

# CHIEF

## Taming Your Inner Critic

### Guide Need-to-Knows:

1. Editing slides for this content module is highly discouraged. This ensures a consistent Chief experience for all members.
2. When you fill out your **post-meeting recap**, please select:  
**Flexed to Fit > “Taming Your Inner Critic”**

### Change Log

March 22, 2023	Original publish date
April 17, 2023	Minor explanatory updates to “What is also true” strategy and “One Rulebook” strategy

### Document Legend

- *Italics* = Voice over script for the Guide. Please feel free to either use precisely OR slightly adapt to the group’s style and dynamic.
- **Bold Teal** = Facilitation Tip

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### Meeting Objectives & Format

Members reflect on their inner critic and engage in a guided discussion that helps identify 4 ways cognitive distortions show up in our lives and impact our thinking in sneaky ways. This meeting is designed in a way that members....

- - normalize the notion that we all have an inner critic
- - are prompted to examine whether their inner critic impacts their behavior in unwanted ways
- - are motivated to consider how to incorporate new or more balanced self-talk into their internal narrative
- - reflect on their role as a leader when inner critics show up in the workplace

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This meeting includes:

- Individual quiet reflection
- Full-group discussion & reflection

## Member Outcomes

### Meeting outcomes

Members gain self-awareness about their inner critic and how it impacts their leadership narrative, whether that narrative is internal or external.

- Members understand the gap between inner critic opinions and actual evidentiary facts
- Members re-examine and release the external pressures and expectations to be 100% confident all the time
- Members recognize others' inner critic struggles, and build empathy for the different kinds of negative self-talk

## Materials

In addition to this facilitation guide, please find:

Item	Description	Link
<b>Member Presentation</b>	Member presentation to screen-share during the meeting.	<a href="#">Link</a>
<b>Member Handout (OPTIONAL)</b>	PDF for members to leave session with as a takeaway.	<a href="#">Link</a>

## Suggested Meeting Outline

Feel free to flip the content module & Peer Advisory Board format based on your group's preferences!

<b>10-15 min</b>	<b>Opening / Welcome Ritual</b>
<b>50-60 Min</b>	<b>This Content Module</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (5 min) Provocative Initial Question</li><li>• (10 min) Setup content (aka "mini-lesson")</li><li>• (25 min) First round discussion</li><li>• (20 min) Breakout rooms workshop &amp; discussion</li><li>• (5 min) Closing of content module</li></ul>
<b>40-45 Min</b>	<b>Peer Advisory Board</b>

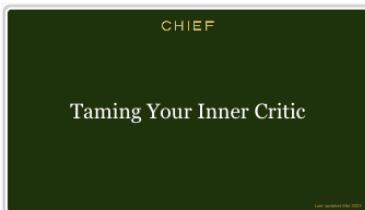
# CHIEF

10 Min

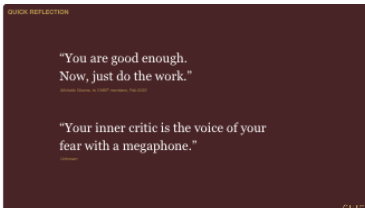
Closing Ritual

## Detailed Facilitation Notes

### Slide 2 | Title Slide



### Slide 3 | Provocative quote



#### Intention:

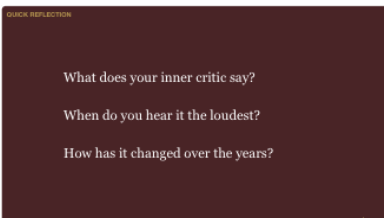
- Get members in the headspace of the topic, without saying it outright
- Challenge members to reflect in new ways or on new topics
- Start a quick lively discussion that acts as a lead-in to the Guide formally introducing the topic

#### Suggested voiceover:

[Read quotes out loud] and ask a quick question to get the conversation started:

- *What comes to mind when you see these quotes?*

### Slide 4 | Initial discussion

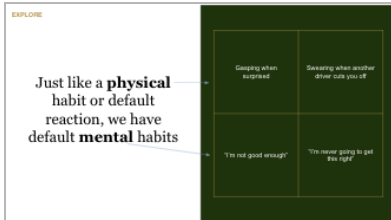


#### Intention:

- Everyone has experience with negative self-talk. This slide is intended to get right into that vulnerable space, to have members open up about this potentially uncomfortable topic.
- Members normalize negative self-talk.

### Slide 5 | Setting the stage - Mini Lesson

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## Intention:

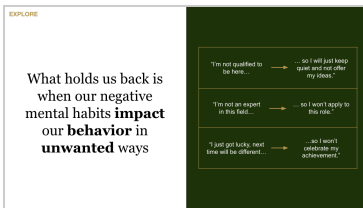
- Underscore the importance of how normal an inner critic is
- Underscore that we will not banish the negative self-talk - that is not the goal - but rather we will work to tame it, to understand it.

## Suggested Voiceover:

- [Read slide aloud]
- *We all have physical habits - tapping our foot when anxious, maybe cracking our knuckles or twirling our hair when bored, gasping when surprised, cussing when a driver cuts us off, etc.*
- *Negative self-talk from our inner critic is similar - it is a mental habit we've developed over the years.*
- *Mental habits, just like physical habits, take work to tame.*
- *This is what we will work on today.*

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## Slide 6 | Setting the stage - Mini Lesson, cont.



## Intention:

- Highlight the red flags of our inner critic: when our inner critic voice becomes so loud that our behavior is impacted in unwanted ways.
- Highlight that not all self-talk is bad - sometimes it can motivate us to act (a positive behavior impact).

## Suggested Voiceover:

- [Read slide outloud] - notes to enhance these points are below.
- **Our inner critic is not all bad! Sometimes our inner critic can motivate us, inspire us to overcome our fears - these are positive behavioral outcomes...**
- But when that inner voice becomes so loud and starts to impact our behavior in negative ways, this is when it sets us back.
- Ask the group: *Has this happened to you? Has your inner voice impacted your behavior in some negative way? Maybe you did something or didn't do something in response to your inner critic voice?*

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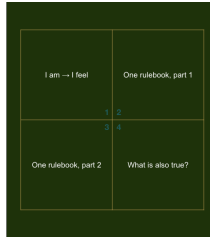
## Slide 7 | Topic deeper dive

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EXPLORE

## Four strategies to try

To help when our brain distorts facts and feelings into inner critic, negative self-talk, or impostor syndrome



### Intention:

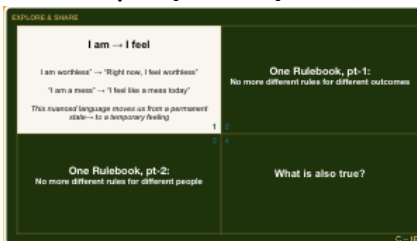
- Introduce the term “cognitive distortion” and set up for the deep-dive of the 4 signs of cognitive distortions.

### Suggested Voiceover:

- *These automatic mental habits are called **cognitive distortions** - they distort our way of thinking about ourselves, sometimes so much so that we believe the distortions are factual.*
- *When we believe it as factual, it tends to impact our behavior in unwanted ways.*
- *Let's look at 4 common signs of cognitive distortions, and we'll talk through how we may tame them for a more balanced and kind self-talk.*
- *[Read the titles of the 4 quadrants]*
- *All of these terms are slightly different but we can use them interchangeably for this conversation: inner critic, negative self-talk, self-sabotaging talk, impostor syndrome, et al.*

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## Slide 8 | Topic deep dive, cont.



### Intention:

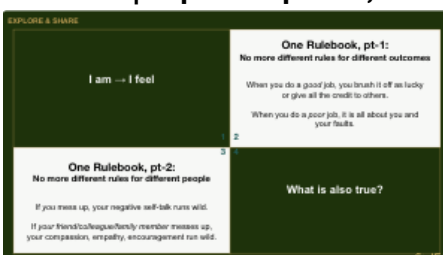
- First strategy to tame a cognitive distortion

### Suggested Voiceover:

- **[READ UPPER LEFT QUADRANT ALOUD]**
  - *When we change our internal language from “I am” to “I feel”, this helps us remember this is a temporary feeling, not a permanent one. This helps us put things in perspective and helps us be vulnerably honest about our feelings.*

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## Slide 09 | Topic deep dive, cont.



### Intention:

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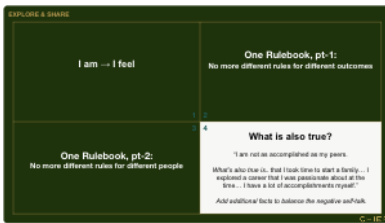
- Explain the two different “One Rulebook” tips to tame your inner critic

## Suggested Voiceover:

- *These two have a similar frame, but with two different twists.*
- *They are both related to how we distort our thinking by having two different rulebooks, when we really need just one! Let's not change the rules mid-game!*
  - *Often, we “change the rules” or “move the goalposts” depending on the situation or context. So, the recommendation is to try to only play by ONE rulebook. Apply the same rules to yourself as you would to others. This helps us have more grace with ourselves as we navigate our inner critic.*
- *“One Rulebook, Part 1”: [READ Quadrant #2 ALOUD]*
  - *So, our inner critic may have different rules for different outcomes - which is not a fair rulebook!*
- *“One Rulebook, Part 2”: [READ Quadrant #3 ALOUD]*
  - *This is the classic “what would you say to someone else in this situation?”*
  - *We would likely never say these types of negative things to a friend, a colleague, a mentee, so why do we tell them to ourselves all the time?*
- *[Ask]: Do either of these ring a bell? Anyone have an example to share?*

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## Slide 10 | Topic deep dive, cont.



## Intention:

- Share the final cognitive distortion taming strategy - this one is for more balanced self-talk

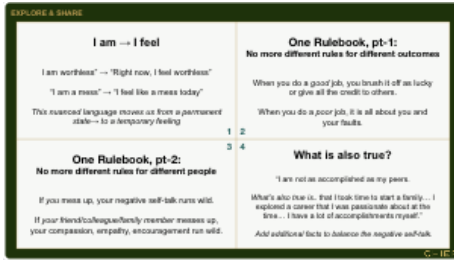
## Suggested Voiceover:

- **[READ SLIDE ALOUD]**
- *This one is all about balancing the self-talk we hear.*
  - *Blanket statements can be distorting how we perceive ourselves.*
  - *Instead of stopping the negative self-talk altogether, which can feel impossible, we ask “what is also true?”*
  - *We want to bring in other facts about the situation or our experience, so we focus on more than one data point.*
  - *This helps us bring balance and perspective into our frames.*
- *[Ask]: Do you find yourself making blanket statements about yourself, without considering other data points?*

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## Slide 11 | Summary, discussion set-up

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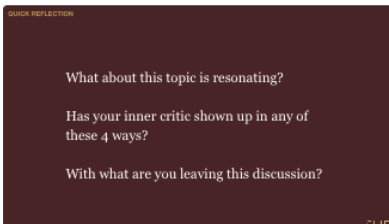
## Intention:

- Show all 4 cognitive distortion tamers at once.
- Very quick slide to wrap it up before the discussion.

**Facilitation Tip:** This slide is also available as a handout for members after the meeting. [Please find it here.](#)

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## Slide 12 | Group discussion



## Intention:

- Begin a vulnerable discussion around the 4 cognitive distortion tamers
- Large-group or breakout-group discussions are welcome, your choice!
- Encourage members to think through which one of the 4 strategies they might want to try in the next month.

## VIP Facilitation Tip:

- If someone in your group resorts to extreme or dangerous negative self-talk, please remember we are not mental health professionals and Core is not designed to be a therapeutic service.
  - It is totally fine, if you are comfortable, to encourage the member to consider therapy for a more constructive space with a licensed expert. Removing the stigma of mental health and therapy will likely be appreciated by the group.

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## Slide 13 | Summary of the 5 types of boundaries



## Intention:

- Wrap up and do a quick reflection

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- Ask members to make a commitment and hold themselves accountable to doing something related to this topic before the next Core meeting.
  - Ask them to verbalize their commitment, even if it is super small (ex: *"I'll experiment with strategy #4 and journal twice a week about it"*)
- Recommended resource for further exploration ([The Confidence Code book](#))
- Feel free to share the Member Handout at this time. [LINK](#)