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**Newsletter: November/December 2016**

**Edited by: Audrey Carlin**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING  
AFTERNOON TEA ON  
WEDNESDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2016  
AT THE IMPERIAL ROOMS,  
MATLOCK, DE4 3NL  
FROM 1.00 PM TO 3.00 PM**



Please  
along and  
we start  
Christmas

come  
join us as  
our

celebrations with Afternoon Tea followed by our own “home grown” entertainment which we are sure you will enjoy. It’s also an opportunity to chat with your new friends in a happy and relaxed atmosphere at this scenic location.

### **Annual General Meeting**

Prior to the Afternoon Tea, we will hold our AGM, for which information is enclosed with this newsletter. This is usually done quickly so you will be able to enjoy the afternoon.

### **Christmas Raffle and Christmas Cards**

Joy will be preparing a raffle with several prizes for the afternoon tea which will be drawn on the day and we will be bringing along specially printed Christmas cards for sale.

### **REPORT FROM OUR LAST MEETING**

We held our last meeting at the Imperial Rooms, Matlock where 30 people enjoyed afternoon tea and an interesting and humorous talk by Andrew Leigh. Andrew has very kindly passed on his speech notes to us so we can share his talk with all our members.

### **Laugh Away Your Inner Critic Speech by Andrew Leigh**

#### **Speech notes**

We tend to treat our unhelpful and negative thoughts too seriously and often accept our negative internal messages as truth. Treating unhelpful thinking with less respect – and introducing humour as part of our positive response significantly lessens the power of negative thoughts.

#### **Core Message**

- We take negative thoughts too seriously
- A lighter, more humorous approach reduces the power of our negative thinking
- Personification of our negative thinking helps us decrease negative thoughts and increase positive ones

### **Separating your negative thoughts from ‘you’**

All the effective approaches I’m aware of start with this foundation – though often not explicitly. It’s all about separating out your negative thoughts from ‘you’. When you can do this it

creates a feeling of 'distance' that helps you combat negative thinking much more effectively.

A good way to do this is to think of the source of your negative thoughts as a separate part of you – and not a very helpful part at that! In my approach to creating this separation I use the term **Horrible Inner Critic** as a general label. This can be shortened to **HIC**. We can also refer to our negative thoughts as **HIC Thinking**.



### How Does Our Negative Voice Develop?

Many psychologists suggest that our unhelpful negative voice begins in childhood and, at first, is actually a protective voice that warns us about actions that might lead to hurt – with the possible hurt being either physical or mental (such as being told off or humiliated). As we grow, this part of us takes on board and stores all sorts of negative experiences and negative information about us.

Such information might be things we've tried and failed at, or negative opinions about us from family, teachers and society. So gradually our developing Horrible Inner Critic builds up a profile of us that is based on all these negatives. No surprise then that it has a low opinion of our abilities to learn,

succeed and grow – it thinks we're pretty useless!

Now remember, its role is still to protect us from hurt, and it will stick to that even though it doesn't think we're much good. So our Horrible Inner Critic becomes very risk averse. Why take the chance of being hurt if you don't have to? But it only has one primary method of protecting us from hurt and that's by stopping us from doing things that might hurt us. And its primary way of stopping us is by 'talking us out of it' – with lots of negative thinking that will give all sorts of 'reasons' why we'd be better off just not bothering.

### The Impact of an Active HIC

Actually, when our Horrible Inner Critic is part of a generally positive mind it's not too much of a problem. But it can creep in at all sorts of times, and for many people it can feel so prominent that not only does it overwhelm our more positive thoughts, it can also feel as if it's who we are: a naturally negative person.

The impact of this can be both practical, in terms of damage to relationships, career, income and achievements – and psychological, with perhaps, increased stress levels and fear of failure, lowered confidence and self-esteem, and unhappiness about the things you would like to do that you've felt blocked from doing.

With all this taken into account, it's very easy to assume that our Horrible Inner Critic is a very powerful critter – and we certainly often react to our negative thoughts with panic and dread. Not only that but when we try to combat our

negative thoughts we often add to its power by treating the thoughts so seriously.

### **Personification**

Strangely enough, despite all the serious negative impact an active HIC can have on our life, taking it much less seriously is one of the best ways of neutralising the power of its negative thoughts. We've already started this process by giving it the label *Horrible Inner Critic*. Next we can give it a name. The kind of name you give it is important: ideally you are looking for a name that amuses you, a name that makes you smile perhaps, and definitely a name you can't take too seriously.

You might choose a name of a real person you know but think is a bit of a joke; it may be a name that just seems funny – *Alphonse* works for me (apologies to any Alphonse reading this); it may be your own name but with some kind of descriptor attached – *Awkward Annie*, *Little Steve*, *Terrified Tina*; or how about something with a relationship title in it like *Old Gran* or *Old Gramps*. You don't have to stick with names of people – cartoon characters, animals and nicknames can all work well, so things like: *Donald Duck*, *Scaredy Cat*, *Bodger*, *Stinky* could all work well.

For many people this is as far as you need to go with personifying your HIC. But if you have a visual imagination it can be helpful to build an image of your HIC too. This will usually turn out small, weak and often a bit pathetic.

It's interesting that we often assume our HICs are quite powerful, but in my experience they tend to be a bit like *The Wizard of Oz*: they project a façade of power but behind it you've got some little thing desperately trying to pretend it's much bigger than it really is. For this reason, recognising when our HIC is at work tends to take away the power.

### **Some Simple, Effective Tools**

#### **1. Tell your HIC to 'shaddup'**

They don't come much simpler than this tool, and yet it can be so very effective. The key is to use an offhand, dismissive tone of voice. So once you've noticed the negative thinking just say to your HIC 'ah... shaddup'. However, you must avoid a serious or strident tone, because all that does is give your HIC more power.

#### **2. Acknowledge your HIC by name**

Once you've noticed you are having negative thoughts, you can greet your HIC and tell it to go away. For instance: 'Oh, hi *Froggy*. Nice try but I'm not listening today. Now be good and shuffle off.'

#### **3. Recognition of negative thoughts**

Both the above techniques rely on you first recognising that you are having negative thoughts. So practising awareness of your negative thinking (your HIC thinking), is vital. This is especially true because HIC

thinking can often sneak in without us noticing.

When we do start noticing our negative thoughts more, then we can often start to recognise that they are the same old thoughts that we had yesterday and the day before. Our negative thoughts can be quite repetitive and even predictable. Recognising a particular thought as one of your HIC's 'old chestnuts' can make it much easier to dismiss both the thought and the HIC. So: 'Ah, hi *Froggy*. It's the old *you always fail so why bother* thought, is it? I'm not listening so off you go.'

### **The Good Inner Critic**

While listening to our negative thoughts can be very damaging to us in so many ways, we still do need the ability to recognise our weakness and mistakes. The trouble with leaving this job to our HIC is that it does so in unhelpful ways. It uses blame, it tells us we're no good or not good enough, it tells us we might as well give up. It says we are *always* unlucky and that we *never* get things right, and it builds up the imagined consequences of failure way beyond the reality.

And yet, within every one of us is the capability to rise above set-backs, to learn from mistakes and to grow as a person. It's not always easy to embrace these positive thought processes though – especially when our Horrible Inner Critic is at its busiest.

This is where the idea of a *Good Inner Critic* can help. Good Inner Critic

thinking is essentially constructive and courageous. It is the type of thinking that helps you look at yourself honestly yet positively. If there are, for instance, things you don't do well, your Good Inner Critic can acknowledge it and help you plan constructive ways to get better. If you make an error a Good Inner Critic will not beat you up for getting it wrong (like a HIC would), but will instead allow you to make judgements of what went wrong, along with new ways of doing better next time.

### **Personifying Your Good Inner Critic**

It can be useful to have an image of your Good Inner Critic – though it's by no means essential. However, if the idea feels useful for you, then anything that you associate with positivity and inner strength can be good. You can ask yourself, 'what would my Good Inner Critic suggest here?' or 'how would my inner lion (for instance) think about this?'

### **Recognition and Flip-switch Questions**

Sometimes it's not easy to tell if a thought is a negative HIC thought or not. A simple way of figuring this out is to ask yourself (not your HIC) this question:

- **How is this helping me?**

If the answer is that it's not helping – in fact it's stopping you doing things that would bring satisfaction and growth, and actually making you feel worse about yourself, then you can count it as a Horrible Inner Critic thought.

Asking yourself a constructive question (a flip-switch question) relating to the mistake or situation that's on your mind

will switch you into more helpful Good Inner Critic thinking. Here are three examples, but any good constructive question will do the trick:

### Where's the positive in this?

- How can I learn from this?
- What can I do differently next time?
- What's a more helpful way of thinking?

**Conclusion:** I hope you've found these notes useful. There really is so much we can do to limit the impact of our negative thoughts, and my write-up necessarily can't include everything. My main message is that surprisingly, having a bit of fun around negative thinking, and not taking these thoughts too seriously turns out to be an extremely effective way of doing this.

So at the very least, do take on board the idea of a Horrible Inner Critic that can dress itself up as powerful and troubling – but actually turns out to be weak and sneaky. Give it a name. And when you need to just tell it nicely to 'shaddup!'

If you would like to talk more about this, or any other personal development topic, I'd be happy for you to contact me. Likewise, if you are interested in life coaching to change or improve aspects of your life I'd love to hear from you.

**You can contact Andrew by phone:**  
**0114 2486554,** email:  
[andy@pathwayscoaching.co.uk](mailto:andy@pathwayscoaching.co.uk)  
or through his website:  
[www.pathwayscoaching.co.uk](http://www.pathwayscoaching.co.uk).

## DONATION AND FUNDRAISING THANK YOU's

We would like to thank the following members for kindly raising funds for our group, for which we are very grateful.

### Fundraising at Spring Bank Holiday

Joy, along with Muriel and Shay ran a stall on Chesterfield Market for Spring Bank Holiday at which they raised £147.



### Crossword Competition

Thank you to Muriel who won a crossword competition in the local magazine S40 in July and asked for her prize of £20.00 to be donated to our group.

### JACK the Bear

Muriel also continues to knit Jack's "Tinnitus" outfits but is also happy to knit bespoke outfits for Jack the Bear to raise funds for



The travel agent bear



our group. To date Muriel has made



several bespoke outfits including a Joiner, Sailor, Priest, Cricketer, Travel Agent as well as special outfits for two students who are travelling around the world and wanted Jack

as their lucky mascot. Muriel has dressed each in a coloured duffle coat and trousers and carrying a duffle bag



so they are well prepared for their trip around the world. Muriel also knitted an outfit for Jack's brother (William) for the Derbyshire Asbestos

Support Team and Christmas Cards have been printed which are for sale. The cards cost £4.50 for a pack of 10 and they are size 15cm x 21cm (approx. 6" x 8¼"). If you would like to purchase your Christmas cards, please give us a call or call in the office. We will also be bringing them along to our next meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> December at Matlock. Over the past few weeks Muriel has raised a further £40.00 for the sale of bears.

If you would like Muriel to knit something specifically for you, please give us a call on: **01246 380415**.

## Members of our group

Thank you also to members of our group who bring along unwanted gifts and items for either sale or for our Tombola stall. We are grateful for your continued support.

## Coffee Morning

In the summer, Gail's friend held a coffee morning for our group and Philip



added to this coppers he had saved. The total raised was £45.15.

## Summer Events

Shay took along

tinnitus information to a variety of events taking place throughout the summer months but on a particularly wet Saturday morning, he bravely went along and raised £7.70. At another event a further £12.81. At one of the events, where Shay was wearing his Tinnitus t-shirt with the winning drawing by India Smith on the back, he was approached by India herself who recognised her drawing and she was happy to have her photograph taken.

## Eckington Market



Philip and Shay held an information stall on Eckington Market in August and raised £50.00 for our group.

### Recycling Drinks Cans

Shay is now recycling drinks cans to raise funds for our group and in doing so has raised £37.00. He will continue to do this so if you can please save your aluminium drinks cans and bring them along to meetings, we would be very grateful. Thank you to Kathryn for donating a can crusher to save Shay having to "jump" on the cans!

### Tips for Tinnitus

Thank you to John O'Brien and his team at Hearing Help UK for collecting a jar full of coppers for our group, raising £18.63.

### Donations from our Workshops

Thank you for your generosity to those who attended our recent workshops and donated £95.00 to the group. We are very grateful and it will help us to continue our support.

### Silk Mill



Every opportunity we have we go along to events to promote the work of the Tinnitus Group. Here we are at the Silk Mill Rally in Derby in June.

### GAIL AND PHILIP WHEELHOUSE

Gail and Philip are members of our support group and have been so for many years. Philip is also a member of our committee. A few months ago the

BTA asked if we had anyone who would be willing to write an article for their magazine "Quiet" and Gail and Philip were willing to do so. Gail has experienced tinnitus for over 20 years and Philip has always been supportive of Gail and together they have been regulars at our group meetings. Their story is in Issue 3 (2016) of "Quiet".



Thank you to Gail and Philip for writing this article about how our group has helped and supported you both over the years and how you in turn are helping and supporting our group.

### MESSAGE FROM HELEN





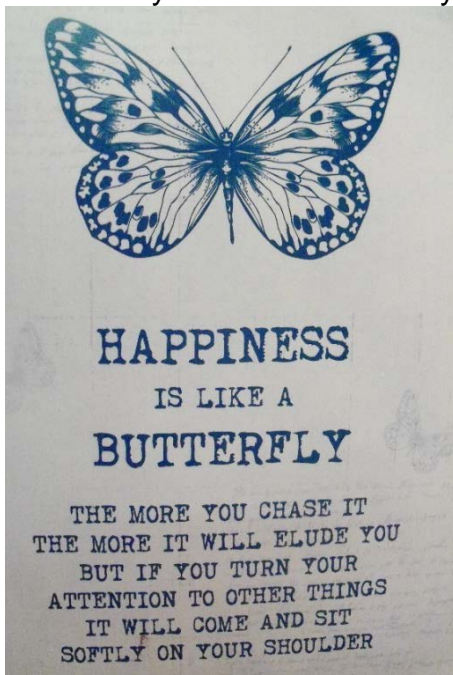
You will remember that Helen gave an inspirational talk about her tinnitus journey in June at our meeting in Cromford. She would like to pass on her thanks to everyone who attended the meeting whom she said were so kind and welcoming and she also felt inspired by talking to others. She continued "I have been touched by the nice words people have said". These were in the very positive feedback that everyone completed about Helen's talk.

### **Festival of Trees – Chesterfield Crooked Spire and 'Drop-In'**



Jemma has been busy making decorations for our Christmas tree which will be displayed in the Crooked Spire from Friday, 18<sup>th</sup>

November to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November. If you haven't already been to the



Festival of Trees, it is well worth a visit. Last year there were over 100 trees on display and it was a lovely start to

Christmas. Jemma has been busy making bees and

honeycombs in cross-stitch and will be helping to decorate the tree in the church. It would also be an opportunity

for you to 'Drop In' on **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016 from 10am – 1pm** at our office on Glumangate for a **Coffee and a Chat**. As we are on the first floor, the GMB have very kindly offered to host the **Drop in Coffee and Chat** in their offices on the ground floor. Please ring the bell at the bottom of the stairs and we will come down and join you. Tea, coffee and mince pies will be provided.

### **Enjoy looking after wildlife in your garden**

Don't forget to look out for hedgehogs



in your garden and make sure they have a safe place with

plenty of leaves in which to hibernate. This is "Hoggy" our resident hedgehog who hibernated in our garden last



winter and has stayed with us all through the summer months

and here is his offspring – "Baby Hoggy"

*With Very Best Wishes for  
Christmas and the New Year  
from all of us*