

Gremlins, Saboteurs, and Inner Critics

We all have an inner Gremlin, or Inner Critic, that little voice in our head that holds us back and keeps us small and doesn't want us to grow or change. The gremlin is the inner critic (those replaying tapes - often negative) who seems preoccupied with danger, fear, pessimism, worry, regret, judgement and cynicism. This is a different voice from the one that is non-judgmental and self-reflecting to improve our performance.

As a leader, who or what is your gremlin?

When does your inner critic get in your way?

How is this impacting your leadership or performance?

What kinds of conversations are you having with yourself and your gremlin?

Your gremlin may have a profound impact on your quality of life and your performance and uses many ways to get your attention. The gremlin usually shows up when we are trying to improve, learn or change. The gremlin likes the status quo. That inner dialog that is fear-based or judgmental may be the gremlin at work. "I can't do it," "What's the use--things will never change," or "I'm not good enough" are examples of the cynical, pessimistic and negative messages that your gremlin may be communicating. The message is often about you and holding you small but can also be a judgment about others. You are not alone, we all have one.

Your gremlin prefers to operate undercover, so it seems like YOU are saying all this stuff. When you learn to distinguish between the voice of the gremlin and your own voice, you can begin to choose which voice you will listen to. This can be a very powerful place and leads to living a life at choice, which will bring you more satisfaction, productivity, energy and results.



How is your Gremlin working for or against you?

What is your Gremlin costing you?

What impact is your Gremlin having?

How do you recognize your Gremlin?

What would your Inner Ally say?

Who's voice will you chose to listen to?

Ways to Manage your Gremlin

- Speak positively to yourself. When you notice a gremlin thought, say “Cancel that!” and convert it to a more empowering thought.
- Remember that you HAVE thoughts, feelings and emotions; that's not who you ARE.
- Notice and label when your gremlin is speaking and simply say “oh that’s the inner critic right now”.
- Fighting with your gremlin isn’t as effective as noticing, acknowledging and then choosing the voice you are want to listen to for positive effect.
- Clear your anger, resentments, hurts and reactions; don’t hang on to or perpetuate being a victim and complaining. Learning to let go and move forward is an effective way to manage your gremlin and your judgment.
- Create commitments so powerful that they overshadow the inner critic – what is your higher purpose you are striving for?
- Give up both the need to be right, always having to do it right - those perfectionistic tendencies. It’s not about being perfect, or right – think about the possibilities and expanding choices and options.
- Compassionately see your inner critics motives – its usually an attempt to keep us from harm, or prevent us from changing and growing.
- Face your fear; your gremlin is usually stimulating fear. Shift to another energy or positive emotion.
- Find the humour in what your critic is saying and you may become less attached to it.
- Practice forgiving and accepting and create an environment that will support and encourage your potential. Create your inner ally.
- Find a coach and/or mentor! Often a coach can hear your gremlin at work before you do and can help you be your best self!
- Read, *Taming Your Gremlin - A Guide to Enjoying Yourself*, by Richard Carson or *Playing Big* by Tara Mohr for more information and tips on taming your gremlin.



Tame Gremlin

Michelle Scott is a professional coach that facilitates the change and growth her clients are seeking for increased success in their career and life. How can overcoming fears or taming your gremlin, help you achieve your peak performance?