



INNER COACH



What is it?

The Inner Coach is a tool that opens the capacity to reappraise an event, thereby helping to develop a positive, reasoned inner dialogue, which offers access to a more rational approach to solutions in times of pressure.

“The compassionate mind is the mind that transforms”

- Paul Gilbert

Developing our Inner Coach

- First think of a challenging situation you are currently facing. Jot down what you are thinking, feeling and some of your actions/behaviours. You can use the [Inner Coach template](#).
- What are you saying to yourself about this event? (refer to the Self-Talk tool)
- Rate the emotional intensity you are experiencing (up to 100%).
- Now take a moment to visualise in your mind's eye someone for whom you have deep respect. Someone whose opinion and values you admire. This could be a friend, a parent, sibling, colleague and so on. This person will become your Inner Coach. This

visualisation will increase the potency of the next steps.

- Once you can picture that person - your Inner Coach - go back to the challenge you are facing and reflect on what you have written down for your thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
- Now apply the following question:-
- What would my Inner Coach, or a friend, say to me or advise me to do in this situation?
- Alternatively or as well, you can ask yourself: what would I be advising a friend/colleague/relative if they were experiencing a similar situation/thought?

And finally :

- What have you noticed about the emotional intensity you had originally rated?
- What alternative viewpoint comes up?
- Have you been able to reappraise the situation and adjust what you are saying to yourself?
- What can you/will you do differently now?

Why is it important?

- What you think about and how frequently, shifts your perceptions and actually drives your neurochemistry.
- Because our brains are plastic, if we practice talking to ourselves with a constructive, compassionate, and encouraging voice we can change our neural pathways over time.

How does it work?

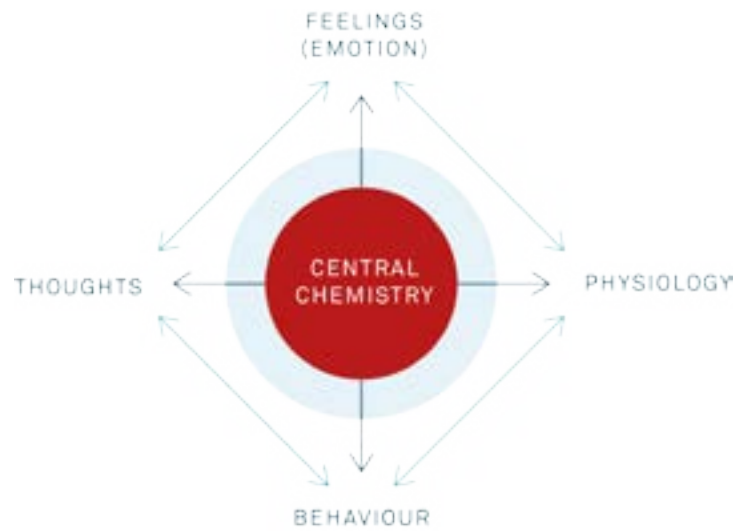
- Asking ourselves how another would be thinking or advising us in a tough situation forces our rational thinking brain (that has been depleted in the face of threat) to reconnect, giving us space to form another perspective and so choose our behaviour and attitude.
- The Inner Coach is the counsel for the defense, observing our self-talk, noting it with the view of 'that's interesting' and then moving on to thinking through constructive solutions instead of catastrophising and self-blaming.
- Over time and with practice, our Inner Coach becomes stronger and stronger, meaning we can call on him or her quicker and more effectively in challenging times.

Translation into the classroom

- How could you apply this in the classroom or common room setting?
- How can you translate this tool for pupils?
- What may be particularly useful for your pupils?



INNER COACH - TEMPLATE



	Primary Appraisal	Secondary Appraisal
Thoughts	<i>Record any 'NATs - negative automatic thoughts'; what is your 'inner critic' saying to you?</i>	<i>What would you be saying to a friend?</i>
Feelings (emotions): 0-100%	<i>What emotions are you experiencing? How intense is the emotion from 0-100%?</i>	<i>How do the thoughts above impact your emotions? What is the intensity now?</i>
Feelings (physical):	<i>How are you feeling in your body?</i>	<i>How does your body feel now?</i>
Behaviour:	<i>What actions do you take/avoid?</i>	<i>What actions do you take now?</i>