

TRANSFORMING RESISTANCE

a guide to recognizing and releasing the inner critic with compassion



photos by Sallie Keena

WHAT IS THE INNER CRITIC?

Many of us, when we approach creative projects or get sparks of creative inspiration, begin to experience resistance.

This can come in many forms - so-called “limiting beliefs”, negative inner voices, anxiety, unkind self-talk, worry... and can manifest as blocks, avoiding action, talking ourselves out of our intuition, or spending our energy on more “practical” items on our rational to-list.

We may avoid honoring our ideas and the creative waters we want to wade in by overthinking ourselves to exhaustion, or by shrinking back - making ourselves and our needs for creative fulfillment quieter, smaller - leaving the creative for another day.

WHAT IF “ANOTHER DAY” IS TODAY?

We can start honoring our creative ideas and natural longing for creative time and flow state by creating boundaries around creative time, and recognizing some of that resistance, and how it manifests for us.

We can start to investigate our inner critic with compassion, and bring some curiosity with us...

In this exercise, I will share with you how I have learned, throughout decades of creative and self-care practices, to start demystifying the negativity that sometimes gets in my way. Giving them names and faces has helped me to become more aware when my anxiety and resistance are bubbling up, and more able to transform these moments into self-love and smoother paths to enjoying my creativity.*

*I've also had decades of therapy - I am not a therapist, but there are great ones out there who can help go a bit deeper + I fully support that!

Sallie Keena | MOONLIGHT CREATIVE | moonlightcreativecoaching@gmail.com
WWW.MOONLIGHTDETECTIVE.COM | [@MOONLIGHTCREATIVECOACHING](https://www.instagram.com/moonlightcreativecoaching)

CONNECTING WITH THE INNER CRITIC: an exercise

pour a glass of water, take a deep breath, and get comfortable!

This practice helps me get in touch with where I am being held back, often by fear of criticism from audiences I'm not interested in pleasing anyways! Once you learn this practice, you can use it almost anytime and place to check in with yourself with compassion and get more clarity to move forward.

FIRST

Get really comfortable - get into a meditation frame of mind and body. Feel free to sit or lay down, and maybe you want a pillow or a blanket. Have a notebook on hand to record (or draw!) your reflections, or use the journal spaces provided. Take a few deep breaths to check in with yourself.

NEXT

Think about how your inner criticism shows up. Sometimes it helps to think of a specific situation. Where has a voice been getting in your way, sending you negative messages as soon as you start to paint, write, step out on that stage, wear that outfit?

Are you a visual thinker? How do you envision this voice? Is it someone you know? A caretaker, colleague from the past? A specific audience you are wary of?

Do words come to you in this space? What words would you use to describe this energy, and how it makes you feel? Does it sound familiar to you?

Are you aware of some feelings? Who is in this audience you are afraid of being vulnerable in front of? Who would make you feel open to criticism if you gave them access to your work?

CONNECTING WITH THE INNER CRITIC: an exercise

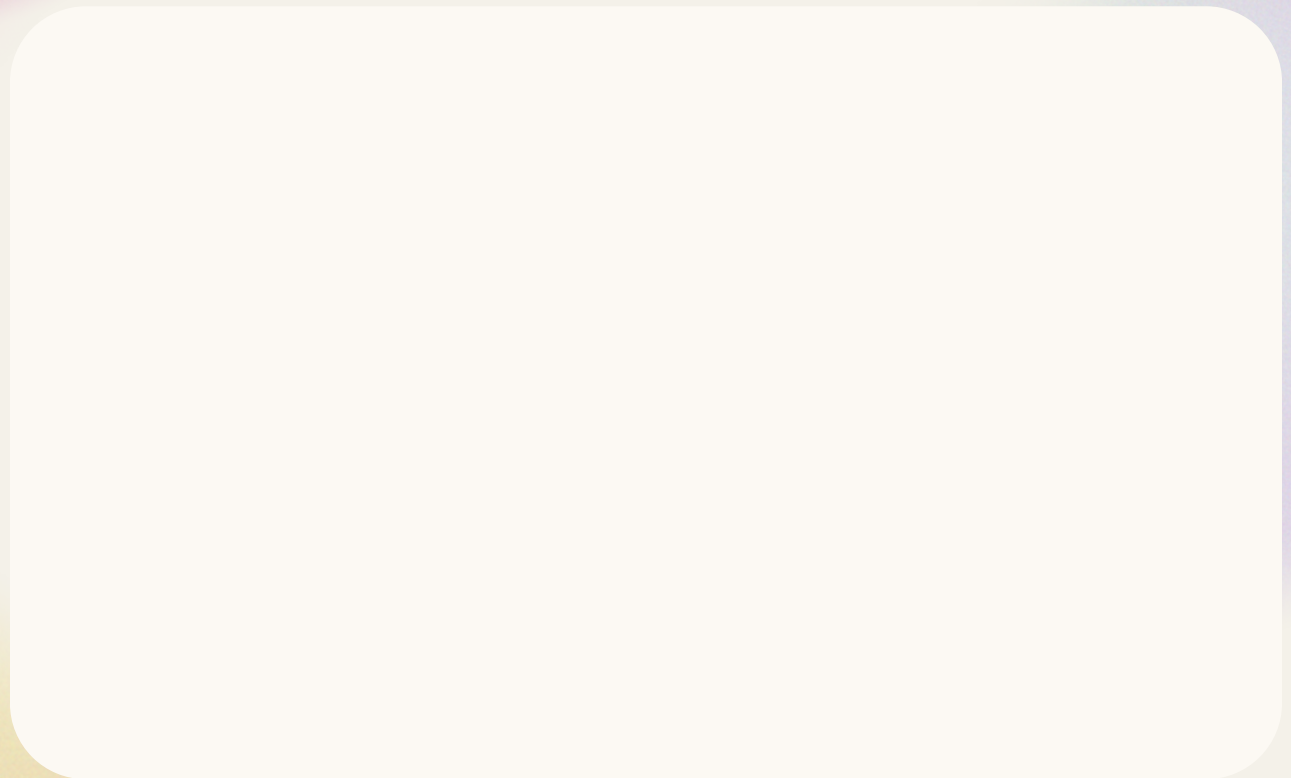
pour a glass of water, take a deep breath, and get comfortable!

There is no pressure here to forgive anyone, “let go” of past trauma, or reconnect in real life with anyone who did you harm - we are just holding space for what might come up. Take notes on what comes to you.

THEN

Connect with warmth and compassion

So often, we discover our inner voices of resistance stem from real experiences with real life people. Can you offer yourself warmth and compassion for anything you’ve been through that was difficult? How can you give yourself love and hold space for the fact that you’ve been dealing with this negativity?



Be patient

This may take time - reflecting within in this space of meditation is also flexing the muscle of your intuition and may take practice! Be open to writing down whatever answers you are getting back. In my experience, this is an exercise that is helpful to do as often as I feel the need to clear the air a bit, and getting to this place of awareness comes with practice.

CONNECTING WITH THE INNER CRITIC:

an exercise, continued

THEN

Connect with CURIOSITY

Ask yourself: Can I approach these inner critics I've named with CURIOSITY? What would it look like to ask why are they here and see what comes back? **Is there a reason why these critics are still speaking in this, my most sacred, creative, space of joy and self-expression?**

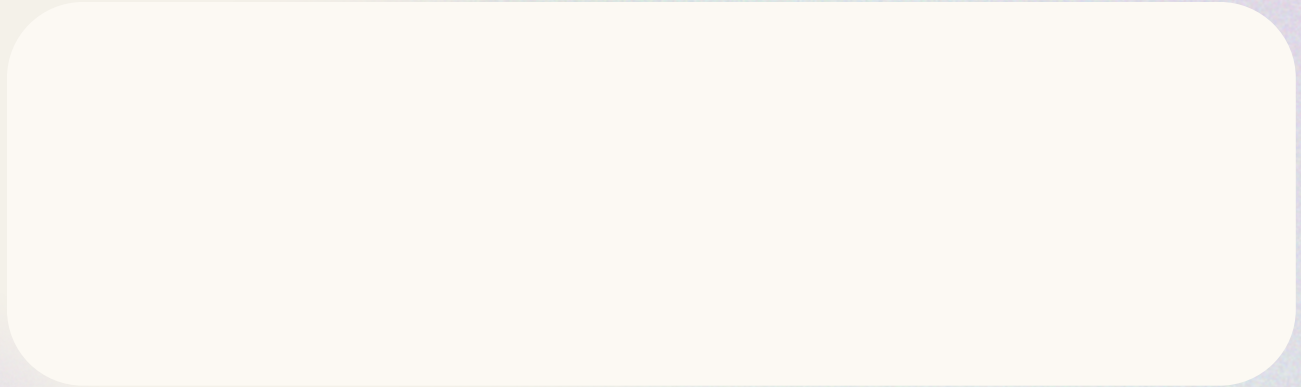
So often, these audiences, voices, - inner critics - made you feel judged, questioned your ideas, rained on your parade, or made you feel as if you needed to be quieter or smaller. Sometimes we've allowed these voices to keep speaking, as a way of protecting ourselves, staying less visible, and taking less risks. Sometimes, these inner critics have actually been serving a purpose - to keep us physically safe in spaces where it wasn't actually safe to shine, to keep us in a false sense of comfort, or to protect us in ways we no longer need protecting.

CONNECTING WITH THE INNER CRITIC:

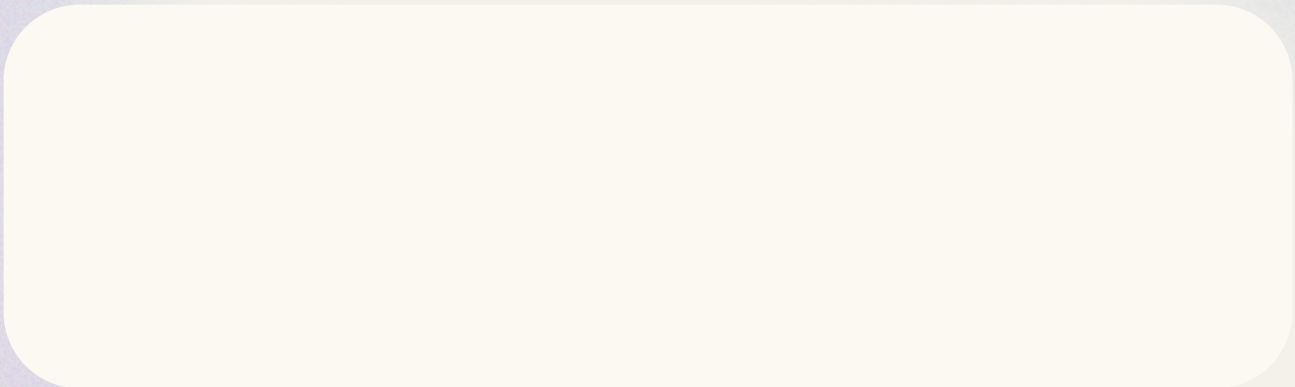
an exercise, continued

Now that you've identified and approached these inner critics with self-compassion and curiosity you can...

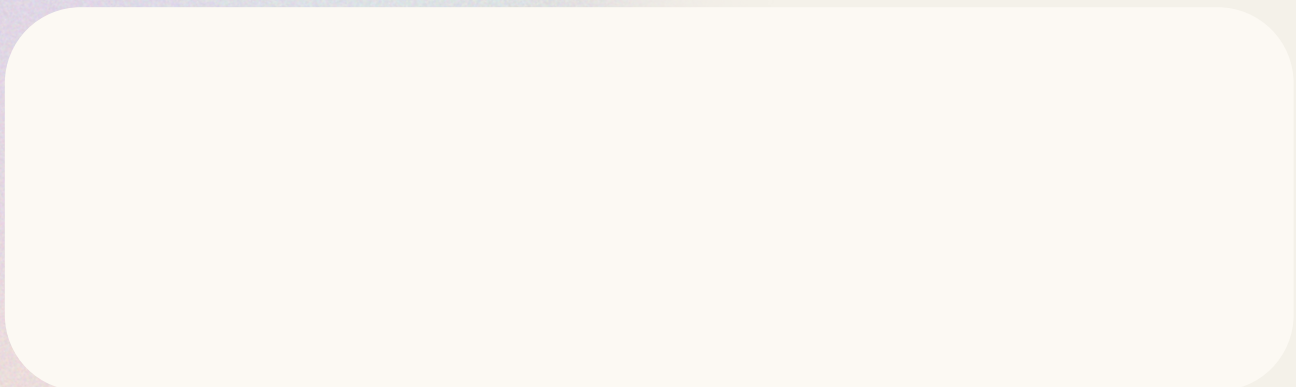
- Send appreciation to the parts of you that were trying to keep you safe with these stay-small messages - from threats once real or imagined.



- Consider telling these inner critics / negative energies that you no longer need them!
- Ask - Can they step aside? What does that look like for them to let go? To trust that you don't need their help in the way they've been trying to "help" or protect you?



- Honor - what will it cost you, if anything, to let them go? This could be a sense of false comfort, a feeling of grief to process, or something else.*



*another thing you could keep discussing with a coach or therapist

CONNECTING WITH THE INNER CRITIC:

an exercise, continued

- Remind yourself *and* these inner critics of all the ways you are now safe to be big, loud, expressive, waste time, materials, pursue your dreams, bake a cake, wear glitter, make a mess, *enjoy your life with creative expression*. Because it is part of what you were born to do!

And...CELEBRATE! With self-kindness...

How will you approach your creative ideas, plans, and enjoyment with more room to breathe, more positivity? **Can you start to integrate more kind and encouraging self-talk?** Can you start to replace the resistance with self-compassion? Congratulate for showing up for yourself in this new way!

I hope this has helped you identify and transform a bit of what might be holding you back! I know this is a process, but your creativity is worth it. And, remember that you're not alone - so many of us struggle with inner critics holding us back, and it's great that you're doing the work to clear more paths for yourself and your ideas to shine! THANK YOU!

*another thing you could keep discussing with a coach or therapist

Sincerely,
SALLIE