



Sensing Mind Institute

**FROM  
SELF-CRITICAL  
TO  
SELF-AWARE**

how to build strong and supportive relationships between all sides of yourself so you can worry less and live more

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# 1

**C H A P T E R**

## THE 3D MODEL

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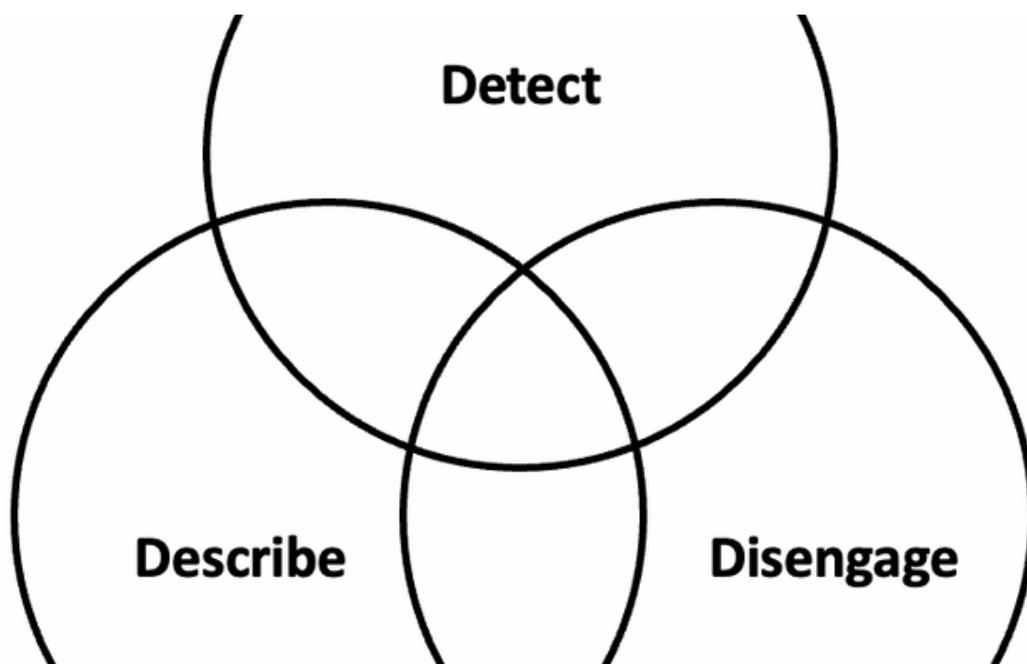
# THE 3D MODEL

**The 3D model:** Working with self-criticism has three interrelated parts, which all support each other.

**Detecting self-criticism:** As strange as it may sound, we often criticise ourselves without noticing it. Therefore, it's important to continuously work with your capacity for detecting self-criticism - even in its more subtle forms.

**Describing self-criticism:** Getting familiar with self-criticism by describing it in detail is important for two reasons. 1) It makes it easier to detect self-criticism, and 2) it gives you the depth of understanding you need to turn self-criticism into friendly self-awareness.

**Disengaging from self-criticism:** Disengaging from self-criticism is not about getting rid of any part of yourself. It is about changing the way in which different aspects of yourself relate to each other - replacing criticism with curiosity, engagement, appreciation, truthfulness, etc. The result is a sense of increased wholeness as your parts begin to work together towards your goals in life.





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# CHAPTER 2

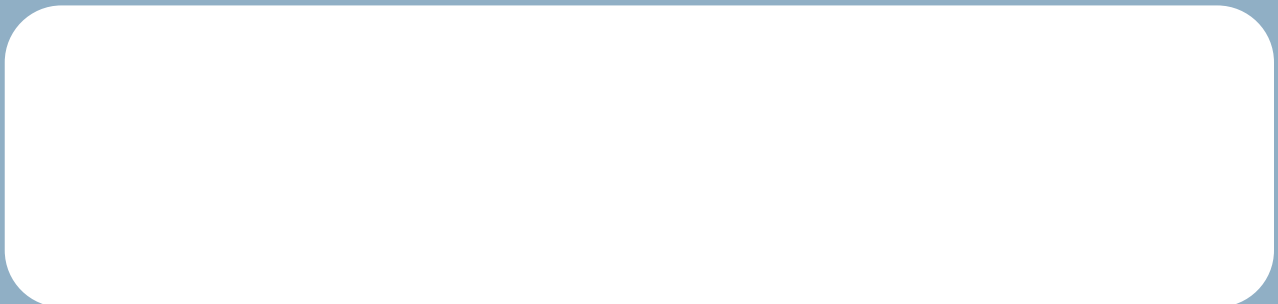
## DETECTING SELF-CRITICISM

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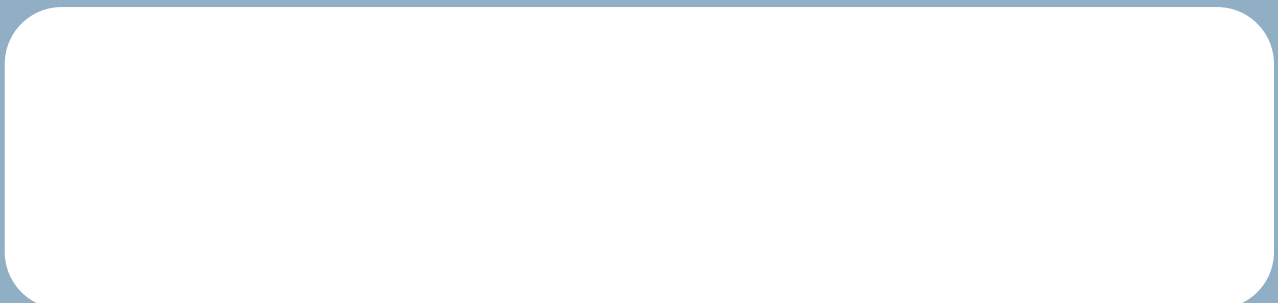
# DETECTING SELF-CRITICISM

There are five ways of detecting self-criticism. You can try each of them below.

**Deficiency emotions:** Identify a situation where you have felt one of the following emotions: deficient, insufficient, wrong, guilty, or ashamed. Was this emotion caused (at least in part) by you criticising yourself for having or for not having a particular thought or emotion or for doing or not doing a particular behaviour?



**Deficiency motivation:** Identify a situation where you felt it was very important to do something particular. What did you hope to gain/avoid through your actions? Did you hope to gain something (respect, love, value, etc.) you feel you do not have enough of? Or did you hope your actions would help you avoid touching a painful lack (of respect, love, value, etc.) in yourself?




# DESCRIBING SELF-CRITICISM

**Others' criticism of you:** Identify a situation where you had a strong emotional reaction to someone else's criticism of you. What did they criticise? When have you criticised yourself in a similar way?



**Your criticism of others:** Identify a situation where your criticism of others had a strong emotional charge. What thought, emotion, behaviour, or trait do you criticise in the other? When have you wanted to do what the other person did? What did you say to yourself in that situation?



**Absence of common traits:** Identify a thought, emotion, or behaviour, which is common in others - but wholly absent in you. What would you say to yourself if you ever had such thoughts, emotions, or behaviours?





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# 3

CHAPTER

## DESCRIBING SELF-CRITICISM

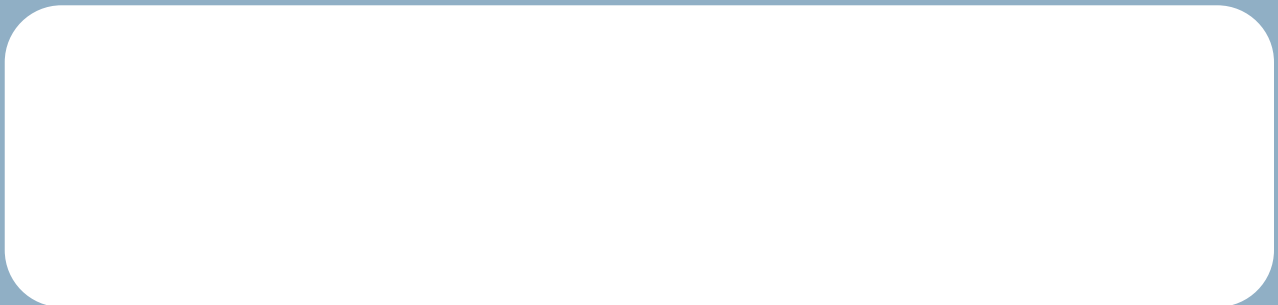
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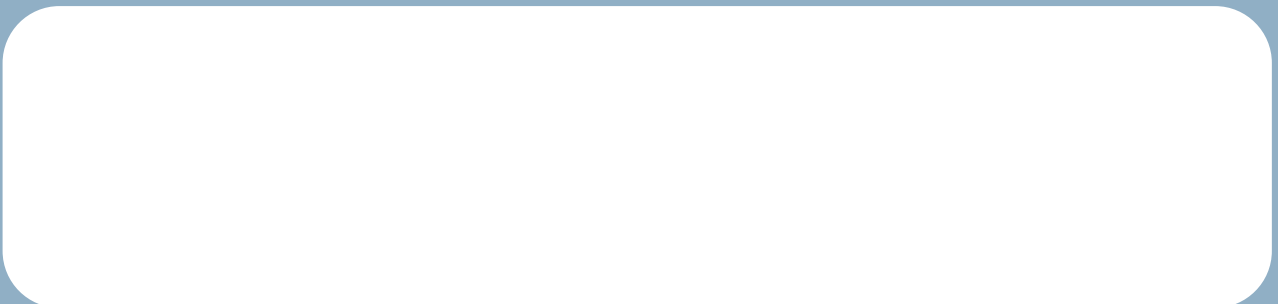
# DESCRIBING SELF-CRITICISM

You can describe an instance of self-criticism by describing the following five aspects.

**The situation:** Identify a situation where you have criticised yourself. you can use one of the situations you detected in the exercises above.

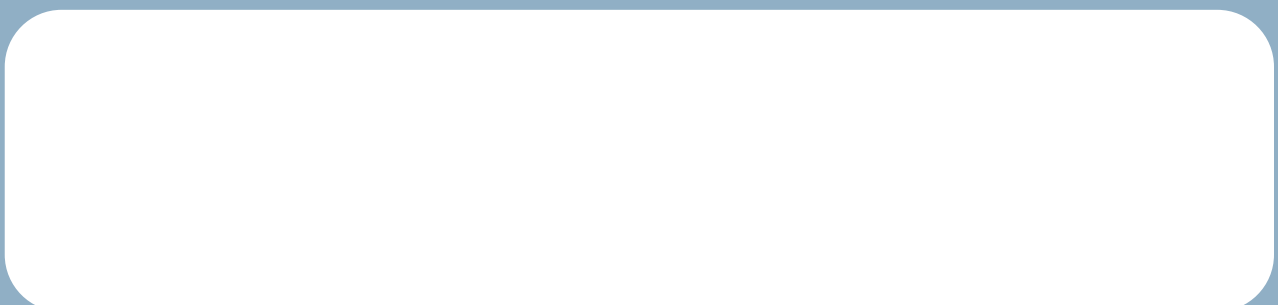


**Target:** Identify precisely what your self-criticism is targeting. Is it a particular thought, emotion, behaviour or physical attribute? Be specific.



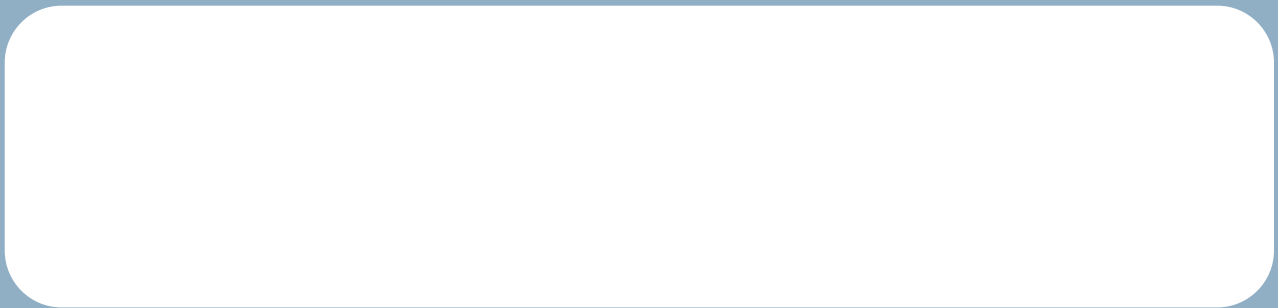
**Message:** Formulate the message of self-criticism in a sentence. It can help to notice whether the message is:

- a judgement (it is selfish to think like that)
- a threat (nobody will like you if you act like that)
- a devaluation (feeling good won't help you pay the bills).



# DESCRIBING SELF-CRITICISM

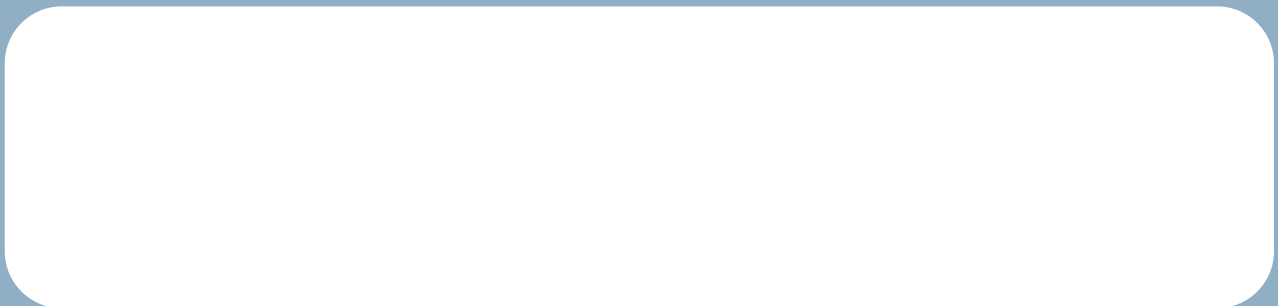
**The emotional reaction:** Identify the emotions that are created by the self-criticism. Do you feel small



**Behavioural reaction:** How do you react to the criticism?

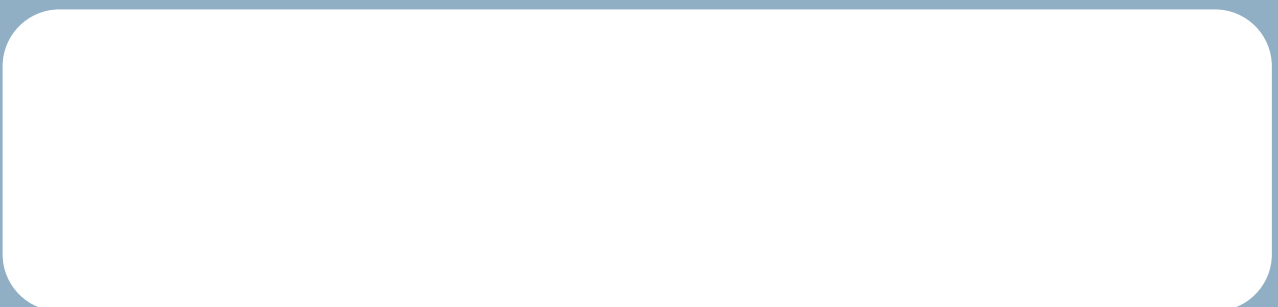
Do you try to escape the criticism by

- improving yourself
- rebelling against the criticism
- collapsing under the pressure of the criticism



Self-criticism often occurs between different parts of you with opposing agendas.

**Systems of self-criticism:** Identify situations where you criticise yourself for both doing something and for not doing it, feeling something and not feeling it, thinking something and not thinking it. What are the opposing messages?





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# CHAPTER

# 4

## DISENGAGING FROM SELF-CRITICISM

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# DISENGAGING FROM SELF-CRITICISM

Disengaging from self-criticism is about changing how different parts of us relate to each other.

We often choose criticism because we believe the only alternative is a laissez-faire attitude that will undermine our possibility to achieve things in life.

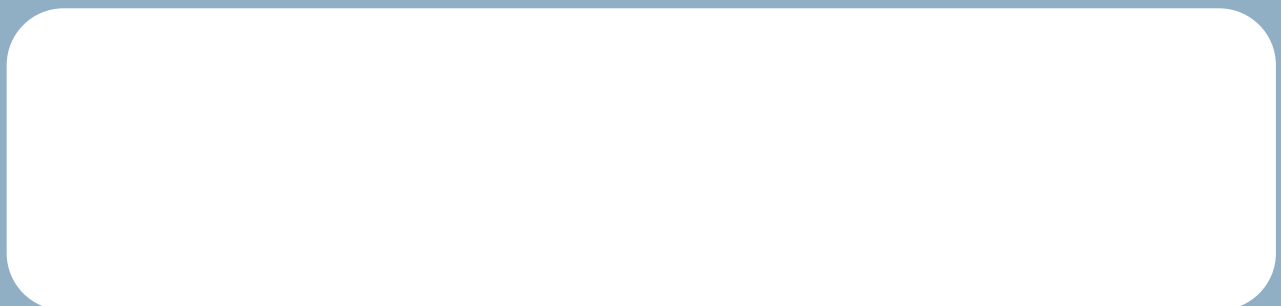
However, there are many alternatives to either criticism or a complete lack of ambition and values.

Below, we will explore the attitude of appreciation.

**Step 1:** Identify a situation where you have criticised yourself. You can use one of the situations you have already detected.



**Step 2:** Formulate the target (what thought, emotion or behaviour you criticise) and the message of self-criticism (how you criticise the targeted thought, emotion or behaviour).



# DISENGAGING FROM SELF-CRITICISM

**Step 3:** Imagine that the targeted thought, emotion or behaviour belongs to an inner part of you that is trying to accomplish something valuable. What is it trying to do that is good for you? What feeling is it trying to get you to?

For example:

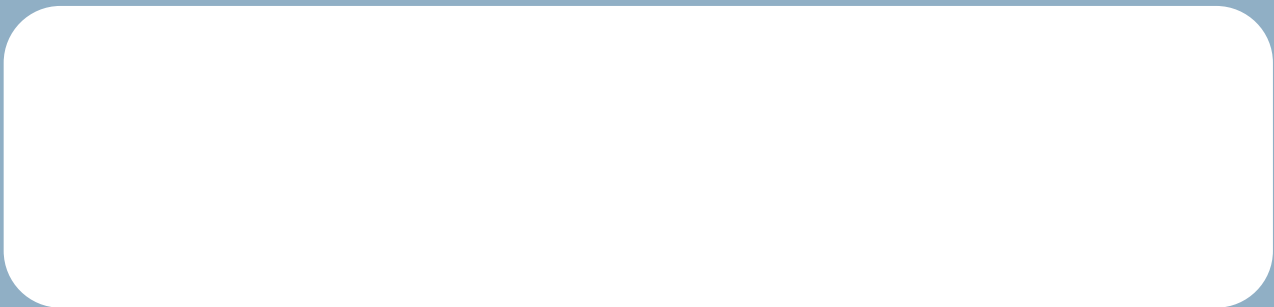
- The part that makes you spend more than you have may try to make you feel a sense of enjoyment and freedom.
- The part that is saving more than you need may try to make you feel safe and secure.
- Laziness may be trying to relieve you of tension and stress
- Wishing other people to fail in their projects may be an attempt at making yourself feel more valuable instead of feeling left behind.
- And so on...

# DISENGAGING FROM SELF-CRITICISM

**Step 4:** Imagine that the criticism belongs to an inner part of you that is trying to accomplish something valuable. What is it trying to do that is good for you? What feeling is it trying to get you to by getting rid of, repressing, or changing the thought, emotion or behaviour it is targeting?

For example:

- The part that criticises your laziness may be trying to get you to work hard because it believes that what you can accomplish through hard work will give you a feeling of value. Or it may believe that through hard work, you can gain wealth that will give you a sense of security.
- The part that criticises your selfishness may be trying to get you to do nice things for others because it believes that this will bring a feeling of connection or acceptance.
- The part that criticises your shyness may believe that by getting rid of shyness, you enjoy life more.



# DISENGAGING FROM SELF-CRITICISM

**Step 5:** Describe the felt sense of the feelings the two parts seek and spend time vividly imagining what it is like to feel both these feelings simultaneously. Then write a bit about this experience.

For example,

- You may criticise yourself for being lazy, and you may notice that the lazy part may seek a feeling of relaxation and the part that criticises the lazy part may seek a feeling of safety. Now imagine what it feels like to be completely relaxed and completely safe.
- You may criticise yourself for getting angry with a friend that arrives late to a meeting. You may notice that the angry part is seeking a feeling of value - and the anger comes from believing that if your friend comes late, they don't value you. Similarly, the part that criticises the anger may seek a feeling of connection and believes that the anger will prevent you from feeling connection. Now imagine what it feels like to be 100% made out of pure value and connection.



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# 5

**C H A P T E R**

## NEXT STEPS

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# NEXT STEPS

If you want to learn more about how to disengage from self-criticism and build strong and supportive relationships between different sides of yourself, you can sign up for the full online course at [sensingmind.com](https://sensingmind.com).

When you sign up to the full course, you will get:



## **Videos:**

Detailed explanations of all tools - including 15 ways of disengaging from self-criticism.



## **Worksheets & quizzes:**

To help you put the tools into practice.



## **Office Hours:**

Where you can ask questions and get help.



## **Community:**

The possibility of connecting with others on the same journey.



# **CLAUS SPRINGBORG, PHD**

## **FOUNDER OF SENSING MIND INSTITUTE**

I grew up with two loves. I loved natural science. This led me to study physics at Copenhagen University. I also loved the metaphysical and religious. This led me to study various psychological and spiritual traditions with the likes of Claudio Naranjo (Enneagram), Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche (Tibetan Buddhism), and Faisal Muqaddam (Diamond Logos/Diamond Approach). With the founding of Sensing Mind Institute, my love of science and my love of personal and spiritual development have merged into a strong and mutually supportive relationship.

**INFO@SENSINGMIND.COM**



I thought I was fairly well versed in self-critic work, but with this book, I've gained so much more. And as self-critic work is the necessary foundation for any meaningful spiritual or personal work, the book is utterly invaluable. Definitely the best thing out there by far, both in terms of its scope, depth and clarity. A heartfelt thanks to Claus for contributing hugely to my journey and that of my clients.

-  
Susanne Niedrum  
Counsellor and Executive Coach



What did I learn through working with  
Claus? I began to learn that I have  
capacities within which are more  
satisfying and meaningful than the  
rewards which our society commonly  
offers. That it is possible to feel peace,  
joy and contentment as an ordinary  
human being and to access the internal  
support which makes the continuing  
journey possible

-  
Ian Fuller  
Counsellor and Psychotherapist,  
Reg. MBACP (Accred.)

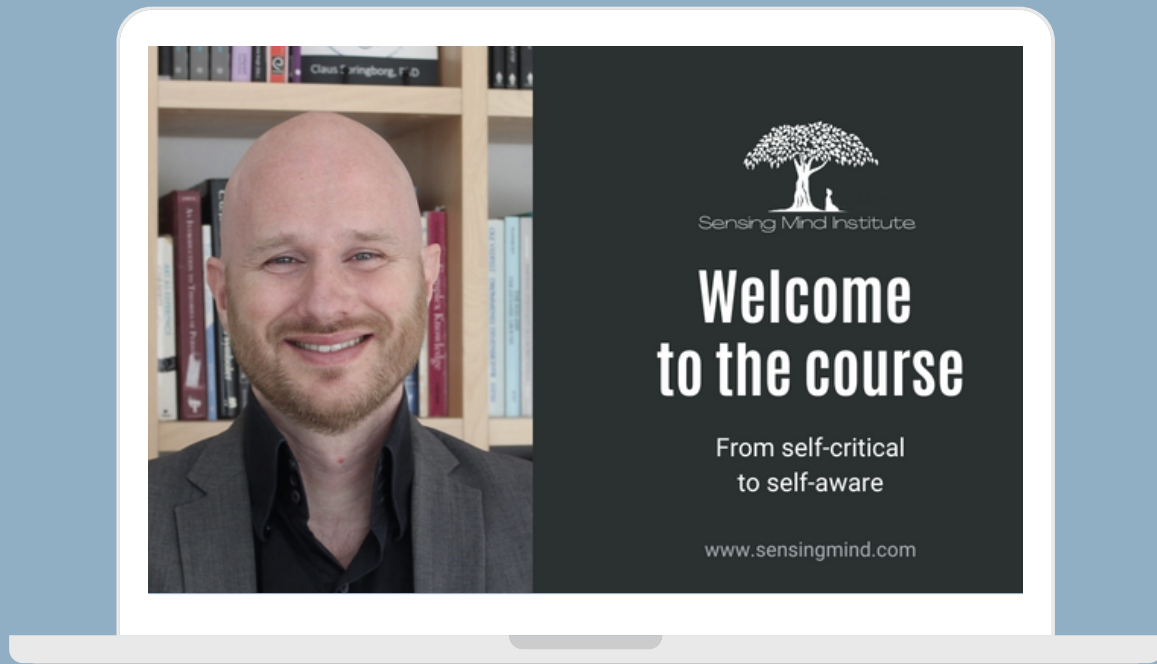


I am finding the book profoundly helpful. Particularly the clarity and detail around reacting to inner criticism by complying, combating or collapsing. Applying that teaching in detail is revealing so many blind spots and starting to open out parts of my structure which have been blocks and tangles for years!!

-  
Stuart Frost  
Mindfulness Teacher



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# LEARN MORE...

Disengaging from self-criticism is about building strong and supportive relations between all sides of yourself - so you can worry less and live more.

To learn more, visit [sensingmind.com](http://sensingmind.com) and check out available online courses and educational programs.

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