

# What to Do with Criticism, Negative Feedback and Naysayers



I'll never forget watching American Idol years ago, when Simon Cowell told Jennifer Hudson she'd never amount to much. Jennifer was eliminated in the 7<sup>th</sup> round and reminisces, "I remember telling everyone at American Idol, 'I will be back. I don't know when, I don't know how, I don't know where... and I recall the producers laughing.'"

Jennifer wouldn't let these events impact her resolve, going on to extraordinary success, winning an Oscar, a Golden Globe and a Grammy. Since then, she's performed at the Super Bowl and received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, among many other accomplishments. The *Los Angeles Times* claimed Hudson to be one of the greatest *Idol* contestant in the history of the show, placing behind season one winner Kelly Clarkson and season four winner Carrie Underwood. "Whether you win or not, you still have your talent and you can still make it," she said.

Jennifer Hudson believed in herself enough to block her Inner Critic from adopting Simon Cowell's potentially negative programming. How many people do you think could withstand such an icon's scathing pronouncements? Not many! But she did...

Back then, I would think to myself, "I'd love to be like Jennifer Hudson. Don't let anything or anyone stand in my way. Just keep moving forward no matter what!"

The words we believe the most are the ones we tell ourselves about ourselves. When someone in the outside world is critical of us, it's not really that person who makes us feel bad. It's the words and resulting feelings that our own Inner Critic accepts and ingests from what they said, because we ourselves believe them to be true. In the end, it's our own beliefs and interpretations – and lack of belief in ourselves and self-love - that can send us into a downward spiral of paralysis, failure, self-

loathing and depression. But when we learn to love ourselves, we have a powerful remedy that can elevate us from that downward spiral.

Just because we have bad or disappointing feedback, even from expert sources, doesn't mean we need to adopt it as our truth. We are "at choice" about what we let in. We are at choice about what we think.

If ever you receive negative feedback, just like you do with your Inner Critic, you can take a few moments to reflect on it and see if there's anything useful. Below are a few questions to ask:

1. What part of this feedback is constructive and helpful? For example, if it is judgmental and labeling it can sound like, "You'll never be successful." If it is constructive, it may sound specific and practical such as, "You may want to work on your pitch."
2. How much do you respect the source of this feedback (the person or people offering the feedback)?
3. What is your relationship to the person or people offering the feedback? For example, is it someone or people who believe in you or at least have your best interests at heart?
4. What do you think the intentions of the person or people offering the feedback are? Was this feedback *evaluative*, meaning coming from a place of judgment and criticism? Or was it *developmental*, meaning coming from a place of supporting your growth and success?
5. How new, or, how much of a surprise is this feedback? For example, have you heard this before, experienced this before, or have you been made aware of this before? If the feedback sounds familiar or if it's a pattern, perhaps there's a valuable granule to accept.
6. What do the people who believe in you say about it? How does that compare to the feedback you received?

7. What would be the benefit of accepting this feedback?
8. Will this feedback help you reach your goals and dreams?
9. What does your gut tell you about it?
10. What is the story you are telling yourself about yourself, in lieu of this feedback? How can you turn your story into a positive one?
11. If I accept this feedback, what's possible for me? How can I grow, and what would be the benefit?

Although some negative feedback can be potentially painful to hear, especially when someone doesn't package it all that delicately, this pain goes away with time... If you embrace a growth mindset while doing this reflection, you may find a golden nugget that allows you to take your abilities to the next level and move forward. Then, the feedback becomes a gift, helping you redirect and improve. You can then stay in a positive place while taking on the challenge.

Can you think of a time when you've received feedback from someone you know cares and who you trust? This is when feedback becomes the greatest gift of all, right? Some of my hardest lessons learned and yet defining growth moments came from mentors and leaders who believed in me and cared enough to give it to me straight. I always made sure to thank them, even if it was sometimes hard to digest in the moment. Nowadays, I practice the same with my Coachees when they ask. We call that "direct communication," and it is framed with care and support as a personal observation, not as an evaluation. As mentioned earlier, feedback with noble intentions using an appreciative approach and coming from the heart can be very helpful, motivating and inspiring.

In summary, we're not at the whim of what others say or do, or what life brings us. We are at choice about the feedback we accept. We are at liberty to decide whether the feedback can benefit us going

forward or paralyze us. When we acknowledge this choice, the feedback becomes the gift it's meant to be.

Choosing what feedback we accept puts us in the driver's seat of our emotions and our lives. We're more stable, more resourceful, lighter and optimistic, which in turn affects how we relate to others and ultimately, our results.



## Meet Robin Altman, B. Comm, PCC, Executive Coach and Senior Faculty of Professional Coaching

Robin is a Toronto-based professional certified coach, speaker and facilitator, having worked with hundreds of executives, entrepreneurs and creative professionals since 2008.

### Her Story

After 20 years as a creative trailblazer in the media and entertainment industry, Robin threw all caution to the wind and went back to school to become a certified, professional coach. She launched her company, Radiate Coaching, in the fall of 2009 and hasn't looked back since.

### Radiate Coaching for Executives, Entrepreneurs and Teams

Robin has designed and facilitated both individual and team coaching programs for leaders, executives, entrepreneurs and professionals of all ages and backgrounds, and in a variety of fields, including Marketing Communications, Financial Services, Professional Services, Retail, Media and Entertainment, Not-for-Profit and the Public Sector. Robin has worked with Discovery Channel, Bell Media, Corus Entertainment, RBC Dominion Securities, Fidelity, Brinks, Starbucks Coffee Canada, Indigo Books & Music Inc., University of Toronto, and leaders in various levels of government, among others.

### Teaching

In 2012, Robin was invited to join the coaching faculty at Adler Graduate Professional School, a Toronto-based global pioneer in coaching education. As senior faculty, Robin teaches all aspects of Adler's Professional Coaching program, which serves student coaches of all ages and backgrounds. Robin is a Mentor Coach for students working toward their professional certification with the International Coach Federation. In addition, Robin supervises other coaches working with clients in the corporate environment.

Robin's expertise is in her commitment to excellence in all aspects of coaching. Her flexible, adaptive and thoughtful approach, combined with a dedication to research, innovation and continuous learning is the cornerstone of her success.

Robin's passion and purpose is to work with individuals of all ages and backgrounds looking to derive more meaning and fulfillment from their lives - both personal and professional. She's delighted to share her webinar about the Inner Critic in the hopes of supporting you in reaching your goals and dreams.