



## Working with the Inner Critic

This is a four-part exercise to help you work with your inner editor, the person who keeps telling you that your work is not good enough. It is designed to help you get in touch with that person (or creature) and negotiate with him/her/it so that you can get back to the business of writing. Take a good amount of time with each step. Write in a place where you feel comfortable and where you will not be disturbed. It's best to complete all four parts of the exercise at one time.



### Step One:

Personify your inner critic. Give your critic a name. Write a detailed description of what he or she looks like. How does he or she move or sound or smell? Include all five senses in your description. Who is this person? What kind of character does she have? What makes him tick?



### Step Two:

Go deeper. Become your critic. Write in his or her voice. How does the critic view you and your work? Allow the critic to be honest and also allow yourself to write whatever he or she says. You might be surprised. What does he **want** from you? What does she think she's doing for you? Most importantly, what is he or she **afraid** of? Be sure to answer this last question

thoroughly. Imagine that your critic feels safe enough to tell you the truth about this one. What does your critic **need** from you?



### Step Three:

Be yourself. Write in your own voice. What do you want from the critic? How do you see him or her? What do you need from him? What would you most like to hear from her? What would make you able to write fully? What role do you want the critic to play in your life?



### Step Four:



Here comes the hard part. Imagine that you have all the resources of a generous universe at hand – time, space, money, any building materials or airplane tickets or places that you might need. Write a conversation between yourself and the critic in which you negotiate what you need from each other. This has to result in a win-win situation where you **both** get what you want. The critic is not going to go away permanently nor are you. So be imaginative and give each of you what is most needed. If your critic needs a stage, build him one. If she needs to go on vacation to Bali while you're writing, send her there. If you need a place to write in Africa, create it. Make an agreement with the critic for how you can work together. Both of you must end of satisfied with your most important needs fulfilled.