

WISDOM WITHIN PROGRAM



The **INNER CRITIC**
BEFRIENDING
GUIDE

FROM SELF-DOUBT TO SELF-TRUST
IN 3 SIMPLE STEPS

Renewal with Suzanne

Maybe this sounds familiar:

You're about to say no to someone, and suddenly you hear, "Don't be selfish."

Or you sit down to try something new, and a voice chimes in, "Who do you think you are?"

Sometimes it even shows up in small moments — at work, with family, or when you're simply trying to rest — whispering, "You should be doing more."

That's the **inner critic**. Most of us know it well. It can sound harsh, but beneath the sharp words is a part of us that's trying — in its own clumsy way — to protect us from mistakes, embarrassment, or rejection.

The good news? You don't have to keep fighting with it. When you learn to pause, listen, and respond differently, the critic begins to soften. What once felt like a relentless enemy can actually become an ally — one that helps you stay safe without keeping you small.

This guide gives you a simple, three-step process you can use anytime your inner critic flares up. It's short, practical, and designed to help you experience a shift right away.

- *What once felt like a relentless enemy can actually become an ally.*

Step 1

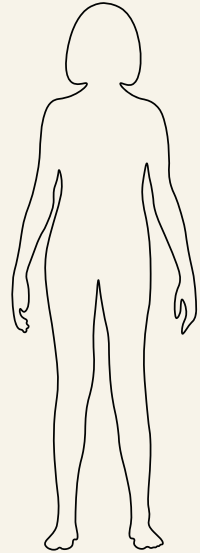
PAUSE & NOTICE

The first step in shifting your relationship with the inner critic is simply noticing when it's there.

Most of us are so used to its constant chatter that we don't even realise it's running the show. By pausing, even for a few seconds, you begin to step out of its grip and create just enough space to choose a different response.

Try this:

- Notice what's happening in your body in this present moment, including your breath.
- You don't need to change anything — just be a witness.
- Name it: "My critic is here."
(If you've given it a nickname, use that.)



That's it.

No judgment, no pushing it away.
Just noticing.

Quick Exercise:

Your Critic's Greatest Hits

Grab a notebook and write down the top 3 phrases your critic loves to throw at you.

Then reflect:

- When do you usually hear these phrases? (Work, family, trying something new, or when you're tired?)
- What do they stop you from doing?

This helps you spot patterns, so you'll recognise your critic faster next time.

Step 2

GET CURIOUS

Instead of shutting the critic down, the next step is to get curious about what it's really trying to do for you.

Behind every harsh word is a worried part of you — one that wants to protect you from pain. When you can hear its concerns, the critic often softens.

Try this:

The next time you hear it speak up, ask:

“What are you worried will happen if I don't listen to you?”

“What are you trying to protect me from?”



Simple Reframe:

Instead of hearing
“You're so stupid”
and believing it....
try reframing it as:
“My protector is worried
I'll make a mistake.”

This doesn't excuse the harsh tone, but it helps you see the good intention behind it.

Step 3

THANK & REDIRECT

Once you've listened with curiosity, it's time to thank your critic for trying to protect you — while also letting it know you're capable of making choices yourself.

This step helps you shift from being ruled by the critic to being guided by your wiser self.

Try this:

- Say to your critic: “Thank you for trying to keep me safe. I've got this.”



- If it comes back, set a gentle boundary: “I hear you, and I'm choosing to trust myself here.”

- Move your body gently: stretch, shake, or roll your shoulders. Maybe a deep breath or two.

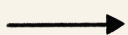
These small actions send a clear signal — to your inner critic and to your whole system — that you are steady, present, and in charge.

THINK OF THE NEXT PAGE AS YOUR COMPANION — A QUICK REMINDER THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET STUCK IN THE CRITIC'S VOICE. KEEP IT SOMEWHERE YOU'LL SEE IT OFTEN: PRINT IT OUT, TUCK IT INTO A NOTEBOOK, OR SAVE A SCREENSHOT ON YOUR PHONE.

Quick Reference Card

When Your Inner Critic Flares Up

3 Steps to Befriend Your Inner Critic:



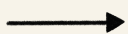
Pause & Notice →

Notice what's happening in your body and with your breath. No need to change anything. Just witness, then name it if that feels right.



Get Curious → **Ask** → “What are you concerned about?”

Reframe: “This is an inner part that is trying to protect me.”



Thank & Redirect → Say:

“Thanks, I've got this.” Remind and release your body: roll your shoulders, stretch, move.

Remember: You're not trying to silence your critic — you're learning to befriend it.

What Changes When You Befriend Your Inner Critic?

- 🌀 Everyday decisions feel calmer and clearer
- 🌀 You stop over-apologising and second-guessing
- 🌀 Others notice you're more confident and at ease
- 🌀 You begin to trust your own judgment about your own life

✨ This is just the beginning. With practice, you'll discover that the voice of your inner critic isn't the loudest one anymore — it's your inner wisdom that leads.

And when that happens, something profound shifts:

- You no longer live at the mercy of that inner voice.
- You make choices from a steadier, calmer place inside you.
- You start showing up in ways that feel more aligned with who you really are.

This simple guide is one step toward a bigger transformation — moving from self-doubt and second-guessing into a life guided by clarity, confidence, and self-trust.

Next Step


You've taken your first step toward befriending your inner critic. Imagine what becomes possible when you have ongoing guidance, deeper practices, and a supportive space to truly shift from doubt to confidence.

✨ That's the work I do inside **Renewal with Suzanne** — helping women over 50 move from being steered by self-criticism to living with steadier inner confidence.

Keep an eye on your inbox for my upcoming emails with practical tools and invitations to go deeper. All the best--

Suzanne | Renewal with Suzanne
IFS & Somatic Psychotherapist,
Guide for Women 50+

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