

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 26

Stop Your Inner Critic

Full episode script · English

138 lines

Your English Toolbox

Introduction.

A Special Dedication.

Welcome to Your English Toolbox, your slow English podcast, where we train your ears and your mind step by step.

I am Julia.

And I am Martin.

Today represents a special shift for our podcast and for us personally.

We have been reading your comments, and we realized something important.

We do not see you just as an audience or listeners anymore.

We see you as friends.

And because of that, we want to ask you something very small, but very important.

Please leave a comment after the episode.

Your comments help us build our community and show the platforms that our podcast is alive and growing.

Every single comment makes a real difference.

It helps us reach new listeners and continue creating new episodes for you.

So, from now on, we are going to talk to you exactly like that, as friends.

This new series is actually dedicated to two specific friends of ours from Lithuania.

They are our friends, Zay and Vy.

These two wonderful girls left a comment on our previous episode about how to talk to yourself.

They shared their thoughts, and it inspired us to go much deeper into this topic.

We realized that we needed to expand on these ideas to truly help them, and to help you.

So, to our Lithuanian friends, thank you for the inspiration, this series is for you.

And to everyone listening, please talk to us in the comments.

Tell us what you are struggling with or what specific points you want us to cover.

We will create tailored episodes just to answer your questions, just like we are doing today.

Before we start, could you do us a quick favor?

If you feel like a friend today, please leave a comment or a like to support the show.

It helps us find more friends around the world.

Now let's open the toolbox.

Today, in part one of this special series, we are facing an invisible enemy.

It is the voice that wakes up with you in the morning and whispers, "You are not good enough."

We are talking about the inner critic.

We are going to identify it, understand it, and give you the tools to stop it.

Part one.

Why is this voice so mean?

Martin, I think our friends listening know exactly what voice we are talking about.

It is that automatic negative reflex that jumps out whenever we try something new.

You want to apply for a better job, and the voice says, "Don't bother.

You are not qualified."

You want to post a creative photo on Instagram, and it says, "People will laugh at you."

You want to speak English in a meeting, and it screams, "You will make a mistake and look stupid."

It feels like this voice hates us, doesn't it?

It feels like a bully living inside our own heads.

But here is the surprising truth, the inner critic is actually trying to help you.

It is a very old, very outdated survival mechanism.

Thousands of years ago, if you made a mistake or stood out from the tribe, you could die.

If you were rejected by your group, you would not survive the winter.

So the brain developed a warning system to keep you safe.

It learned to say, "Stay small, stay quiet, don't take risks."

The problem is that your brain still thinks public speaking is a life-or-death situation.

It treats a social rejection like a tiger attack.

So the inner critic is not a monster, it is a frightened bodyguard.

It is trying to protect you from shame, but it is doing it by crushing your potential.

Understanding this is the first step to freedom.

You don't have to hate the voice.

You just have to realize that its advice is thousands of years out-of-date.

Part two, the critic in everyday life.

Let's look at some concrete examples of how this shows up in our daily lives.

We see it constantly in relationships.

Imagine you want to set a boundary with a friend or a partner.

You want to say, "No, I cannot come to your party because I am tired."

But the inner critic immediately jumps in.

It says, "If you say no, they will stop liking you."

"They will think you are selfish.

You have to go."

So you go to the party, you feel resentful, and you drain your energy.

The critic convinced you that your own needs were dangerous.

We also see this in health and fitness.

You miss one workout or you eat one unhealthy meal.

A supportive friend would say, "That is okay.

Just get back on track tomorrow."

But the inner critic says, "You ruined everything.

You have no discipline."

"You might as well give up completely."

This is called catastrophizing.

It takes one small mistake and turns it into a total disaster.

And what happens?

You feel guilty, so you actually give up.

The critic creates the exact failure it was warning you about.

It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Think about our friends learning a new skill, like painting or coding.

You look at your first attempt, and it is not perfect.

The critic says, "You have no talent.

This is embarrassing."

But nobody is perfect on the first try.

The critic demands instant perfection, which is impossible.

So how do we stop this cycle?

We need specific tools to disarm this bodyguard.

Part three, tools to silence the noise.

The first tool is one of my favorites, give it a name.

This sounds funny, but psychology shows it is incredibly powerful.

If you hear the voice as you, you believe it.

But if you give the voice a silly persona, you create distance.

I call my inner critic the Grumpy Uncle.

Imagine an old man sitting in a chair, complaining about everything.

When the thoughts come, I can say, "Oh, the Grumpy Uncle is shouting again."

"Thanks for your opinion, Uncle, but I am going to do it anyway."

Some people call it the gremlin or give it a cartoon voice.

Try to imagine your inner critic sounding like a duck.

It is very hard to be terrified of a voice that sounds like a cartoon duck.

This technique is called cognitive diffusion.

It unhooks you from the thought.

The second tool is the best friend test.

This is the ultimate reality check for negative self-talk.

When you beat yourself up, stop and ask one question.

"Would I say this to my best friend?"

If your best friend from Lithuania called you and said, "I made a mistake at work," what would you say?

Would you say, "You are stupid and you should be fired"?

Absolutely not.

You would be kind.

You would say, "Everybody makes mistakes.

You are smart and you will fix it."

So why are you so cruel to yourself?

You need to learn to be your own best friend.

When the critic attacks, answer it with the same words you would offer a friend.

Say, "This is tough, but I am doing my best."

"I am learning, and learning is messy."

Self-compassion is not weakness, it is fuel.

Research shows that people who are kind to themselves achieve more than people who criticize themselves.

Because when you are kind, you are not afraid to try again.

And trying again is the only way to grow.

Conclusion, your assignment.

Martin, we have covered a lot of ground today.

We have exposed the inner critic for what it really is, just a scared voice.

It is a story, not a fact.

And you are the author of your life, so you can write a new story.

To our friends from Lithuania, and to all our friends listening, we have a question for you.

What name are you going to give your inner critic?

Is it a Grumpy Uncle, a gremlin, a storm cloud?

Tell us in the comments below.

We really want to know.

By naming it, you start to control it.

In the next episode, we will tackle the critic's big brother, imposter syndrome.

That is the feeling that you are a fraud, even when you are succeeding.

It is a crucial topic, especially for high achievers.

So make sure you are subscribed so you don't miss part two.

Thank you for treating us like friends today.

We are cheering for you.

See you in the next episode.