



Kate Daigle Counseling

Nourishing Wisdom for
Eating Disorder Recovery

Kate B. Daigle, MA, NCC, LPC
709 Clarkson Street
Denver, CO 80218

tel. 720.340.1443
Kate@KateDaigleCounseling.com
www.KateDaigleCounseling.com

“Befriending” Our Inner Critic

In recovery from disordered eating, at times there can be an "eating disorder voice" or "critic voice" that speaks negatively or destructively to us and damages self-esteem and healthy coping. In getting to know the voice, speaking back to it, individuating ourselves from it, we can feel empowered and free. We can even utilize the voice's power for our own good -- try to understand what it needs, what it wants, and how it can help us instead of harm us.

We all have an Inner Critic. How can we reach across the aisle and enlist his/her support?

When we challenge ourselves or commit to a difficult task (like recovery), sometimes our inner critic can get LOUDER and try to convince us that the effort isn't worth it.

Have you ever had that experience? This is common, so if you come across it don't let the critic voice get in the way of pursuing your goals. Instead, get to know it -- give him or her some direct attention:

- What's your inner critic's gender? Name?
- What's his or her favorite color, game, food?
- Where does she live?
- How big is she? How old is she?
- Try to engage in a dialogue with your Inner Critic

Once you have a clearer picture of your Inner Critic's way of life and personality, you can separate yourself from her and notice your voice as opposed to hers.

Some tactics in working with your Inner Critic:

- Instead of discounting or deflecting her voice, notice her and then set her aside. When she's been acknowledged and your voice is distinctively used beside her, she loses some of her power over you.
- If your Inner Critic is full of "should's" and is driven towards perfectionism (as mine sometimes is!), try to remember that the drive for perfectionism keeps us stuck and away from our goals. Recovery (and life) is messy and certainly doesn't fit into neat little boxes. I like the saying that "Perfect is the enemy of beginning."

Finally, ask your Inner Critic two important questions:

- What do you want for me?
- How can you help me?

I notice that sometimes the drive under the critic actually desires to help us in some way. For example, my critic's drive for perfectionism is actually her way of trying to help me find whatever I'm looking for to cultivate inner peace. When I am able to notice that, I can reframe the voice, change the words, and funnel that energy into self-care activities.

Try this exercise for yourself and notice how this was for you or anything you discovered about your inner critic. Has your relationship with her changed? In doing this, we can connect with, utilize, and befriend all parts of ourselves and not feel like we need to "banish" any of them -- even our Inner Critic.

Kate Daigle, MA, NCC, LPC

720-340-1443

Kate@KateDaigleCounseling.com