

Managing Your Inner Critic

STRO**BEL**
EDUCATION

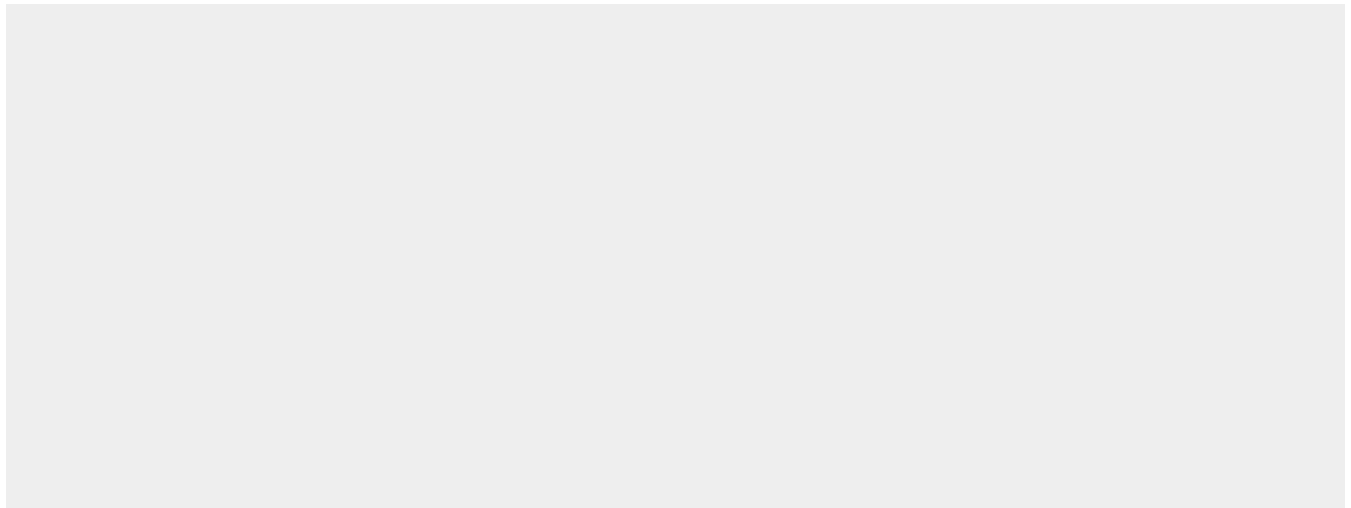
Lesson 1: Releasing Perfectionism

We all struggle with the fear of not being enough. And at the same time, we are afraid to let our true selves be seen. We are really good at faking it. The teacher or coworker who smiles, acts positive, appears to have it all together, yet she's inwardly deteriorating and struggling to cope with her anxiety or stress. The parent who tries to do things by the book, follows the rules, is selfless and nurturing, but behind closed doors she's depressed, overwhelmed, and feels terrible for even having these feelings.

We find it so hard to be our true selves, to share our real stories and why? Because we worry about what others think. We worry we will be judged. We are secretly afraid that we don't measure up. We are simply not "good enough".

How can we begin to know our worthiness regardless of who we are, what we do or don't do, how much we accomplish in a day's time, our skillset, our title, or even our past mistakes? You are not worthy when you perform at a certain level. You are worthy right now even with all of your so called inadequacies and imperfections.

1. List the areas in your life where you feel inadequate or not good enough?



We all carry around unwanted identities and they dictate our behavior every day. It's good inner work to figure these out and get honest with yourself. It's worth it to figure them out and get real about them.

Many times the goals, perceptions, or identities that you are striving for are completely unrealistic. How do you want others to see you? As a great mom, superior wife, hard-working, successful woman or man? Or maybe it's a list of adjectives you want to be perceived as? "Put together, calm, educated, successful, strong, organized."

2. Look back at the question in #1 and pick one area where you might feel shame. (body, work, motherhood, parenting, career, house, etc.)

3. Then, answer the following questions. These are the “Ideal Identities” you want others to perceive you as:

Ideal Identities

I want to be perceived as

I want to be perceived as

I want to be perceived as

Unwanted Identities

I don't want to be perceived as

I don't want to be perceived as

I don't want to be perceived as

Now look at these unwanted identities.

Unwanted Identity #1: _____

What does this perception mean to me? _____

Why am I afraid of this perception? _____

Where did the beliefs or messages that contribute to this identity come from?

Unwanted Identity #2: _____

What does this perception mean to me? _____

Why am I afraid of this perception? _____

Where did the beliefs or messages that contribute to this identity come from?

Unwanted Identity #3: _____

What does this perception mean to me? _____

Why am I afraid of this perception? _____

Where did the beliefs or messages that contribute to this identity come from?

Lesson 2: Practicing Self Compassion

If we are going to talk compassion, we must talk perfectionism. Most perfectionists were raised getting praised for achievement, performance, intelligence, skillset, etc. Some examples might be: attaining good grades, getting a good job, following the rules, making others happy, looking and smiling pretty, being nice, having good manners, being smart, being an athlete.

As Brene Brown says, “Somewhere we adopt a belief system that says, “I am what I accomplish and how well I do it. My value comes not from just being me, but being able to please, perform, perfect.”

I believe perfectionism is the lowest standard you can hold yourself to because it's the very thing from keeping you from becoming all that you can become.

Perfectionism is not the same thing as striving to be your best. Perfectionism is the belief that if we live perfect, look perfect and act perfect, we can minimize or avoid the pain of blame, judgement, and shame. It's a shield.

Dr. Brene Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, pg. 56

You cannot wait until you know it all or have it all perfect to put it out into the world.

Perfectionism Self-Talk

“I’m stupid for not finishing the marathon. I looked like an idiot, and I’m embarrassed and ashamed. Thank goodness I didn’t sign up for Facebook alerts about my progress. I’m a real loser and just stupid.”

Healthy-Striving Self-Talk

“I’m disappointed, and this feels like a failure. I trained hard and put in a lot of time. The outcome of this doesn’t make me less of a person though. I am still worthy of the same love and respect. I’m going to have to figure this out and do something different.”

Notes

How to Practice Self Compassion?

According to Dr. Kristen Neff, researcher at Texas University, Self Compassion Has These Three Elements.

Self Kindness: Be warm, kind, and understanding toward yourself when you fail, suffer, or feel inadequate—rather than practice self-criticism. Watch how you talk to yourself inside your head!

Common Humanity

Suffering and feelings of personal inadequacy are part of the shared human experience—something we all go through rather than something that happens to “me” alone.

Mindfulness

Taking a balanced approach to negative emotions so that feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated. We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it at the same time. Mindfulness requires that we not “over-identify” with thoughts and feelings, so that we are caught up and swept away by negativity.

Dr. Kristen Neff’s Self Compassion Test

Let’s take [Dr. Neff’s Self Compassion Test](#)!



What were your results?

Self Kindness Score:

Self Judgement Score:

Common Humanity Score:

Isolation Score:

Mindfulness Score:

Over-Identification Score:

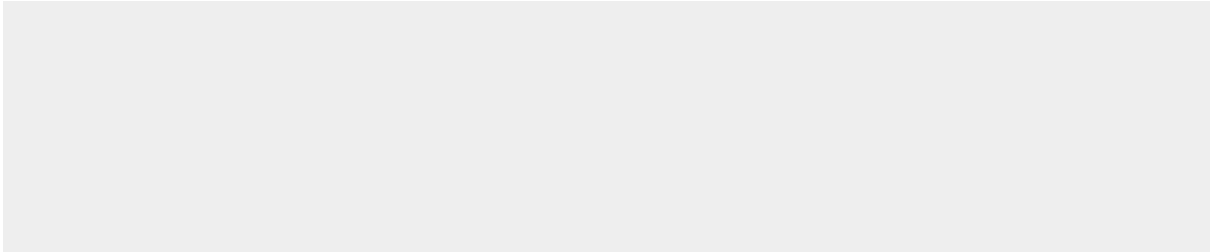
Overall Score:

What do you need to be more aware of when it comes to giving yourself more compassion and understanding?

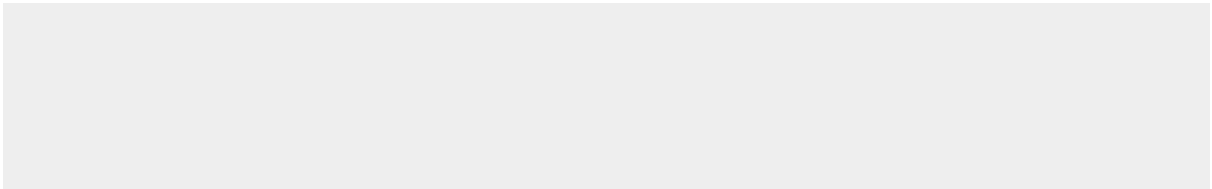
Self Compassion Activity

1. I want you to think about a time when a friend or family member was going through a hard time or felt bad about themselves.

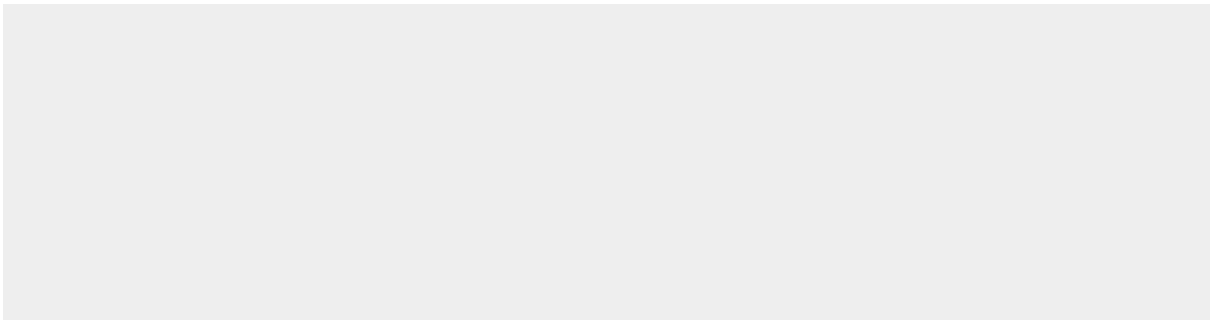
What did you do in that situation (how did you act, what did you say, what tone did you use)?



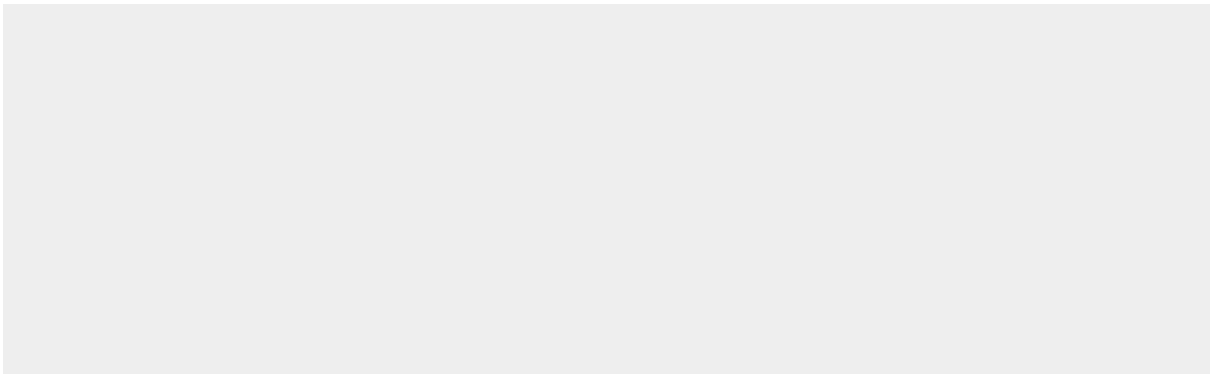
2. Now think about a time when you were struggling or feeling bad. What did you do in that situation (how did you act, what did you say to yourself about the situation, were you self critical or kind)?



3. Is there a difference between how you treat a friend who is suffering and how you treat yourself? If so, why?



4. How could you treat yourself more like you would treat a loved one the next time you are suffering or feeling “not good enough”?



Lesson 3: Shift Your Inner Critic

4 Layers of Self Talk

Anger: I am pissed at you for running into the street. You could have died or been run over. Go to your room and think about what you did.

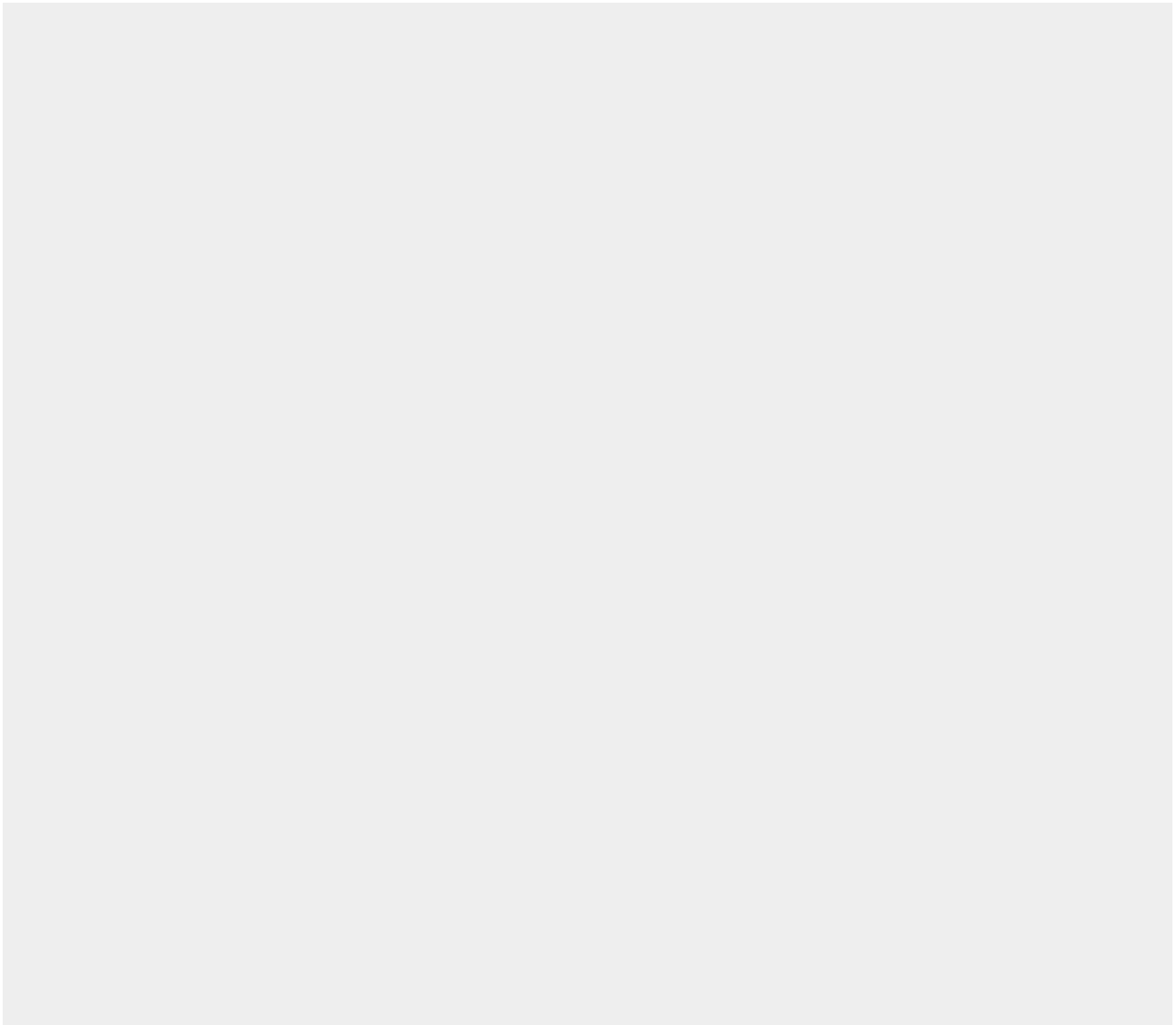
Fear: I'm afraid that you'll get hurt or killed.

Requests: I want you to pay more attention when you are playing near the street. Always look both ways.

Love: I love you so very much, and I don't ever want to lose you. I want you to be safe.

From Inner Critic to Self Coach

Make a list of all the things you say to yourself when you are judging yourself.



Now go back to your list and pick one of your inner critic sayings. Apply the 4-step process for changing your inner critic into your inner coach. Here's my example.

Step 1 - Anger: I'm pissed that I didn't complete my marathon. You are such an idiot and you look like a fool, posting about marathon training and then you can't even get to mile 19. You don't take your training seriously enough and now you just wasted 16 damn weeks running.

Step 2 - Fear: I am no longer a marathon runner, and I just can't perform anymore. You aren't as good as you thought you were. You probably won't be able to compete in races anymore because you just don't have a good enough body to do it anymore.

Step 3 - Requests: I want you to take some time to recover because of the injuries you had and start taking better care of yourself. Find a way to not eat so much sugar. Go to the chiropractor. Find a training program and actually follow it.

Step 4 - Love: I love you and I want you to be able to do the things that bring you joy like running and competing. I know you like to feel alive when you run and you like pushing yourself and the sense of accomplishment that comes from your drive.

Now do yours.

Step 1: Anger:

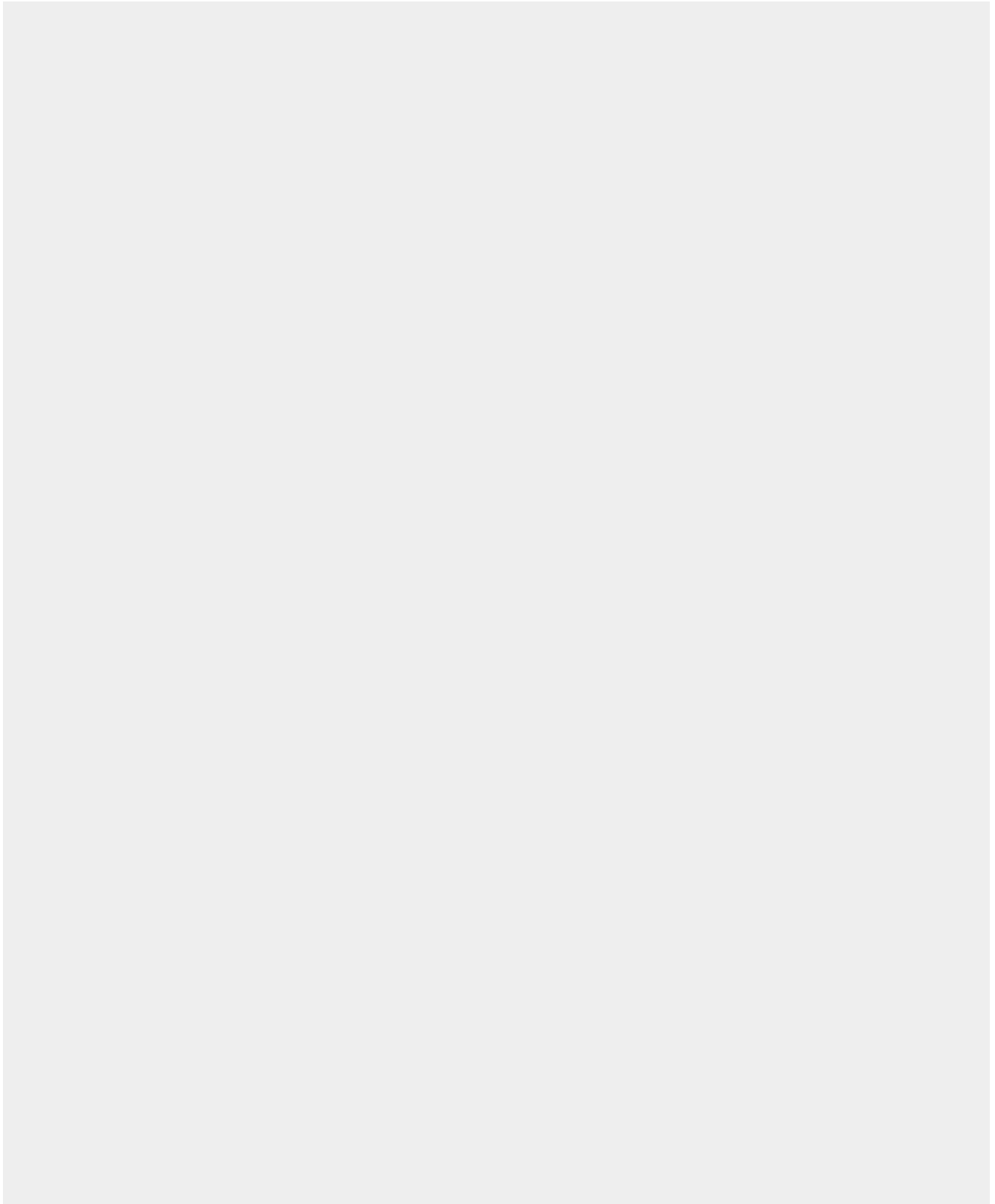
Step 2: Fear

Step 3: Requests

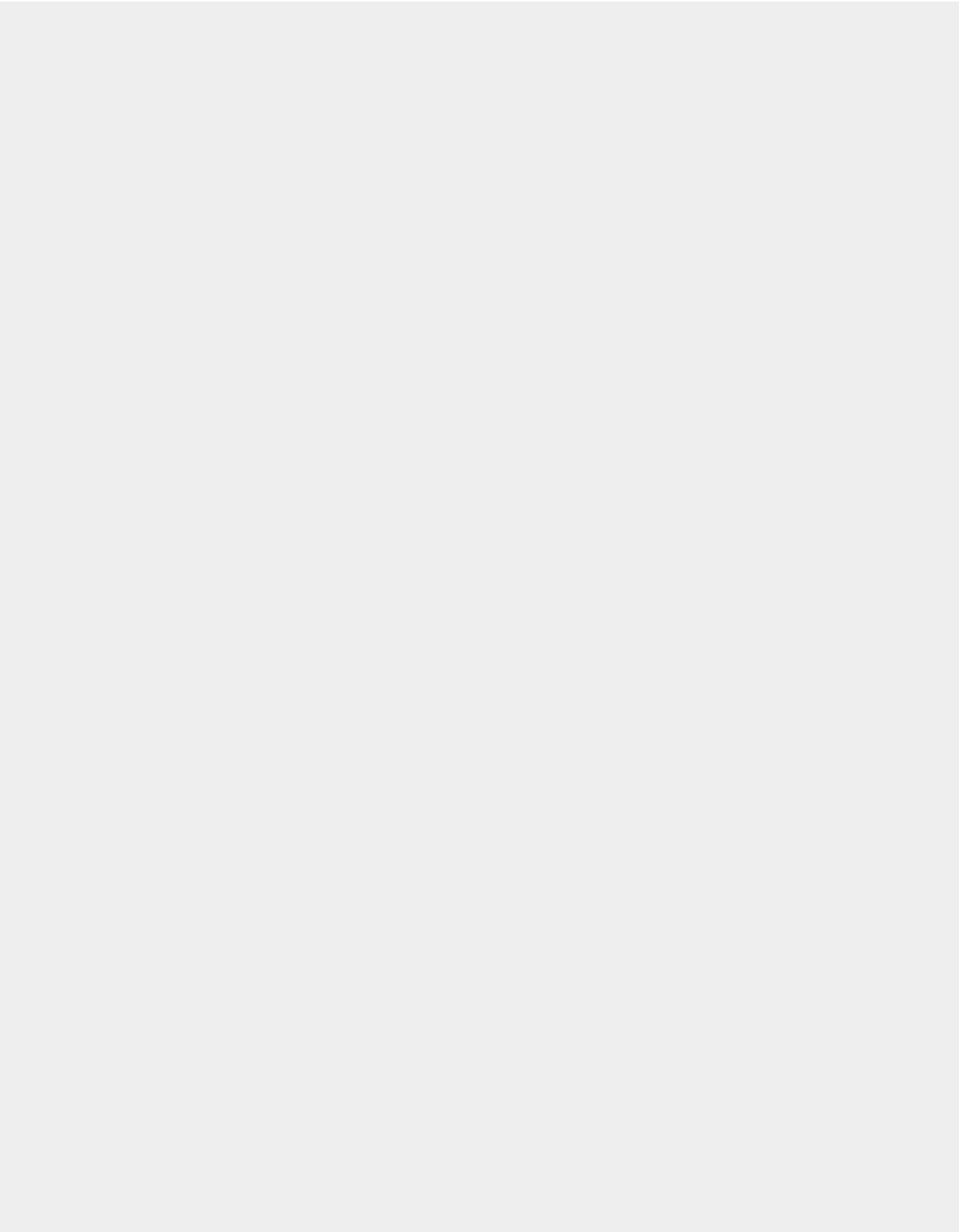
Step 4: Love

Draw Your Inner Critic Activity

It's time to have a bit of fun and play. Use the space below to draw and name your inner critic. Feel free to write out things he/she says, etc.



Notes and Reflections



Notes and Reflections

A large, solid grey rectangular area that occupies most of the page, intended for writing notes and reflections. It is positioned below the title and above the footer.

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