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Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice: A Revolutionary Program to Counter Negative Thoughts and Live Free from Imagined Limitations

By Robert W. Firestone, Lisa Firestone, Joyce Catlett, Pat Love

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The inner critic is the voice in our heads that whispers, whines, and needles us into poor self-esteem and self-confidence. It edits our thoughts, controls our behavior, and inhibits our actions. It thinks it is protecting us from being hurt or feeling abandoned, but all it really does is reinforce our feelings of shame and guilt, sabotage our intimate relationships, and incline us to self-destructive behaviors. *Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice* presents a revolutionary new strategy for dealing with the inner critic: externalizing it. This subtle, powerful technique turns internal self-criticisms into 'you' statements that can be evaluated objectively and exposed as the gross exaggerations, unfair comparisons, or flat out lies they really are. This book takes you through the step-by-step process of learning how to keep track of your negative thoughts, analyze their reality, and recognize how they impact your life. Learn to use a variety of techniques to help release your inner critic's stranglehold and combat its subversive effect on your career achievement, intimate relationships, and sexuality. A final chapter of the book offers parents simple ways to help their children avoid forming a tyrannical inner critic.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In vain, psychologist Firestone, psychotherapist Lisa Firestone, and lecturer/ writer Joyce Catlett attempt to convey the interesting concept of the "critical inner voice," which could be described as that little devil that sits on one's shoulder to balance out the little angel on the other side. This voice begins when as young children we internalize parental messages, particularly negative ones, creating a psychological base which many of us do not progress beyond to find a more realistic and rational self-view. All parents, however well intentioned, create critical inner voices. Unfortunately, description is all readers will get here as the text recounts ad nauseam various manifestations of the voice. Although many readers will respond to the premise (and to the sad anecdotes), the book fails to articulate clearly any methods for counteracting the effects of the voice. Not recommended; instead, consider Byron Brown's clear, practical *Soul Without Shame: A Guide to Liberating Yourself from the Judge Within*.

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Review

The self-help literature is strewn with the carcasses of superficial and glib advice. *Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice* presents a wise, bold, and provocative alternative to the limits of similar self-help books. The chapter on intimacy and couple relationships alone is worth the price of the book. Complex psychological phenomena are described in concrete and clear language. The authors offer numerous exercises to help the reader put the book's ideas to immediate use, and they include guidelines for therapists who may want to use the book in their work with patients in psychotherapy.

—Charles Bonner, Ph.D., clinical psychologist in private practice, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

As a psychologist, spouse, and parent, I have been influenced by the wisdom inherent in the work of *Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice*. The authors convey to the reader in simple terms the relevancy of their profound psychology. I am inspired by their commitment to help readers liberate themselves from a legacy that undermines their essential well being and right to a life.

—Richard Vogel, Ph.D., coauthor of *Brief Psychotherapy Methods*, associate of Weiss-Sampson Control Mastery Theory Group, San Francisco

I am very pleased that this book is being published because it contains information invaluable to individuals and families. We tend to express our deepest self-feelings in an interior voice that is at times heavily infused with self-critical messages. For many, these negative messages inhibit productive activity and success in relationships. The authors provide a series of self-help exercises to aid in overcoming the painful distances in relationships with those they love and care about.

—Gail McCracken Price, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist, Radcliffe Seminars Adjunct Faculty

This landmark book reveals an age-old truth, namely: that the sworn enemy of mental health is our own silent voice! The authors depict the problem and then introduce the reader to a proven innovative strategy known as voice therapy that has helped countless clients take charge of their lives.

—Dr. Howard Rosenthal, author of *The Encyclopedia of Counseling* and editor, *Favorite Counseling and Therapy Techniques*

This highly engaging book is filled with informative real life cases and insightful exercises to help free oneself from the tyranny of a critical inner voice. The sooner people recognize and challenge this 'enemy within' the greater the opportunity they will have for a full, rich, and happy life. Highly recommended to psychologists, counseling therapists, and other helping professionals across the globe.>

—Yasmin Farooqi, professor of applied psychology and private practitioner, University of the Punjab, New Campus, Lahore, Pakistan

Robert Firestone and his associates have again provided readers with incisive and insightful views into the minds and personalities of those that suffer from negative self-images, depression and destructive impulses. This book will enlighten and guide therapists who can use the concept of the inner voice to better understand their clients and use the techniques presented in counseling sessions.

—Donald K. Freedheim, Ph.D., professor emeritus of psychology, Case Western Reserve University, and former editor of *Psychotherapy Journal*

About the Author

Robert W. Firestone, PhD, is a psychologist, author, and artist . He has been the main theoretician with the Glendon Association since 1979. He is author of 10 books including *Fear of Intimacy* and *Fantasy Bond*.

Lisa Firestone, PhD, is a psychotherapist in private practice, program and education director of the Glendon Association, and an adjunct faculty member at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Joyce Catlett, MA, is a lecturer, author and coproducer of The Glendon Association's thirty-seven documentary videos. She developed the Compassionate Child Rearing Parent Education Program and conducts trainings. She lives in Santa Barabara, CA.

Foreword writer **Patricia Love, EdD**, is an acclaimed therapist and speaker and author/co-author of six books, including *Hot Monogamy*, *The Truth About Love* and *How to Improve Your Marriage Without Talking About It*. She has appeared on Oprah and Today and on CNN, and has contributed to numerous magazines including *Cosmopolitan*, *Men's Health*, and *Woman's World*.

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