



*This is the worksheet to be used together with the recording of Masculinity Mastery Session #3 with Nathan Charles and special guest Rob Scott.*

*Our topic is “Moving from Inner Critic to Mature Self-Assessment.”*

*Use this worksheet to apply the insights and exercises given in the session to your own life, in order to gain self-understanding, increase your happiness, and blow up the roadblock of unrealistic self-critical thinking.*

Most of us have a nagging “inner critical voice” that pipes up with useless, energy-sapping, motivation-puncturing regularity to sabotage and undermine effective action for what we truly want. We end up mired in an inner war we can’t win, looping and losing confidence.

Most approaches to dealing with this voice are partial and poorly sequenced, which ends up either not working, or worse, reinforcing the power of this negative influence.

In these exercises, Nathan Charles and special guest Rob Scott begin with clear definitions and understanding, then give a series of insightful tactics that have the result of your integrating, maturing and dealing with your “inner critical voice” in a manly, effective manner. Ultimately, you gain more clarity, power and effectiveness in your relationships and career.

Exercise #1 (Rob Scott):

**Self-awareness of your Inner Critical Voice**

1. Get a journal and some quiet time
2. List 1-15 of the most bothersome of the phrases that your inner voice says
3. You don't have to believe these phrases are true. If you have even a 1% belief that a phrase applies to you, then write it down.
4. Examples from other men that might be similar to yours:
  - a. I'm stupid
  - b. I'll never succeed
  - c. You're an idiot
  - d. No good woman would ever want you
  - e. I always sabotage myself
  - f. You're never going to amount to anything
  - g. etc.
5. Now, you know that whenever you have any of these thoughts or the exact feelings associated with them, you should know you are engaging your Inner Critical Voice.

Exercise #2 (Nathan Charles)

**Dis-identification exercise credit Rational Recovery, by Jack Trimpey.**

This is a powerful tactic to use if our notice your "inner critic" coming up at any unwanted moment.

1. This approach uses a language shift: This is from a book, Rational Recovery, by Jack Trimpey. For each of the phrases you wrote down in Exercise #1, re-phrase it to reflect "it", the voice, as not you. Examples:
  - a. "you are useless" to "it thinks I am useless".
  - b. "I'm an idiot" to "This voice says I am an idiot"
  - c. "I'll never succeed" becomes "It will never succeed"
2. Try and find the change in language that gives you the most power -- try a few different ways of re-phrasing to make the thought "more true".
3. Write down your re-phrases, or alternatively use this tactic in real time, or both

Exercise #3 (Rob Scott)

Now, feel free to use Rob's guided meditation from the webinar to unpack and understand these stories and how to see them for what they truly are.

#### Exercise #4 (Nathan Charles)

##### **Rise above the avoidance-resistance cycle**

1. Understand that any time you engage your inner critical voice, there are two parts:
  - a. the critical part, the “person” running the voice
  - b. and the shamed part, the “you” that believes any part of the critical part
2. Identify the emotion of the voice: is the voice angry, harsh, despairing, nasty? Actually give the emotion or tone of the voice a name.
3. Identify your emotion: do you feel shame, fear, defiance? Give the emotion an exact name.
4. Notice that the emotions of the two parts are quite separate, and different.
5. Lastly, notice that you, in your totality, are capable of experiencing BOTH parts simultaneously. In other words, YOU are neither the critical or the criticized parts of yourself. Your consciousness is bigger than either one of them. Once you notice this, you are freely able to understand and integrate both parts of yourself, accept the deep value that each part has to offer you, and transcend the the pain of the parts conflict.

Exercise #5 (Nathan Charles)

**“Growing Up” the Inner Critical Voice**

*Very often our “inner critic” is a voice we internalized young from a caregiver or peer. It can be characterized by childish insults, black-and-white thinking, and bullying tone. By “growing up” this inner critical voice to have mature assessments, admit exceptions and nuances, and drop the bullying tone, we gain power and insight.*

Review the phrases you wrote in Exercise #1. For each phrase of you “inner critic”, apply your adult discrimination and assess its age and maturity.

What is the “age” of that phrase? You might even recall the approximate age you learned that phrase and made it part of you.

In addition to the age, what do you notice about a positive value that voice might represent and advocate, even though it might be in an abusive, inappropriate, and rude way?

For instance “look both ways when crossing the street, becomes, “you’re an idiot, you almost got killed!”, becomes, “you’re an idiot”. But underneath all of that crap, if you use your attention skillfully, you will see there is a value of prudence, of safety, being represented in you by your inner critic saying “you’re an idiot!”. It’s trying to keep you safe!

Then, how do you “grow up” your expression of that value? So, to keep yourself safe, instead of using your “young” program (which is not AT ALL your fault, you were just a kid when you learned that!), as an adult man you can use the power of your attention to substitute, instead of “I’m an idiot!”, you can say to yourself, “How can I be sufficiently safe in this situation?”

You may apply this process of discrimination and “growing up” to each phrase of your “young” inner critic, and change them from “inner critical voice” to “mature self-assessment”.

Exercise #6 (Nathan Charles)

**Surf The Wave of Emotion -- credit to therapist Annie Brook**

What do you do when you are in a crappy moment of your inner critical voice dominating your mood and it feels like nothing is working, and there's nothing you can do, and you feel helpless?

Here's what you do:

1. Admit that you feel like crap emotionally;
2. Don't do anything to add to it, i.e. don't pile crap on crap by bemoaning the fact that you feel like crap. Just stay with your primary feeling, and breathe, and be OK.
3. Tell yourself -- no emotion lasts forever, in fact most emotions last less than 15 minutes.
4. Practice by feeling even more, allow the wave of emotion to come, allow it to be, and allow it to pass
5. Notice when your bad feeling starts to diminish, like a wave receding
6. Notice that you are OK
7. Then, once you no longer feel fully overwhelmed, do something for yourself that you enjoy: go for a walk, do some creative work, take a bath, call a friend, exercise, eat healthy food, read something you like, watch a show, and so on.