

WEEK FIVE:

Introducing...

WEEK FIVE: I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO A FRIEND OF MINE...

*" If you hear a voice with in you say
"You cannot paint"
then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced."*

- Vincent Van Gough

We all have one.

That little voice that expresses doubt, criticizes your choices, belittles your actions, says words like 'can't', 'shouldn't', 'couldn't' + 'why didn't you'...

My inner critic, or as I call her, the **little bitch** hits me when I am feeling my most vulnerable, my most stressed, or my most tired.

And she really knows where to stick in the knife and twist. She knows me better than I do!

Sometimes I don't even realize she's there, but when I am feeling like a failure, unworthy, guilty or shameful I know she's been whispering.

Whispering awful, soul-destroying words.

Words like:

- "You shouldn't have yelled at the kids today... you are a crap mother"
- "You shouldn't have had that cupcake... those jeans won't fit you anymore, you're so fat!"
- "You can't sell that painting, it looks awful - no one will buy it"
- "Who do you think you are to guide people into a creative life? You're no expert!"
- "You're writing a book? BAHHAHAHAHA that is the funniest thing I have heard all week - you're freaking dyslexic!"

My little bitch whispers to me like some over the top teenage super villain, like the stereotypical mean girl from all those high school teen movies hissing at me as I walk through the school corridors.

She is a bitch.

I think most of us have an inner critic, but how do you stop yours from being so paralyzing that you stop doing what you love? Can you ever

evict the Little Bitch from our psyche? I am not sure because mine is still hanging around.

But I do know I have had some success in minimize her soul-destroying words and reducing her input into my life.

And I do believe that one of your little bitch's jobs is to protect you. She does after all know your deepest fears, concerns and worries.

So even though mine told me to stop being silly - no one will buy a painting from you, I knew after a lot of thinking about it, that this time, she was just protecting me from my fear of failing!

There are many ways that you can diminish your little bitch's voices and stop the negative chitchat. But there were four techniques that really helped me.

FOUR WAYS YOU CAN DEMINISH YOUR LITTLE BITCH'S IMPORTANCE.

(For simplicity I will refer to the Little Bitch as a 'her'. Mainly because mine has a female feel to her!)

1. Talk to her like a real person.

Acknowledged they have a voice. My Little Bitch doesn't contribute in positive ways but I do believe she has some value.

So sometimes I talk to her.

Out loud. (And yes, I realize I can sound quite strange, but trust me - it is really freeing!)

For example:

She'd hiss at me "You're not creative, you don't belong in this world, you didn't go to art school, you should get a real desk job and stop dreaming."

Telling her just to shut up will not necessarily work, so I found answering her helped.

I might say out loud. "yeah I didn't go to art school. But I love that I don't have their rules in my head when I am painting, I can just do what feels right and natural." Or "what do you mean I am not creative, if there is one thing I do know it is that I am very creative - just look at my scrapbooking project!"

So talk to your inner critic. Respond to her bitchy words. And thank her for trying to protect you and for looking out for (in *her* opinion) your best interests.

2. Introduce it to your friends!

I introduced my little bitch to everyone via my blog. It turned out I wasn't alone and a lot of people had their own bitches

But I also have a couple of really great friends and we will talk about our little bitches as if their real people.

When we would catch up for coffee, we'd ask how each other how our little bitches were.

We'd talk about them, how we felt when they were telling us lies and talk about ways to minimize their destruction.

We'd even talk about how we thought they might look or dress.

Sometimes this felt demented (talking about our inner critic this way), but it was also very fun and helped keep her diminished voice somewhat.

3. Change your inner critics voice.

This technique I learned while reading Paul McKenna's book "Change your life in Seven Days"

My little bitch sits on my shoulder, just near my ear and she hisses directly into it, mean nasty hurtful things.

So by changing the location she spoke from and the tone of her voice I made her comments that were hurtful and mean into something ludicrous and funny.

I moved her from my shoulder to my little toe. I would then hold my foot out, and then I changed her voice from the hissing sound to something ridiculous.

I changed her voice to baby talk or a Donald duck or Mickey Mouse character voice or breathy Betty Boop or Marilyn Monroe voice.

So now my little bitch is speaking to me from my little toe and she sounds like a breathy over sexed pin up girl.

"Oh Kirs-tin, you are soooo not crea-tive. {Sigh} There is *no* way you can make a living from your art"

Unfortunately it doesn't translate very well to paper, but I think you understand the point.

Try it. You may feel utterly ridiculous, but your little bitch is even more so!

4. Journaling to discover the silent bitch?

Sometimes her voice is virtually silent. Her destructive and dream killing words are still felt, but just not heard.

This happens to me all the time. I might have the most amazing idea. This is the best idea I have ever had and I need to follow through. I start working on the idea full of excitement and enthusiasm, however as time passes I fail to finish the project.

And while I still believe my idea is a good one, something is stopping me from finishing it.

When I first conceived the idea of this course it was five years ago. I loved the idea of sharing tips and tricks to being creative and I would tinker with the idea, but never really commit.

Initially I wanted to film the whole thing, and I did a very small run of videos two years after my idea, but then I stopped.

I would find excuses not to film a segment. I would schedule time to write yet would make other plans or find different priorities.

Finally in a fit of frustration, I pulled out my journal and asked myself “Why am I struggling with this?”

After a few aha moments as to why I was struggling (mostly to do with fear, worry and lack of confidence and lack of equipment I thought I needed), I ended up fleshing out the course content in an afternoon.

It turns out my little bitch was totally there. She was quietly suggesting that I wasn’t good enough to write a course, didn’t have the right equipment to record a video, and it didn’t matter any way no one would be interested in what I was saying.

It turns out she was wrong. And it was only through journaling that I discovered that I had these feelings and worries and I could move forward.

These techniques are just some of the ways that I felt really helped with dealing with negative self-talk and my little bitch. But like I mentioned there are some many different techniques you can use, if these don’t work for you Google ‘stopping negative self-talk’ which will bring up different techniques you can try.

If there is one thing you take from this chapter I want it to be this:

*' Even the most seasoned bitch slapping Bad Ass
has bad days where they too have doubts and fears.'*

We all do. Just don't let yours destroy your dreams.



5.1 REFLECTION: Acknowledge your inner critic.

Time: 5 -10 minutes

Equipment: Your notebook + pen

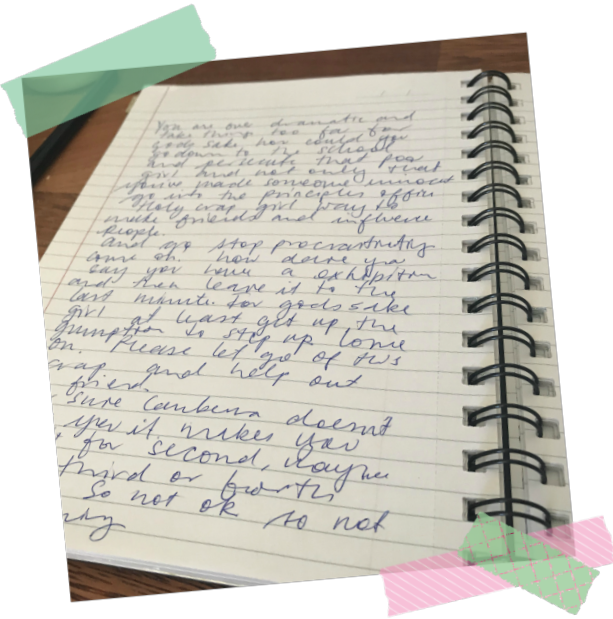
I want you to start this week's exercises by listening to what our inner critic is saying to us.

Settle in for five to ten minutes of listening to your little bitch rant about what ever she wants and write down everything she says to you in your notebook.

Now this can be related to your life in general, but I also want you to concentrate for a couple of moments **specifically** about creativity and how you want to invite creativity into your life.

For some people there may be three things on this list.

I had three pages the first time I did this exercise.



Read through your list. At each comment read it, let the words sink in.

For each of the things that you have written down, acknowledge your little bitch but then out loud tell her it is simply not true.

One of the things that I wrote down was that I am a shitty mother because I yelled at my children and made them cry.

During this exercise, I said to my little bitch out loud: *“Thank you for your concern, however I am not a shitty mama, I yelled at my girls because they were about to walk out onto the road and there was a car coming.”*

After acknowledging everything she has to say to you smooch some paint around on those pages so you don't ever have to see them again.

We will revisit these pages in a couple of weeks.



5.2 ACTION: Acknowledge that you are amazing + worthy!

Time: 5 mins but longer if you want

Equipment: notebook, glue, a pen.

If the true purpose of our little bitch is to protect us, then lets turn her into our guardian angel.

This angel has a suit of armor, and will be your defender from your little bitch.

You can draw your own guardian angel or use mine that is at the end of these notes.



Stick your Angel into your notebook and in her armor, wings or around, write in positive words of affirmations.

Think about our reflection exercise where she was attacking you - saying all the things that you weren't, couldn't, shouldn't or can't and change them into positive affirmations.

FOR EXAMPLE:

My little bitch told me I was worthless, a fraud etc. And I changed those thoughts into words like: WORTHY, AUTHENTIC and LOVING etc.

If I am thinking about the example that I shared in the reflection exercise, I would change them into positive words like: Protector, caring, guardian etc.

Decorate and colour in your

bravery angel any way you wish!

5.3 FUN: Create your Inner Critic.

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Your notebook, pen, glue stick + magazine

Optional: decorative items.

Did you ever doodle horns on magazine images? Color in a models eyes red, or blacken out teeth, handle bar moustaches? I had a 'Lets Sing' schoolbook that I doodled all over much to my mother's disgust.

Today lets have some fun and make an image that represents your inner critic.

You can draw her or collage her from different magazine images or a mixture of both.

What does your little bitch's hair look like; do she have warts, horns, or wonky teeth? Is she ugly or beautiful and innocent looking?

Does she have animal legs or ride a camel? Have a pet that they stroke like a bad Doctor Evil impersonator?

Flick through your magazines and pull out any image that speaks to you.

Give your inner critic a name. Share her with your friends, your family or your kids or with us on social media!

Take away your inner critics anonymity and give her a visibility that will not allow her to hide in the shadows any more.

And when she starts in at you again, think about her and her vicious words, and remember you image of her that you collaged and doodled and how silly she looked.



5.4 EVERYDAY EXERCISES: Drawing like a kid

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Notebook + pen, ruler.

Take a double page spread and using your ruler spit each page into four sections.

Do you remember how you drew when you were a kid? What did you draw or doodle? Did you draw dogs or trucks, or horses obsessively?

Do you remember not caring if the sky was blue or that your person's fingers were longer than their hands?

When I was a kid I obsessively drew three things - the local hospital, dogs and lions.

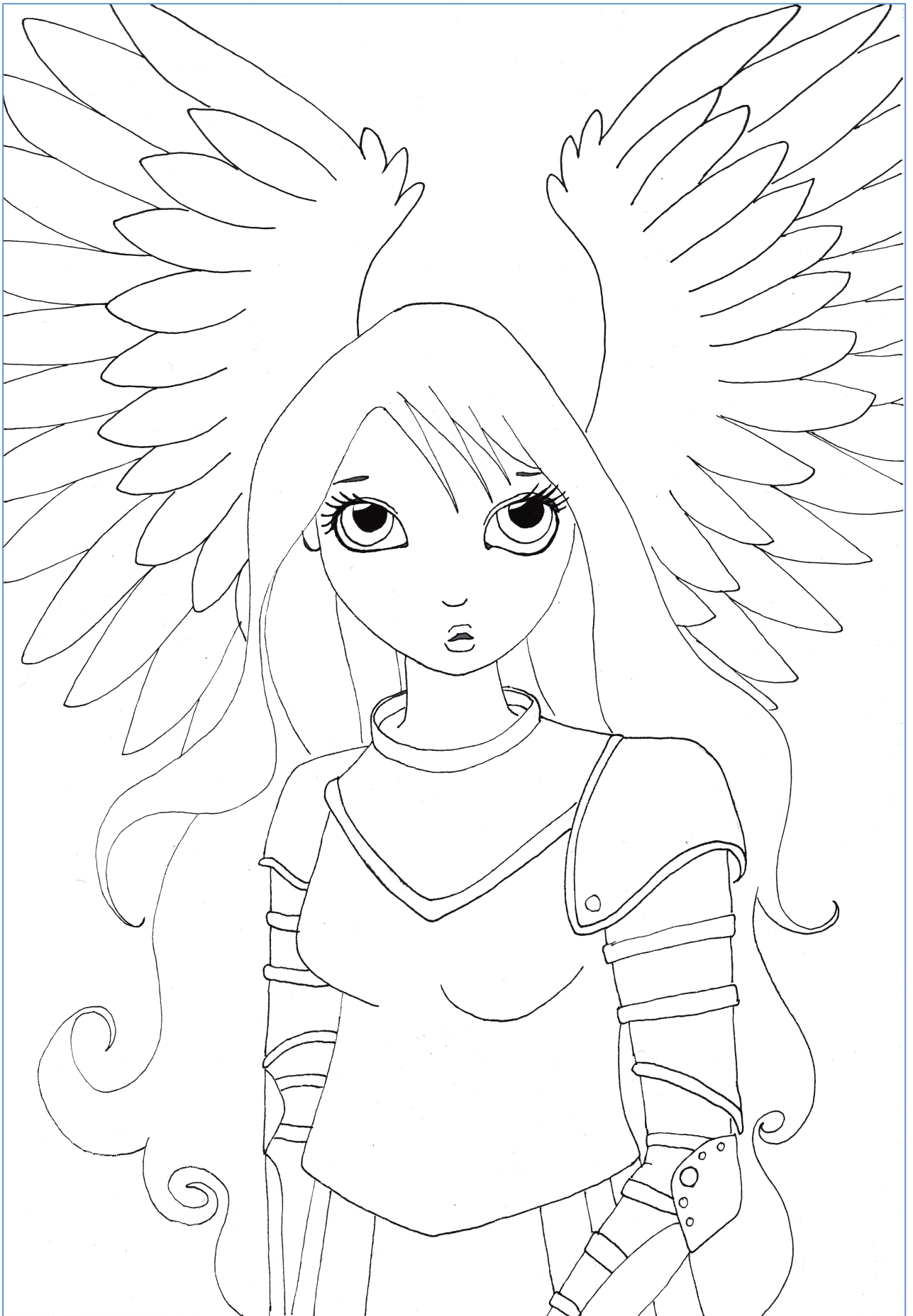
This week I want you to recreate what you drew as a kid - or if you can't remember try to think about the kids around you and what they draw.

Each day using a pen, fill in a box with something you drew as a kid.



Spend five minutes and don't over think about what it is you are drawing but do think about what memories surface, what you used to feel when you drew like that etc.!

If you can only think of a few things you used to draw, just redraw them again in another box. On the last day fill in the final two boxes.



YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL