

## **Checking In with an Inner Critic: A Meditation**

**Richard Schwartz:** Close your eyes, and see if you can find that inner critic in or around your body. Maybe it's tightness in your chest or pain in your neck.

Then see if you can get curious about it. What kind of thoughts, feelings, impulses, images does this part give you? And just stay open to whatever it wants to show you.

As all that is happening, and you're getting to know the part, see how you're feeling toward it, this critic. And if you can stay curious about it, then let it know that you want hear more about what it's trying to do. Just try to stay open to it, whatever it's trying to let you know about itself.

This might seem like an odd question, but ask this critic how old it thinks you are. And don't think of the answer. Just wait and see what number comes. If you've got that wrong, then go ahead and update it about how old you are, and see how it reacts. You can also ask the part how old it is and what it's been trying to do for you all this time.

And as you get to know it, it might be easier to let it know you appreciate how it's been trying to help you. And you might also feel some compassion now or tenderness toward it, so you can let it know that too.

And just see if there's anything else it wants you to know before you come back. And if not, then you can shift your focus back outside and open your eyes.