

# Overcoming the Inner Enemy that Causes Depression

with Lisa Firestone, Ph.D.



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# Part One: Facts About Depression





# FACTS ABOUT DEPRESSION

- Depression is the most common mental health disorder in America.
- An estimated 1 in 10 U.S. adults report depression.
- Depression rates are rising. By the year 2020, it will be the second most common health problem in the world.



# FACTS ABOUT DEPRESSION

- **Low self-esteem predicts depression, but depression does not predict low self-esteem.**
- **Negative self-concept has been found to be associated with depression in toddlers.**

# SOURCES

- APA - <http://www.apa.org/>
- NIMH - <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>
- WHO - <http://www.who.int/en/>
- PBS - <http://www.pbs.org/>
- Infant Mental Health Journal
- Melissa Institute - [www.melissainstitute.org/](http://www.melissainstitute.org/)
- CDC - <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- NAMI - <http://www.nami.org/>

**For specific source links, please send requests to  
Carolyn@PsychAlive.org.**



# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness or excessive sleeping
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment







# DEPRESSION TREATMENT

**Only about two-thirds of those suffering with depression seek help.**

**However...**

**Depression is one of the most treatable illnesses: 80-90 percent of people find relief.**



# DEPRESSION TREATMENT

- **Psychotherapy:** It's critical for people suffering from depression to seek care from a licensed mental health professional who has training and experience in helping people recover from depression.
- **Medication:** Medications can be very helpful for reducing the symptoms of depression in some people. Often, a combination of psychotherapy and medication is the best course of treatment.
- **Support System:** The support and involvement of family and friends can play a crucial role in helping someone who is depressed.

# How does psychotherapy help people recover from depression?



- Pinpoint the life problems that contribute to their depression and help them understand which aspects of those problems they may be able to solve or improve.
- Identify negative or distorted thinking patterns that contribute to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that accompany depression.
- Explore other learned thoughts and behaviors that create problems and contribute to depression.
- Help people regain a sense of control and pleasure in life.



# How is having a support system helpful for treating depression?

- A support system can help encourage a depressed loved one to stick with treatment.
- Supportive friends and family can help a depressed person practice the coping techniques and problem-solving skills he or she is learning through psychotherapy.
- Family or marital therapy can be beneficial in bringing together all the individuals affected by depression and helping them learn ways to cope.





## **POLL #1**

Have you or someone close to you experienced depression?

- Yes
- No

# The Critical Inner Voice and Depression

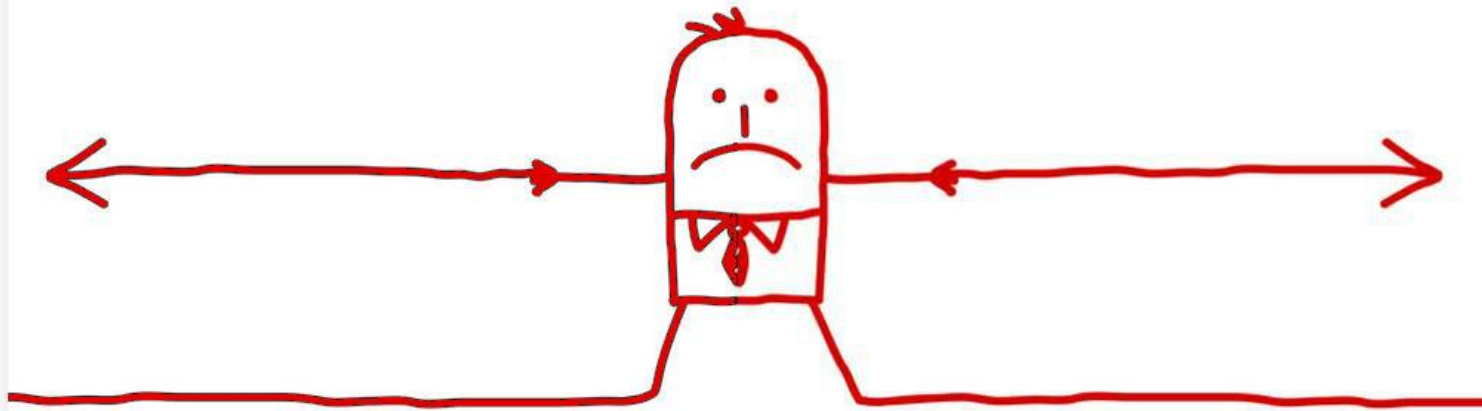




**“When you're depressed, it's as though this committee has taken over your mind, leaving you one depressing thought after the other. Part of the depression is as though you're punishing yourself for something... Your sense of self, your appreciation for yourself, your respect for yourself, disappears completely. It certainly isn't that your mind goes blank. On the contrary, when you're depressed, your mind beats you to death with thoughts. It never stops.”**

**- Rod Steiger, Actor**

# Real Self vs. Anti-Self



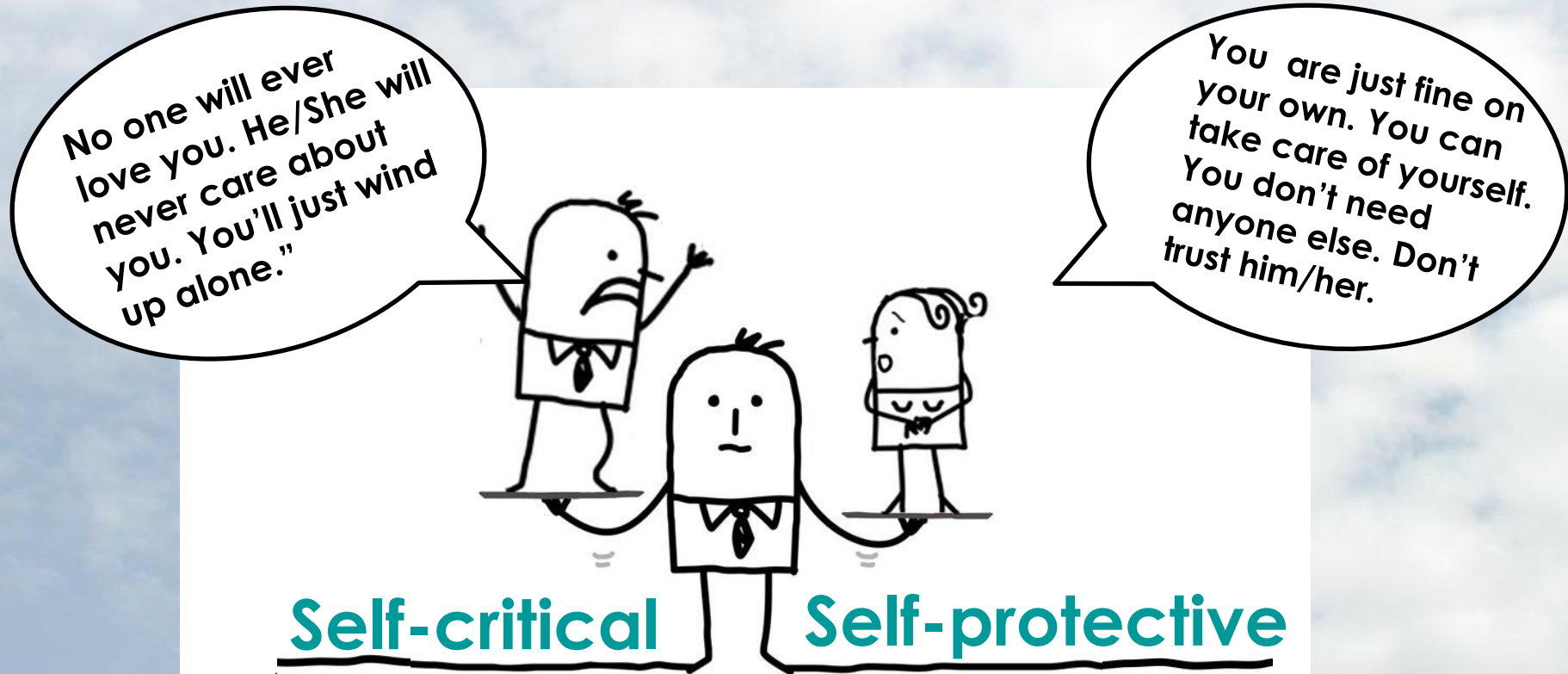


# What is the Critical Inner Voice?

- The critical inner voice is a well-integrated pattern of destructive thoughts toward ourselves and others.
- The nagging “voices” that make up this internalized dialogue are at the root of much of our self-destructive and maladaptive behavior.
- The critical inner voice is not an auditory hallucination; it is experienced as thoughts within your head.
- This stream of destructive thoughts forms an anti-self that discourages individuals from acting in their best interest.



# Critical Inner Voice



# How does the critical inner voice affect us?

- The critical inner voice is an internal enemy that can affect every aspect of our lives, including our self-esteem and confidence, our personal and intimate relationships and our performance and accomplishments at school and work.
- These negative thoughts affect us by undermining our positive feelings about ourselves and others and fostering self-criticism, inwardness, distrust, self-denial, addictions and a retreat from goal-directed activities.





# COMMON VOICES IN DEPRESSION

You just don't belong anywhere.

You're a horrible person!

Your life is so boring and empty.

Don't ever get too happy because the ax is bound to fall.

Nobody really likes you. You're unlovable.

You deserve all the bad things that are happening to you.

Don't show anybody how bad you feel.

Who do you think you are anyway? You're nothing!

You don't deserve anything.





## **POLL #2**

Do you ever experience  
these types of voices?

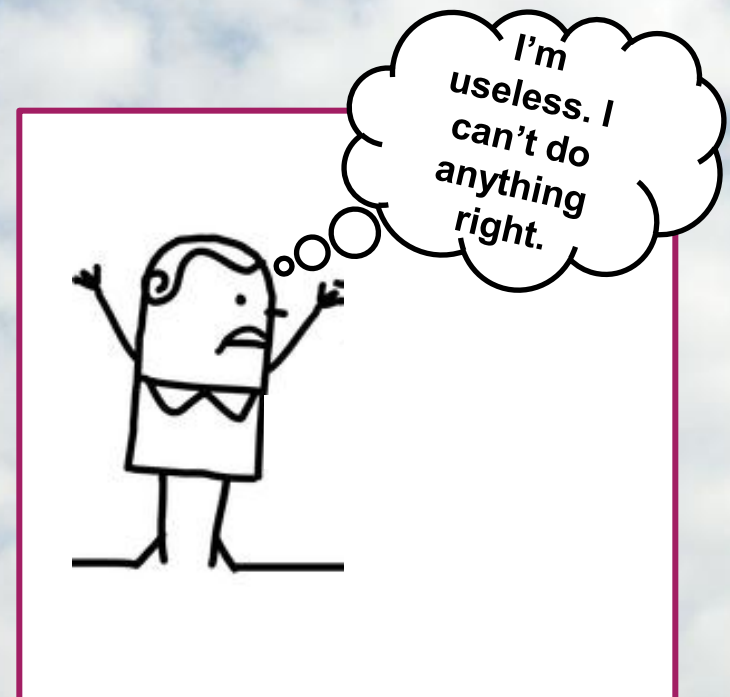
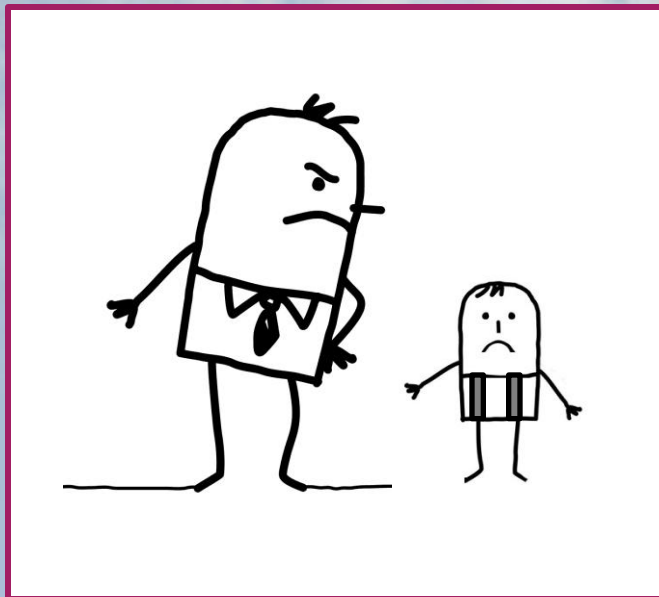
- Most of them
- Some of them
- None of them

# **Part Two: Where Does the Critical Inner Voice that Causes Depression Come From?**



# Our critical inner voice is formed from our early life experiences. It stems from:

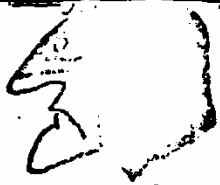
- Internalized attitudes that were directed toward us by parents or influential caretakers throughout our development
- Internalized negative thoughts that our parents or early caretakers had toward themselves



# FEIFFER

by JULES FEIFFER

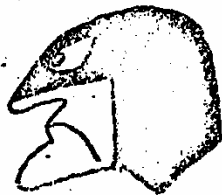
I AM A CRITIC.



I AM NOT A BOOK, ART  
THEATRE, FILM, MUSIC  
OR DANCE CRITIC.



I AM A  
BERNARD  
CRITIC.



A RESIDENT CRITIC WORKING  
INSIDE THE HEAD OF A BERNARD.



HE WAKES UP I TELL HIM,  
"YOU'RE LATE." AT THE OF-  
FICE I TELL HIM, "YOU'RE  
BEHIND." AT DINNER PARTIES  
I TELL HIM,  
"YOU'RE  
BORING."



WHEN HE FALLS IN  
LOVE I TELL HIM,  
"YOU'RE NOT GOOD  
ENOUGH."



ON OCCASION HE CAN'T  
TAKE ANY MORE RE-  
VIEWS AND ORDERS  
ME OUT OF HIS HEAD.



SO I RIP OFF MY  
MASK AND SAY,  
"IS THAT THE WAY TO  
TALK TO YOUR  
MOTHER?"



CRITIC BY JULES FEIFFER

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE 1977



# Division of the Mind

## Parental Ambivalence

Parents both love and hate themselves and extend both reactions to their productions, i.e., their children.

### Parental Nurturance



### Parental Rejection, Neglect Hostility



# Self-System

## Parental Nurturance

Unique make-up of the individual (genetic predisposition and temperament); harmonious identification and incorporation of parent's positive attitudes and traits and parents positive behaviors: attunement, affection, control, nurturance; and the effect of other nurturing experience and education on the maturing self-system resulting in a sense of self and a greater degree of differentiation from parents and early caretakers.



# Personal Attitudes/Goals/Conscience

## Realistic, Positive Attitudes Towards Self

Realistic evaluation of talents, abilities, etc...with generally positive/compassionate attitude toward self and others

## Goals

Needs, wants, search for meaning in life

## Moral Principles



## Behavior

Ethical behavior toward self and others

## Goal Directed Behavior

## Acting with Integrity





# Anti-Self System

- Unique vulnerability: genetic predisposition and temperament
- Destructive parental behavior: misattunement, lack of affection, rejection, neglect, hostility, over permissiveness
- Other Factors: accidents, illnesses, traumatic separation, death anxiety



**The Fantasy Bond** (core defense) is a self-parenting process made up of two elements: the helpless, needy child, and the self-punishing, self-nurturing parent. Either aspect may be extended to relationships. The degree of defense is proportional to the amount of damage sustained while growing up.

# Anti-Self System

## Self-Punishing Voice Process

### Voice Process

#### 1. Critical thoughts toward self



#### 2. Micro-suicidal injunctions



#### 3. Suicidal injunctions – suicidal ideation



### Behaviors

Verbal self-attacks – a generally negative attitude toward self and others predisposing alienation

Addictive patterns. Self-punitive thoughts after indulging

Actions that jeopardize, such as carelessness with one's body, physical attacks on the self, and actual suicide

# Anti-Self System

## Self- Soothing Voice Process



### Voice Process

1. Self-soothing attitudes



2. Aggrandizing thoughts toward self



3. Suspicious paranoid thoughts towards others



4. Micro-suicidal injunctions



5. Overtly violent thoughts

### Behaviors

Self-limiting or self-protective lifestyles, inwardness

Verbal build up toward self

Alienation from others, destructive behavior towards others

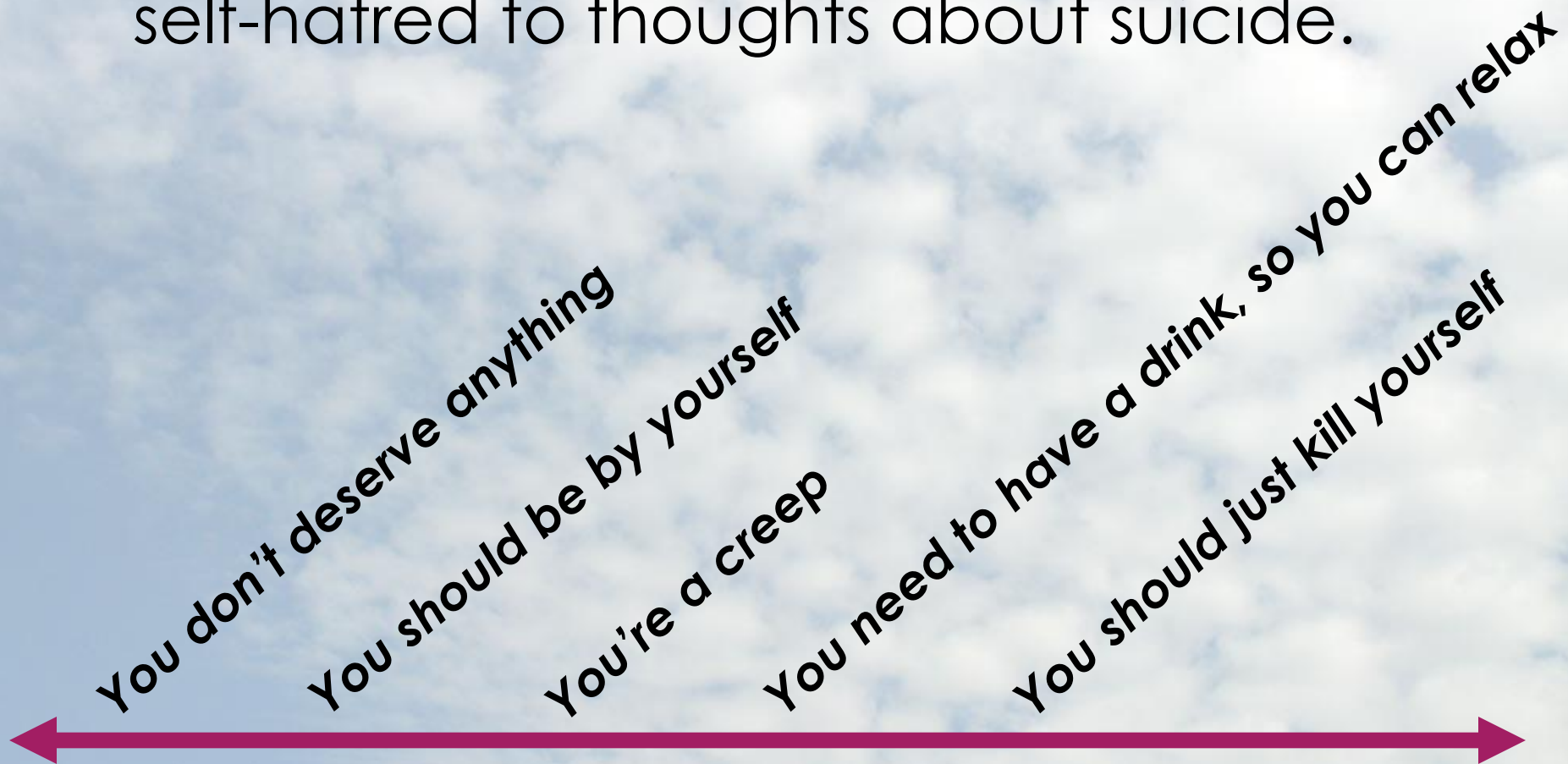
Addictive pattern, thoughts luring the person into indulging

Aggressive actions, actual violence



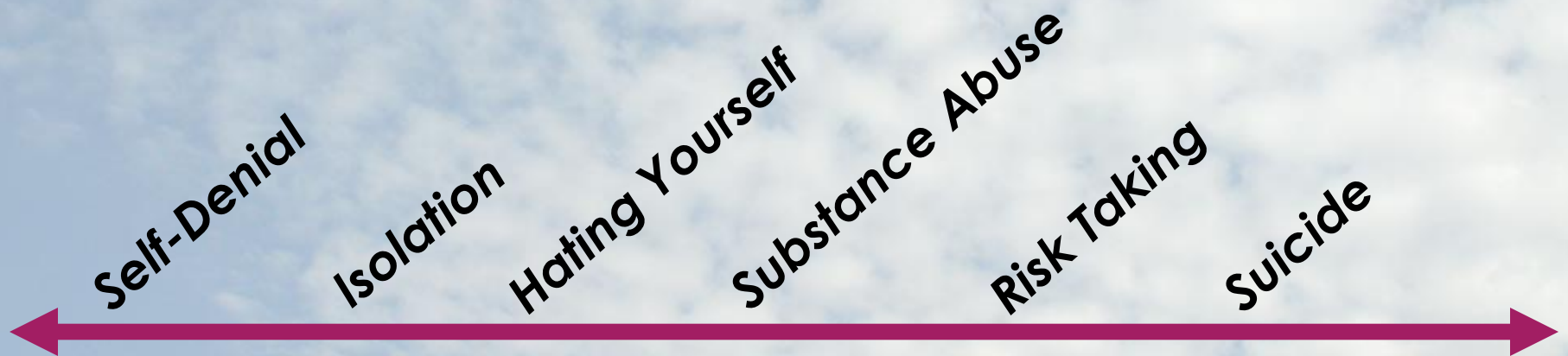
# Continuum of Self-Destructive Thoughts

Negative thoughts exist on a continuum, from mild self-critical thoughts to extreme self-hatred to thoughts about suicide.



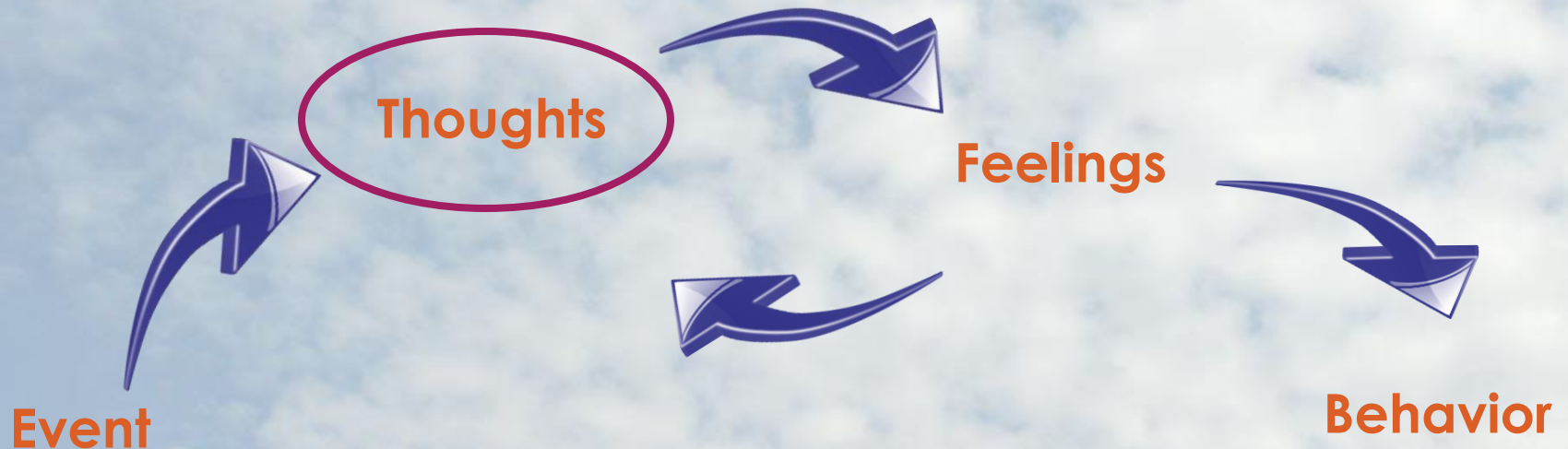
# Continuum of Self-Destructive Behavior

Self-destructive behaviors exist on a continuum from self-denial to substance abuse to actual suicide.

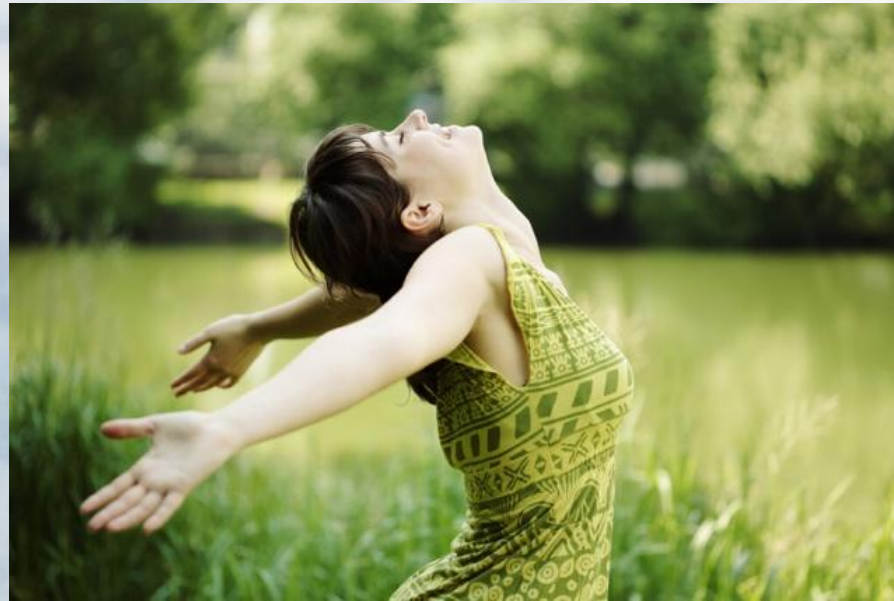


# Our Approach to Self-Destructive Behavior

There is a relationship between these two continuums. How a person is thinking is predictive of how he or she is likely to behave.



# Part Three: Challenging the Critical Inner Voice





# Identifying Your Critical Inner Voice

- Recognize the events that trigger your critical inner voice.
- Recognize the specific outside criticisms that support your critical inner voice.
- Become aware of times you may be projecting your self-attacks onto other people.
- Notice changes in your mood.



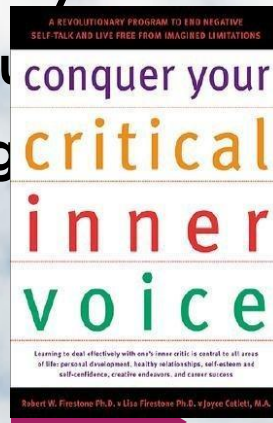
# Think of Your Inner Critic as an External Enemy

## All exercises from Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice

- Change “I” statements to “you” statements.
- This will help separate you from your inner critic from your real point of view.
- Do your self-critical thoughts sound like you of a point of view of someone in your past?

### Example:

“I don’t feel like I’m an attractive person.”



“You’re not attractive.”

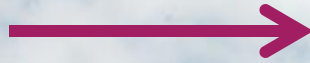


# Respond Rationally to Your Inner Critic

Write down a more compassionate, realistic view of yourself.  
Use the first person to respond.

## Example:

**“You’re so stupid.”**



**“Sometimes I struggle with work,  
but I catch on quickly  
and do a good job.”**





A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM TO END NEGATIVE  
SELF-TALK AND LIVE FREE FROM IMAGINED LIMITATIONS

conquer your  
critical  
inner  
voice

Learning to deal effectively with one's inner critic is essential to all areas  
of life: personal development, healthy relationships, self-esteem and  
self-confidence, creative endeavors, and career success.

Robert W. Firestone Ph.D. • Lisa Firestone Ph.D. • Joyce Gold, M.A.

# Plan of Pleasurable Activities

Describe the activities  
I plan to engage in

A weekly report of my critical  
inner voices about my plan

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# Self

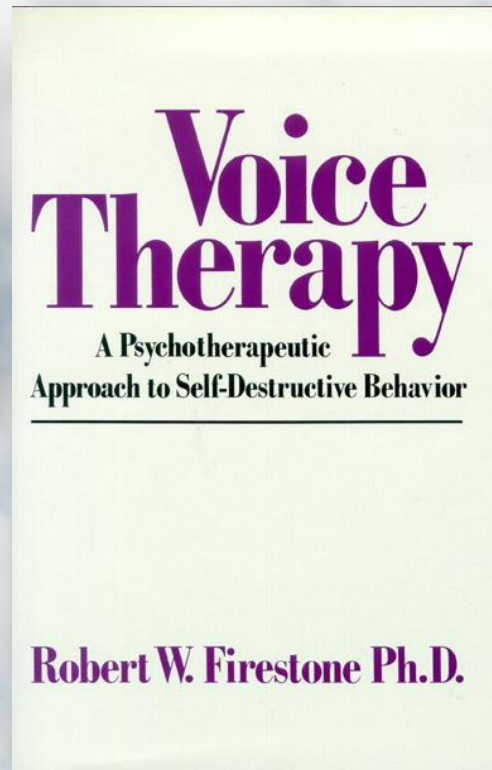


# Anti-Self



# Voice Therapy

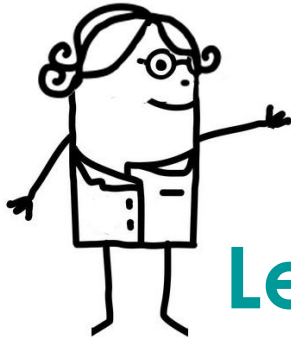
**Cognitive/ Affective/ Behavioral Approach**



# eCOURSE

## Overcome Your Inner Critic:

How to Free Yourself from Imagined Limitations



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STARTS SEP. 14, 2014**

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# Eight Ways to Actively Fight Depression

- Recognize and conquer your critical self-attacks
- Think about what you could be angry at
- Be active
- Don't isolate yourself
- Do things you once liked to do ... even if you don't feel like it
- Watch a funny TV show or movie
- Don't punish yourself for feeling bad
- See a therapist
- Take medication if indicated





# Rumination

- A 2013 study of more than 30,000 people showed that harping on negative life events (particularly through rumination and self-blame) can be the prime predictor of some of today's most common mental health problems like anxiety and depression.
- Limit the time you allow yourself to think about negative thoughts or worries.



# Guidelines for Continued Personal Development

- ❖ Be aware of the fear that accompanies change.
- ❖ Realize that psychological pain is valid.
- ❖ Develop a more realistic view of your parents.
- ❖ Differentiation – unlearn old behaviors, learn new behaviors.
- ❖ Become more aware of specific defenses against feeling.
- ❖ Recognize the value of friendship.
- ❖ Seek your own personal meaning in life.





C urious

O pen

A ccepting

L oving



# Self-Compassion Vs. Self-Esteem

## Research from Dr. Kristin Neff:

### Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion is not based on self-evaluations.
- People feel compassion for themselves, because all human beings deserve compassion and understanding, not because they possess some particular set of traits.
- Research indicates that in comparison to self-esteem, self-compassion is associated with greater emotional resilience, more accurate self-concepts, more caring relationship behavior, as well as less narcissism and reactive anger.

**SOURCE:** <http://www.self-compassion.org/>



# The Healthy Mind Platter



*The Healthy Mind Platter, for Optimal Brain Matter*

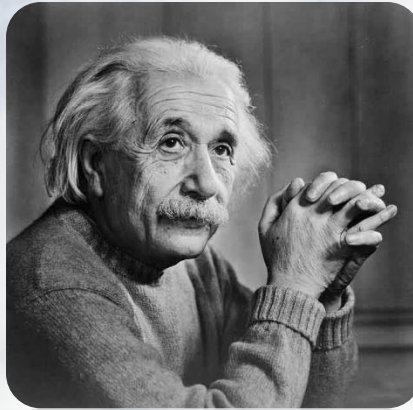
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[http://drdansiegel.com/resources/healthy\\_mind\\_platter/](http://drdansiegel.com/resources/healthy_mind_platter/)

# Guidelines for Further Developing a Meaningful Life

- ❖ Practice being generous in all your relationships.
- ❖ Become aware of existential realities.
- ❖ Develop a spiritual perspective and appreciate the mystery of existence.



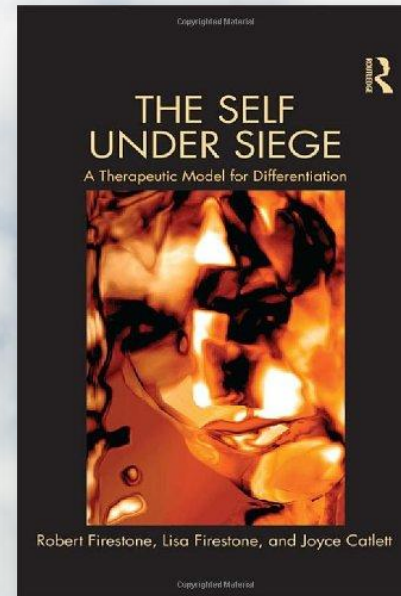
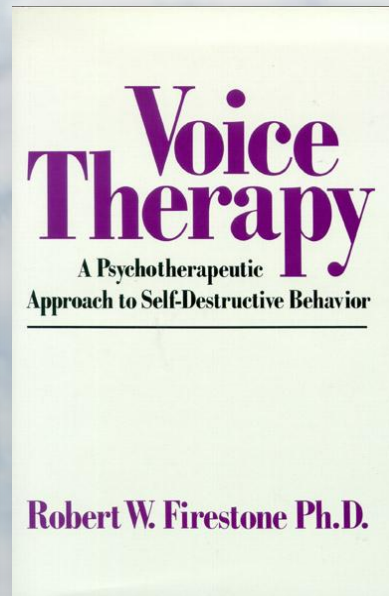
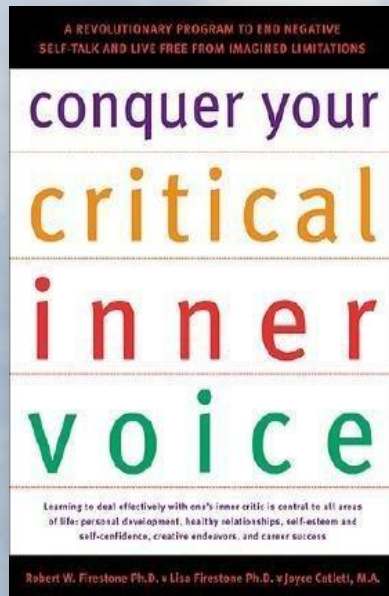


*A human being is a part of a whole, called by us 'universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest... a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security."*

**- Albert Einstein**



# Resources: Books



Visit [www.psychalive.org](http://www.psychalive.org) for resource links



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Presenter: John Norcross, Ph.D.

2 CE Credits

CE Price: \$35 Non-CE Price: \$15



## **Dec. 2: Narcissism: From Healthy to Pathological**

Presenter: Dr. Lisa Firestone, Ph.D.

3 CE Credits CE Price: \$35 Non-CE Price: \$15

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