



COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES COUNSELING



The Self Criticism Reset

A way to respond when your inner voice turns against you

Self criticism may sound like motivation, preparation, or protection, but shame rarely creates the kind of steady growth it promises. This reset helps you hear the critical message, understand what may be underneath it, and practice a response that is both honest and humane.

• Catch the Critical Message

What happened

What did my inner critic say *Write the exact words if you can*

• Notice the Tone

☐ Harsh

☐ Impatient

☐ Embarrassed

☐ Disappointed

☐ Demanding

☐ Fearful

☐ Hopeless

☐ Comparing

☐ Other

How strongly do I believe the critical message right now

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not much

completely

What did this message make me want to do

• Look Beneath the Criticism

What may the critical voice be trying to prevent *Failure rejection embarrassment uncertainty or something else*

Is there a useful concern hidden inside the harshness

What part is exaggerated unfair or impossible to meet

• Borrow a Kinder Perspective

What would I say to someone I care about who made the same mistake or faced the same struggle

What facts would I remind them of

• Create a Balanced Response

A balanced response does not pretend that everything is fine. It makes room for accountability without turning one moment into a verdict about your worth.

What is true about this situation

What I can take responsibility for

What does not define me

My balanced response to the inner critic

• Choose Repair or Care

☐ Make a repair

☐ Ask for clarification

☐ Try again

☐ Rest

☐ Request support

☐ Change the plan

☐ Let the moment be finished

☐ Other

My next supportive action

• A Gentle Reminder

You can acknowledge what needs attention without using cruelty as the teacher. Growth and self respect are allowed to exist in the same sentence.

This resource is for education and personal reflection. It does not provide diagnosis, treatment, medical advice, or crisis care. If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. You may also call or text 988 for crisis support.

Created by Raven Thomas, MA, LPCC-S | Color Outside the Lines Counseling

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