

## Taming the Critical Voices in Your Head

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*As I work with smart, successful and motivated leaders, I've noticed that every one of them wrestles with an inner critic. This is a little nagging "gremlin" of a voice whose job is to resist real change. I bet you have one too.*

*Here are five common messages I hear from my clients' "gremlins."*

- 1. "You're not that (good, smart, disciplined, loveable, etc.)"*
- 2. "You're too (old, young)"*
- 3. "You've always been (a bad listener, impatient, sloppy with money, etc.)—it's just the way you are"*
- 4. "You can't make a change in your career now—think of (your parents' dreams for you, your mortgage, your years of education, etc.)"*
- 5. "This is just too big of a challenge for you. You'll (fail, be embarrassed, do something disastrous, etc.)"*

*These gremlin voices are persistent and can be convincing. Sometimes they even speak in the first-person voice. But they are not nearly as big and compelling as your soul's truest, highest best voice—and if you're a person of faith, they're not as big as God's either!*

*Here's what I ask my clients to do with their critical voices: **Give that voice something to do, some other place to be—imagine asking it to physically put itself elsewhere.***

*One of my clients is a pilot. A good one. She's so good that her company gave her a new aircraft to fly. That's when her critical voice got busy (see message #5). "So," I said. "What do you want to say to that voice?" My smart, successful, motivated client thought for a moment and then, with a combination of authority and mischief, she said, "There's an old airplane on the far side of the field that no one ever flies. When I'm getting ready for a flight in the new aircraft, I'm going to tell that gremlin to go sit in it, maybe make airplane noises. I can't have him going up with me."*

*Like this pilot, you may have to repeat the instructions frequently at first, but that critical voice in your head will comply, especially as you continue to move forward in the direction of the growth and challenge and change you desire.*