maybe hasn't found it all yet.' I was being close minded. A couple days later I tried it out and oh my god has it helped. I get mad now and it just shuts down my anxiety and turns shame into blame/anger. It feels much better for me! After all it wasn't messages I would have given to myself, and they are all messages from my parents."

Successful critic-shrinking usually requires thousands of angry skirmishes with the critic. Passionate motivation for this work often arises when we construct an accurate picture of our upbringing. Natural anger eventually arises when we really get how little and defenseless we were when our parents bullied us into hating ourselves.

Most trauma survivors were blank slates who were brainwashed into accepting the critic as their primary identity. To the degree that a family is Cptsd-engendering, to that degree is it like a mini-cult. Cults demand absolute loyalty to the leader's authority and belief system. In early thought-stopping work, most survivors need to empower their efforts with a healthy rage against their parents for destroying their self-loyalty and their self-individuation. However, with enough practice, the survivor's healthy observing ego can use willpower alone to disidentify from the critic.

My son's birth graced me with an enormous boost in my motivation to practice thought-stopping on the critic. Witnessing the many miracles of his ongoing development moved me to increasingly deepen my emotional bonding with him. This was quite disconcerting to my critic which began working overtime on its endangerment programs.





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The critic warned me interminably about the danger of my rapidly expanding attachment to him. It was trying to protect me from the devastation that would ensue if my loving emotional investment turned out as badly as it did with my parents. What if untrustworthy “Life” let him die or rendered him a “bad seed.”

The critic manufactured the most dreadful horror movies of accidents, diseases, kidnapping, mental illness, oedipal betrayals, etc. Had I not known how to recognize, interpret and refuse to indulge these catastrophizations, I am sure that my capacity to bond with him would have been seriously compromised. Moreover, had I not been able to use my outrage to disidentify from the critic, thought-stopping by itself would not have been a powerful enough tool.

I particularly like this way of challenging the critic. “I’m not afraid of you anymore, mom and dad. You were the critic, and you put the critic in me. I renounce your toxic messages. Take back your shame and disgust. I am disgusted at your shameful job of parenting.”

One of my clients shared with me a phrase that spontaneously came to her while she was fighting her critic at home. “You totally ruined my childhood, and I’m not going to let you get away with ruining my life now.” She reported that this perspective emblazoned in her consciousness, and now often helps to fire her up to fire the critic.

