

VOCABULARY · EPISODE 26

Stop Your Inner Critic

Key words & expressions · English + Español

10 words

Your English Toolbox

1

the inner critic

el crítico interior · la voz interior que juzga

DEF

the internal voice that judges, criticises, and undermines your confidence from within

The inner critic is a psychological concept that language learners know intimately — the voice that says 'your accent is embarrassing' or 'you'll never be fluent'. Naming it helps you separate yourself from it.

ES

La voz interna que juzga, critica y socava tu confianza desde dentro.

Es un concepto psicológico que los estudiantes de idiomas conocen íntimamente.

Every language learner has an inner critic — the voice that tells you your English isn't good enough.

Every language learner has an inner critic. -> Todo estudiante de idiomas tiene un crítico interior.

The first step to speaking with confidence is learning to quieten your inner critic.

The first step to speaking with confidence is learning to quieten your inner critic. -> El primer paso para hablar con confianza es aprender a callar la voz interior que juzga.

2

to second-guess yourself

dudar de uno mismo constantemente · cuestionarse cada decisión

DEF

to doubt your own decisions, judgements, or abilities after the fact; to constantly question whether you are doing the right thing

Second-guessing is the enemy of language learning fluency — every time you stop to ask yourself 'was that right?', you interrupt the flow of speech. The goal is action first, review later.

ES

Dudar de tus propias decisiones, juicios o habilidades a posteriori; cuestionar constantemente si estás haciendo lo correcto.

Es el enemigo de la fluidez en el aprendizaje de idiomas.

She second-guessed every sentence she said in English, which made her sound hesitant even when she was right.

She second-guessed every sentence she said in English. -> Dudaba de cada frase que decía en inglés.

Stop second-guessing yourself — say the sentence first and correct it later.

Stop second-guessing yourself — say the sentence first and correct it later. -> Deja de cuestionarte cada decisión — di la frase primero y corrígela después.

3

to cut yourself some slack

darse un respiro · no ser tan duro consigo mismo

DEF

to be less critical and demanding of yourself; to give yourself some room to make mistakes without harsh self-judgment

Cutting slack comes from sailing — slackening a rope gives it room to move. Applied to yourself, it means loosening the tight grip of self-criticism. Essential advice for perfectionist language learners.

ES

Ser menos crítico y exigente con uno mismo; darse espacio para cometer errores sin un juicio severo. Viene de la vela — aflojar una cuerda le da espacio para moverse.

Cut yourself some slack — you are trying to speak a language that is not your own. That is hard.

Cut yourself some slack — you are trying to speak a language that is not your own. -> Darse un respiro — estás intentando hablar un idioma que no es el tuyo.

The most fluent learners cut themselves slack when they stumble and keep going.

The most fluent learners cut themselves slack when they stumble and keep going. -> Los estudiantes más fluidos no son tan duros consigo mismos cuando tropiezan y siguen adelante.

4

to talk yourself out of something

convencerse de no hacer algo · echarse atrás por miedo

DEF

to convince yourself not to do something that you originally intended or wanted to do, usually through doubt or fear

Talking yourself out of something is the inner critic in action — the slow internal negotiation that ends with you not doing the brave thing. Language learners talk themselves out of speaking opportunities constantly.

ES

Convencerse de no hacer algo que originalmente pretendías o querías hacer, generalmente por dudas o miedo.

Es el crítico interior en acción — la negociación interna lenta que termina con no hacer lo valiente.

He had planned to speak English at the meeting but talked himself out of it at the last second.

He had planned to speak English at the meeting but talked himself out of it at the last second. -> Había planeado hablar inglés en la reunión pero se convenció de no hacerlo en el último segundo.

Every time you talk yourself out of speaking, you miss a chance to grow.

Every time you talk yourself out of speaking, you miss a chance to grow. -> Cada vez que te echas atrás por miedo a hablar, pierdes una oportunidad de crecer.

5

self-doubt

la duda sobre uno mismo · la inseguridad personal

DEF

the feeling of lacking confidence in your own abilities, decisions, or worth

Self-doubt is the voice that says 'you cannot do this'. It is different from the inner critic, which judges your actions — self-doubt questions your fundamental ability. Every English learner experiences it, and naming it is the first step to managing it.

ES

El sentimiento de carecer de confianza en tus propias habilidades, decisiones o valor.

Diferente del crítico interior, que juzga tus acciones — la duda sobre uno mismo cuestiona tu capacidad fundamental. Todo estudiante de inglés la experimenta.

Self-doubt is normal, but you cannot let it stop you from speaking — every mistake is proof you are trying.

Self-doubt is normal, but you cannot let it stop you from speaking — every mistake is proof you are trying. -> La duda sobre uno mismo es normal, pero no puedes dejar que te impida hablar — cada error es prueba de que lo estás intentando.

The moment she started the podcast, her self-doubt disappeared — she was too busy speaking to worry.

The moment she started the podcast, her self-doubt disappeared — she was too busy speaking to worry. -> En el momento en que empezó el podcast, su inseguridad personal desapareció — estaba demasiado ocupada hablando como para preocuparse.

6

to dwell on something

darle vueltas a algo · quedarse atascado pensando en algo

DEF

to spend too much time thinking or worrying about something, especially something negative in the past

Dwelling is unproductive — it keeps your mind locked on what went wrong instead of moving forward. After a difficult English conversation, dwelling on your mistakes for hours is the opposite of what you should do.

ES

Pasar demasiado tiempo pensando o preocupándose por algo, especialmente algo negativo del pasado.

Improductivo — mantiene tu mente bloqueada en lo que salió mal en lugar de avanzar.

Don't dwell on the words you got wrong — focus on the conversation you managed to have.

Don't dwell on the words you got wrong — focus on the conversation you managed to have. -> No le des vueltas a las palabras que dijiste mal — céntrate en la conversación que lograste tener.

She used to dwell on every mistake, but she has learned to note them and move on quickly.

She used to dwell on every mistake, but she has learned to note them and move on quickly. -> Solía quedarse atascada pensando en cada error, pero ha aprendido a anotarlos y avanzar rápido.

7

to beat yourself up

machacarte a ti mismo · castigarte por algo innecesariamente

DEF

to feel excessive guilt or blame yourself harshly for something that went wrong

Beating yourself up is a very common but destructive habit — it goes beyond learning from a mistake and into punishing yourself for it. In language learning, it is the enemy of progress: forgive, note, and move on.

ES

Sentir una culpa excesiva o culparte duramente por algo que salió mal.

Hábito muy común pero destructivo — va más allá de aprender de un error y se convierte en castigarte por él.

Stop beating yourself up about your accent — an accent shows where you come from, and that is something to be proud of.

Stop beating yourself up about your accent — an accent shows where you come from, and that is something to be proud of. -> Deja de machacarte por tu acento — un acento muestra de dónde vienes, y eso es algo de lo que estar orgulloso.

He beat himself up for weeks after the job interview, but the experience actually taught him a lot.

He beat himself up for weeks after the job interview, but the experience actually taught him a lot. -> Se castigó innecesariamente durante semanas después de la entrevista de trabajo, pero la experiencia en realidad le enseñó mucho.

8

to quiet the noise

silenciar el ruido mental · callar los pensamientos negativos

DEF

to reduce or silence the mental chatter, negative thoughts, or doubts that distract you from acting

Quieting the noise is the internal work before speaking — turning down the volume of the inner critic so you can focus on what you want to say. It is a mindset skill, not a language skill, but it determines everything.

ES

Reducir o silenciar el parloteo mental, los pensamientos negativos o las dudas que te distraen de actuar.

El trabajo interior antes de hablar — bajar el volumen del crítico interior para poder concentrarte en lo que quieres decir.

Before you speak, quiet the noise — take one breath and focus only on the next sentence.

Before you speak, quiet the noise — take one breath and focus only on the next sentence. -> Antes de hablar, silencia el ruido mental — respira una vez y céntrate solo en la siguiente frase.

The more she practised, the easier it became to quiet the noise and just speak without overthinking.

The more she practised, the easier it became to quiet the noise and just speak without overthinking. -> Cuanto más practicaba, más fácil le resultaba callar los pensamientos negativos y simplemente hablar sin pensar demasiado.

9

to move forward

seguir adelante · avanzar en lugar de mirar atrás

DEF

to stop dwelling on the past and make progress, especially after a difficulty or setback

Move forward is both practical and motivational. After a difficult English conversation, the healthy response is to note what happened and move forward. It is about momentum — keeping going despite what went wrong.

ES

Dejar de quedarse en el pasado y progresar, especialmente después de una dificultad o un contratiempo.

Práctico y motivador: después de una conversación difícil en inglés, la respuesta saludable es anotar lo que pasó y seguir adelante.

You cannot change what you said — but you can move forward and use what you learned today.

You cannot change what you said — but you can move forward and use what you learned today. -> No puedes cambiar lo que dijiste — pero puedes seguir adelante y usar lo que aprendiste hoy.

After failing the exam, she took one day to feel disappointed, and then moved forward with a new plan.

After failing the exam, she took one day to feel disappointed, and then moved forward with a new plan. -> Después de suspender el examen, se tomó un día para sentirse decepcionada y luego avanzó con un nuevo plan.

10

to be your own worst enemy

ser tu peor enemigo · sabotearse a ti mismo

DEF

to behave in a way that prevents your own success, usually through excessive self-criticism or fear

This phrase captures the paradox of self-sabotage — you want to succeed but your own thoughts or habits stop you. For English learners, being your own worst enemy means letting fear of mistakes prevent you from speaking.

ES

Comportarte de una manera que impide tu propio éxito, normalmente a través de la autocrítica excesiva o el miedo.

Captura la paradoja del autosabotaje — quieres tener éxito pero tus propios pensamientos o hábitos te lo impiden.

When you refuse to speak because you fear mistakes, you are being your own worst enemy.

When you refuse to speak because you fear mistakes, you are being your own worst enemy. -> Cuando te niegas a hablar por miedo a equivocarte, estás siendo tu peor enemigo.

She realised she had been her own worst enemy all along — her English was good enough, but her confidence was not.

She realised she had been her own worst enemy all along — her English was good enough, but her confidence was not. -> Se dio cuenta de que había sido su peor enemiga todo el tiempo — su inglés era suficientemente bueno, pero su confianza no.