

HEALING FROM THE SEVERE CRITICISM, JUDGMENT, & BULLYING

by Johanna Kern

In these challenging times, we need to help each other to maintain our emotional health. If you, or someone you know, suffer from the aftermaths of criticism, judgment, or bullying - you need to know that you are not alone.



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Don't give up on yourself. KEEP TRYING - AND YOU WILL GET THERE.

Repeated criticism can rob us of zest for life and even send our spirit into a dark corner. The number of suicides sadly keeps growing. Suicide is a global phenomenon, and close to 800 000 people die every year, one person every 40 seconds.

While people who suffer from the aftermath of repeated criticism know that their fear of being judged might be sometimes irrational, they still can't help perpetuating their anxious thoughts and feelings.

More than 75% of people worldwide experience the first symptoms of social anxiety during their childhood or early teenage years, and 15 million American adults have social anxiety.

It could be related to the fact that many of us may have experienced criticism in our childhood and later, in our early youth, were rejected or ridiculed by other teenagers. That can result in developing deep social anxiety that gets in the way of going to work or doing other everyday things. As the human species, we are biologically wired to live in groups and communities to survive. Being rejected by our community creates in our subconscious a considerable threat to our survival.

Here are some of the symptoms that keep occurring after being exposed to repeated criticism:

On the emotional level:

- Excessive self-consciousness and anxiety in social situations
- Intense worry for days, weeks, or sometimes even months before an upcoming social event
- Fear of being watched or judged by others, people we don't even know.
- Fear that we'll embarrass or humiliate ourselves
- Fear that others will notice that we are nervous

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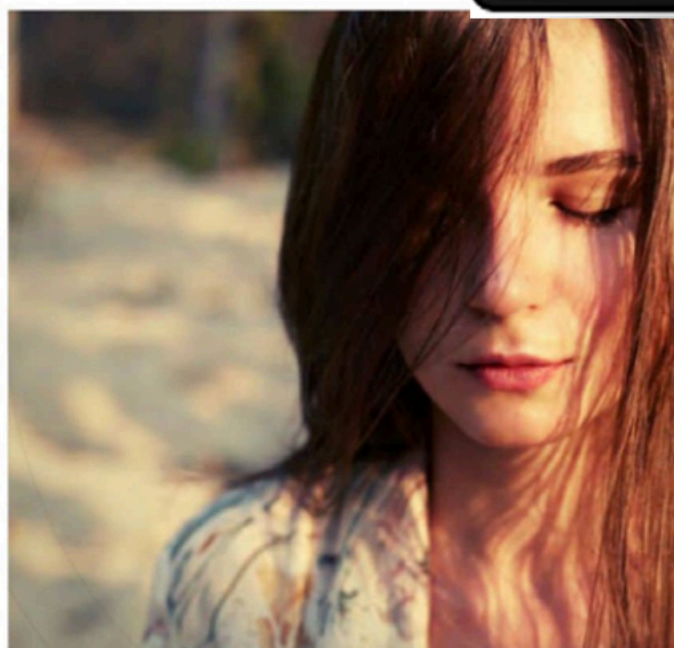
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On the Physical Level:

- Red face/blushing
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea, upset stomach
- Trembling (including shaky voice)
- Racing Heart
- Sweating, hot flashes
- Feeling dizzy or faint

Behavioral symptoms:

- Avoiding social situations and limiting your activities.
- Being quiet and hiding in the background to escape notice and embarrassment
- A need to always bring somebody along with you wherever you go.
- Drinking/smoking before or during social situations to calm down



How to deal with our persistent fear of being judged:

You may want to start challenging your negative thoughts, either through therapy or on your own. Yes, it can be done. If others could do it, you can do it too.

• Step 1: Identify the automatic negative thoughts you are having while being anxious about social situations.

For instance, you may worry about an upcoming work presentation and think that others will think that you are incompetent and that you are going to blow it.

Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Am I sure that I'm going to blow it?
 - Even if others realize that I'm nervous, will they necessarily think that I'm incompetent?



Through such logical analyses of the upcoming situation, you may gradually replace the fearful thoughts with more realistic and positive ways of looking at social events that trigger your Fear of Being Judged.

Remember: significant steps consist of small steps.

• Step 2: Learn how to control your breath. Many things are happening in your body when you are being anxious. One of them is shortness of breath, which makes your breath quick and shallow. Such over-breathing throws the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in your body off balance - causing dizziness, a feeling of suffocation, increased heart rate, and tensed muscles.

Here is what you can do:

Find a comfortable position, sitting with your back straight and your shoulders relaxed.

Take a few deep breaths through your nose. Next - take a deep breath while counting to 4 - and hold it while counting to 4.

Exhale slowly, counting to 4. Continue to breathe through your nose that way until you feel that you are calming down

• Step 3: Face your fears. Now that you know how to replace your negative thoughts with more realistic ones, and you know how to control your breath - it is time to face your fears. Stop avoiding social situations.

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• Step 5: Adjust/change your lifestyle.

Avoid or limit caffeine intake: Coffee, black tea, caffeinated soda, energy drinks, and chocolate act as stimulants that increase anxiety symptoms. Drink only in moderation and quit or limit smoking. Both alcohol and nicotine increase the risk of having an anxiety attack.

Change is indeed a matter of choice, nothing else.

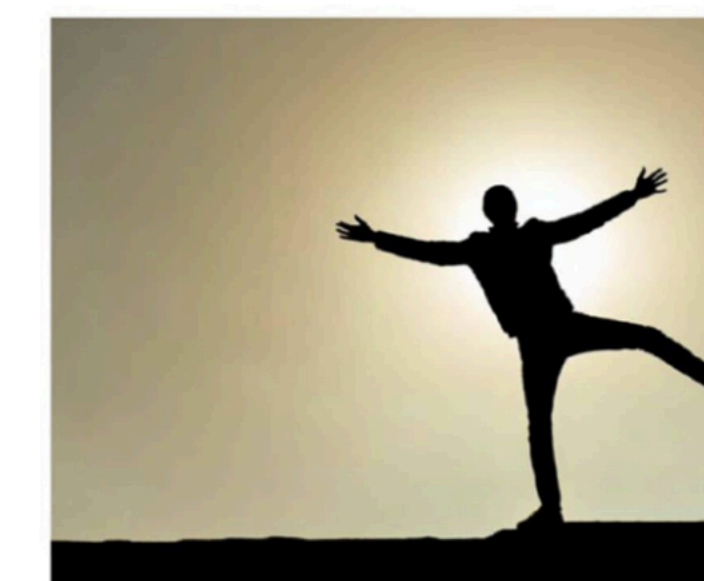
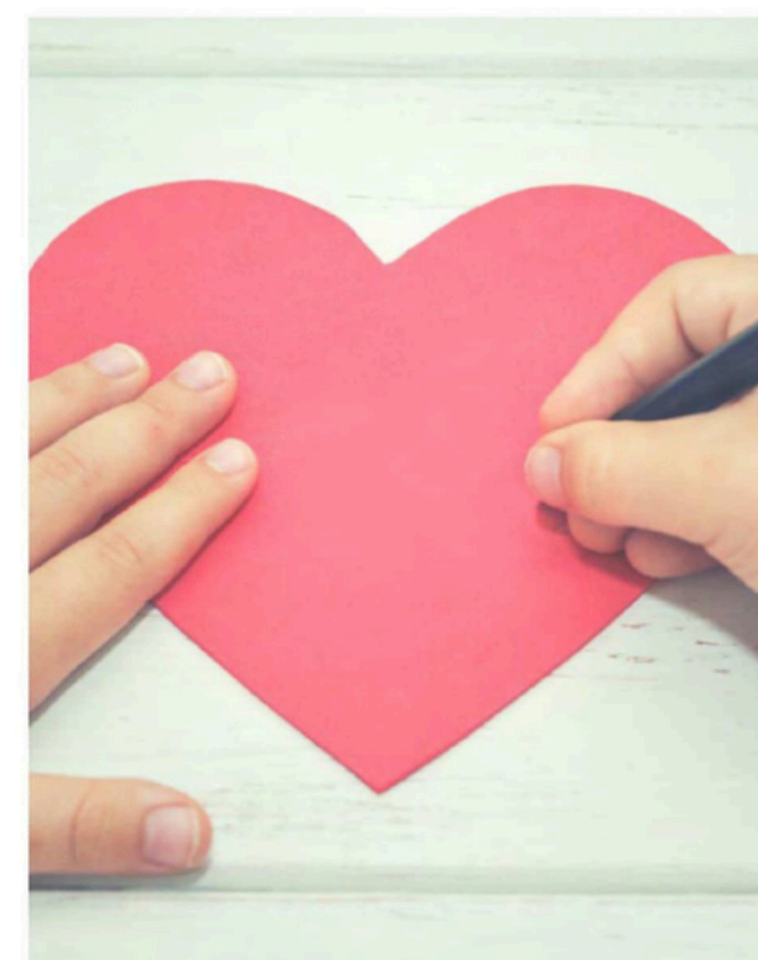
• Step 6: Find out who you are at the bottom of your Heart and let yourself be the best you can be according to your, not anybody else's terms. You will be happy, and your life will become your Dream Life.

Yes, you thoroughly deserve it. You are worth that, and nothing less.

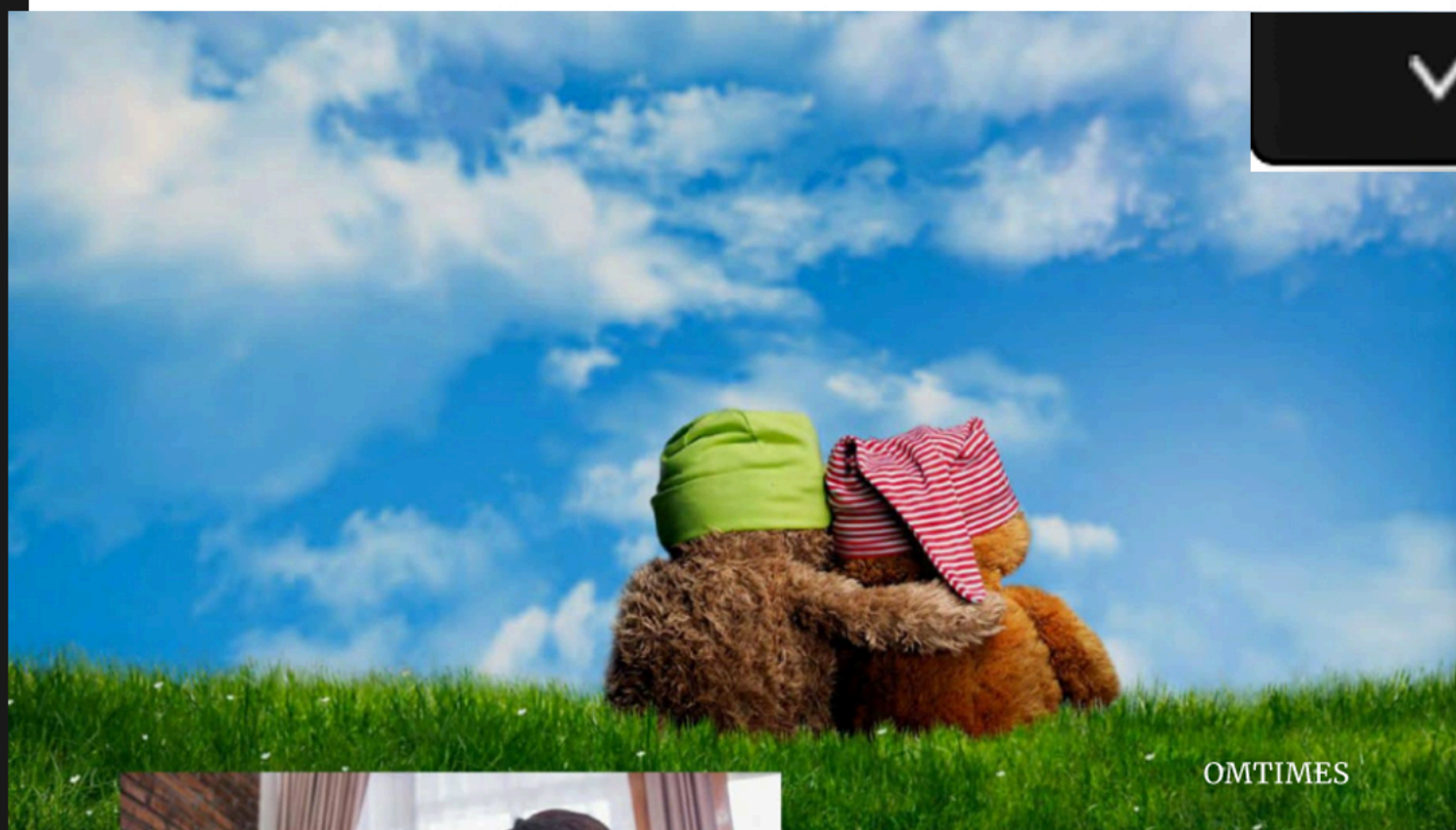
Don't give up on yourself. Keep trying - and you will get there.

Johanna Kern is a transformational teacher, filmmaker, and multiple award-winning authors of "365 (+1) Affirmations to Create A Great Life", "Secrets of Love for Everyone," "Master and the Green-Eyed Hope," etc. She practices and shares the Master Teachings of HOPE, helping people find their own power and progress in all life areas.

Her story received international attention, winning praise by readers in North America and Europe, and endorsement by three world-renowned experts: Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., Jerry Solvin, Ph.D., and Brian Van der Horst. <https://johannakern.com> <https://www.facebook.com/JohannaKernAuthor>



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Avoidance leads to even more problems. For instance, if you are scared of socializing with strangers, you might start accompanying your friend to a party.

Once you are comfortable with that step - you might introduce yourself to one new person. Then to another one, and so on. Important: do not try to face your biggest fear right away. When you move too fast - you may end up reinforcing your anxiety.

Take one step at a time.

• Step 4: Take a class, find a workshop - that teaches self-confidence, public speaking, build assertiveness, and develop communication skills.

You may also want to volunteer to find a small group of like-minded people and while taking part in their activities - focus on the tasks, not on assessing your performance.



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