



The Inner Critic is a Devious Extraterrestrial Plot

After many years of wrestling with my own inner critic and of working with hundreds of brilliant people who have allowed me to accompany them on their journeys, I have come to the startling understanding of a conspiracy of cosmic proportions. Our inner critics or saboteurs, that predator that devours our dreams, that inner voice that makes us feel not good enough no matter what we do, is an absolutely diabolical and exquisite alien artifact - planted within humans to keep us from ever really competing in the cosmos in any meaningful way. The inner critic that holds us back is none other than an alien plot intent on keeping us fearful, small, and thoroughly separated from our own magnificent power.

Oh, snicker if you will, but consider this: What better way could you imagine to keep a brash species unaware of its full potential? What better way to get around some universal prime directive like “you can’t just kill all the inhabitants of various planets that might pose a threat once they evolve”? No killing is required - just infect them with some computer-like virus that messes up their basic operating systems, keeps them running around in a dead-end feedback loop designed to sap power, vision, creativity, dreams and magnificence. And then, in their fear and ignorance they will just kill each other as well as their own very best dreams. There’s one less intelligent species to have what it takes to fully co-create our universal becoming.

Stay with me here for just a minute more. Every single one of us has some kind of inner critic. Whether called critic or gremlin or saboteur or, as the story teller Clarissa Pinkola Estes calls the virus, the predator that devours our dreams, this inner voice comes with our human territory. No matter how emotionally intelligent we are or how very much inner work we have done, no matter how holy we are or how great our self esteem may be, we all have an inner voice that has found a way to keep us smaller than we need to be. “Who do you think you are?” “You’re not good enough”, “You’re too loud/dumb/clumsy (fill in the blank) or you’re not smart/fast/rich/pretty (fill in the blank) enough”. “That’s too selfish” or “No one will like this” or a hundred other messages of unworthiness and un-lovable-ness whisper (or scream) through every single one of our human minds. See what a brilliant virus this is? Are you beginning to get

what a coup this is for our competitors in the galaxy-wide market place? Can't you just hear them saying, "We'll keep these backwater bipeds ensorcelled in the illusion of their unworthiness for a few hundred thousand years while we live to our full potential and leave them eating our stardust!"?

Of course, seeing as how we humans are really quite bright, they would have to make this virus adaptable, sophisticated and just plain sneaky - which my inner predator most definitely is. The alien scourge is adaptable in that the virus can morph once we start to run some anti-virus programs through our systems. Have you noticed the one where, once you get past the "you're dirt so why even bother" level and actually start to bother, it can slip into "sure, you can do that once you complete every undone task I can drag up from your over-full mind" message? Perfection is one of its favorite tricks, that and black-or-white thinking. "If it can't be perfect it isn't worth doing. It's all or nothing and since you're nothing, don't do it at all."

Sneakiness can be seen in the way the alien virus slips in riding right up close to one of our core values. One example for me is my value of working for the good of the whole. There's a trap door in that value the alien predator uses to run the message of "there's no time to write (or create or dream) because there are 6+ billion people who need your attention first, starting with all those emails, phone calls, and critical political action texts you absolutely have to tend to first, and don't forget the environmental and social impact research of every item on your grocery list and the healthy, organic, gluten-free meals you have to make for your family before you can even think of starting to write". Notice how my predator uses run-on sentences (and then condemns me for doing the same)? It's because it's a run-on and run-you-down thought. The bottom line message is **STOP, HOLD BACK, YOU CAN'T DO IT, JUST STOP.**

Now for sophistication - the alien virus, over the millennia of worming through its human hosts - has figured out a way to hijack the bold creations of our desire by deceiving us into believing substitutes are as good as the real thing. Here's one way it does this: in the process of moving past the blatant "not-good-enough" message I begin writing (or designing or imagining or any other of a number of ways of being creative and brave) and I come up with some kind of obstacle, could be big or relatively minor.

My desire is momentarily interrupted and the virus switches tracks on me, confusing me into thinking I am now hungry and I just have to get up and *get something to eat right now*. Or my cat needs me to find her toy mouse. Or that junk email I just got requires me to go on line and buy something.

Get what's happening here? In the process of manifesting my desire I bump up against some part of it that is hard to do . As I back off momentarily (and understandably) from the difficulty, perhaps to even figure out how to meet the challenge, a bait and switch takes place. That cosmic trickster in my head convinces me that my desire now looks like food, love, stuff, sleep, sex... (fill in the blank yet again). "Hey, desire is desire, right? That one's hard, this one is easy. There, there, feel good, hold back, get comforted, why bother anyway? It's just too much for you right now." Or "you need this break now, what you really want is to feel satiation somewhere in your little animal body, go soothe yourself, don't worry your pretty little head about this one now...." I can almost see the bright gold pocket watch swinging back and forth, the hypnotist's voice low and compelling, relaxation and the letting go of my driving thoughts seeping throughout my being, as the devious mantra of *let it go, let it go, let it go*, lulls me back asleep.

Wake up! (I add that just in case those last words got amped up by your own inner beastly and you were starting to float away.)

Ok, if you're with me so far, and if you are starting to realize I'm onto something here, you might be asking what we're going to do about this. You already have figured some ways past the illusion - we all have or else there would still be just a very few of us hanging out in trees or caves. So we are doing what we can to kick the virus. And we need to keep talking to each other and bringing our shared wisdom into the conversation.

Here's what I've found helps me begin to get out of this twisted illusion:

1. Call it for what it is - a lie, a dastardly alien plot, a virus intent on keeping us very, very very small. Don't make friends with it, or reason with it, or feel comfortable with it just because it's been with you forever. It is not a friend. Its

purpose is to keep us from our full, capable, wise, wild, creative, magnificent, awesome selves.

2. We must stay aware of our core values, and be really vigilant for trap doors the trickster uses to hijack what's really important to us. Our conscience is not the same as the inner critic. Conscience keeps us proud of our actions and our choices. The inner predator keeps us *from* choices we would be proud of. Our conscience reminds us of what we can do, of whom we really are. The predator only want us to play small, to hold back, to hide our light because it convinces us we have no light. Living in alignment with our values feels satisfying to us. We feel weary and drained when we live from the alien virus's distortion of them.

3. Call on allies - inner and outer, of this world and from the cosmos, any and all who help us remember who we really are. A good coach is a superb ally - one of our main jobs is to be alien lie detectors (although not all coaches recognize the extraterrestrial threat).

4. Be our true selves. This whole plot is because we are off-the-charts powerful, creative, beautiful, lovable and loving, daring, divine, and just plain dandy. We all need a way, perhaps a daily practice, for remembering ourselves.

5. Have compassion for ourselves and all of our human sisters and brothers. We have all been infected, once again, because we are so bright and beautiful. In our compassion we can see each other for our true selves, for our light that those jealous ones can't quite extinguish. Together we can see through the virulent illusion of 'not enough'.

6. Be really, really creative. When we open up to the myriad of other possibilities within and without, the simple virus message doesn't hold up so well.

7. Gaze at the stars at night. Take a long look and let the stories the stars tell us of majesty and mystery, of vastness and range, of freedom and desire, sing even more loudly than that insidious alien voice ever can. We can let the stars remind us that we, too, are stardust and brilliant beyond all measure.

8. Give tin foil hats a second thought (awareness laced with humor can be a powerful one-two punch to knock us way out of play-it-safe-and-small)!

Please, let me hear from you on this. As we're all in this together I'm way into resource sharing and brainstorming. I'd love to know your ideas on how we can shake this devious plot. We need our independence day - and I know that together we have what it takes to break the hold of this illusion. And pass this message around - just in case I turn up missing.....

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