

Career Women Becoming Fearless Podcast

Silence Your Inner Critic

Intro

I started working with a new client this week and one of the things we do when we start working together is go through a life audit – all of the different categories in your life – how fulfilled you are and if there is room for improvement. One of the things that came up with this new client is her inner critic or inner cave woman that talks her out of doing what she actually she wants to do. This comes up with work, with relationships, family, really in every area.

It's so common.

When we talk about becoming fearless we also have to talk about that inner critic, inner mean girl or inner cave woman – whatever you want to call her.

We have our reptile brain that drives our inner critic – the part of us that tells us we can't do things and then we have our prefrontal cortex which is our logical part of our brain, responsible for our dreams, that tells us we can do anything.

I refer to these as our cave woman brain and our evolved woman brain.

Our cave woman brain is there to protect us from saber tooth tigers. Obviously not a real threat these days.

But why do strong women like you, like my new client, that have success and do amazing things, still have this inner critic and how can you get her to be quiet?

First - It's served you – you've had success with it – I mean you got to where you are with it, the money you've earned, the things you have, the success you've built, your inner cave woman was along for the ride.

You've needed her to protect you – your brain wants to protect you – your brain doesn't want you to do things that are uncomfortable, and your inner cave woman does serve a purpose. She protects you. She keeps you from doing things that are dangerous or potentially harmful.

How your inner cave woman shows up is a cycle of feeling like crap due to some circumstance around you – a bad day, didn't get a promotion, your partner ticked you off, you feel your failing at virtual learning, you don't like how you look in the mirror – so she comes out and tries to get you to avoid the pain, avoid feeling bad.

So, this is where the numbing comes in, where you distract yourself with social media, food, drinking, shopping, TV, your chosen go-to.

You feel a little better.

Then the cycle repeats itself, you don't ever really process those emotions and you don't experience the depth of the fear, sadness, disappointment, grief, whatever it is. Your cave woman won, she distracted you from the pain.

If we don't manage our cave woman, we
Turn to distractions that take us farther from our goals
Self-sabotage and become stagnant in our growth
We don't show ourselves or the world our authentic selves
We feel stressed and negative
People please and make decisions based on what everyone else wants from us

To embrace the cave woman – we need to acknowledge her
Feel the feeling
Process the feeling
Embrace it

Your inner critic or inner cave woman is never going away. You can learn to manage her, but she isn't going to suddenly disappear.

So instead, you need to learn how to manage her.

You probably have someone in your life who loves you very much but is kind of a jerk, maybe doesn't always offer the best advice, criticizes your clothing choices, the way you parent, the way you cook, you get the idea.

When you approach this person, from love, you listen to what she has to say but you have a choice if you want to take her words as fact, if you want to let them stop you, or if you want to just listen and move on with what you were doing, sashaying in your fabulous outfit.

Your inner cave woman is the same way. You need to acknowledge the thoughts or feelings, take some deep breaths, which deep breathing is something we can all do more. Just taking a few moments to take some deep breaths without distraction, getting really in touch with how you feel.

Acknowledge the thoughts and say I see you, I hear you and I don't have to listen to you.

Accept, don't resist that you have the thoughts, just know you get to choose if you want to listen.

You can instead choose to acknowledge, take some breaths, and go on with your day.

Instead of, holy crap what is going on? I need a glass of wine and a candy bar stat!

This will change the cycle for you.

Instead of feeling crappy > distract yourself > feel a little better > repeat and have the result of staggering your growth, self-sabotage, and frustration.

You can feel crappy > acknowledge and embrace it > feel the feels > keep moving forward and have the result of achieving even higher goals and feeling more fulfilled.

Next time something happens that ticks you off or something doesn't go your way try it. Try taking deep breaths, acknowledging the feeling and thoughts and making a decision to let them stay while you keep going. Walk away from the distraction calling your name.

Tell your inner cave woman you appreciate her having your back but you got this.

If you want to dig deeper on this topic – I suggest the book Taming Your Gremlin by Rick Carson. There are many exercises you can dig into that will help you gain freedom from self-defeating behaviors and beliefs and taming that inner cave woman (or as he calls it, your gremlin) from negatively affecting your life.

Alright that's all for this episode. Go get it and have an awesome rest of your week.