

## Inner Critic/Inner Guide

Tom was really worried about doing well on his next math test. With four more weeks left of the semester, his professor reminded Tom that he had a 69% and could still pass the class with a C or even a C+, but he would have to really study and attend the SI (Supplemental Instruction) sessions for the class. Tom felt that it was almost not worth the trouble; after all he had failed the same class last semester after struggling. Tom asked his good buddy, Joseph, “What’s the point?” “I might as well drop the class now since I probably won’t pass this time, too. I am not good at math and I just have to realize this. Since I can’t do math very well, I should probably see the writing on the wall and just drop out of school altogether.”

Like his friend Tom, Joseph found math to be a challenge, too. In fact, he, too, had to repeat Math 70. This time, though, Joseph was determined not to listen to the inner voices that reminded him of his less-than-successful past experiences. Instead, Joseph used his experience of failing the class last semester to take different actions this semester. First, Joseph found an instructor, through word of mouth, who was easy to understand and patient. Second, Joseph went to his professor’s office hours, so much so that his instructor knew his name and would say hello to him around campus. Joseph created a study group with others in the class who appeared to understand the material. Finally, Joseph went to the SI sessions and to the math-tutoring center. Of course, all of this wasn’t easy and it took a lot of time and effort, but he asked himself the following question: *What can I do to get back on course?* His inner voice reminded him of all the actions he *chose* not to do last semester but that he could do this semester.

### TOM

- I am horrible at math.
- The teacher doesn’t explain the subject very well.
- I failed last time so I’ll probably fail this time.
- What’s the use of putting the time in when I’ll fail again?
- The teacher gives really hard tests anyway; no one does really well.
- Math is stupid, anyway. When will I ever use algebra?

**Joseph:**

- I am not good at math, but I don't have to be great in a subject to study hard and pass it.
  - I have asked around for a recommendation for a math instructor who is helpful for students who need additional support.
  - I failed last time, but this doesn't mean I will fail again. I am determined to pass this time.
  - The teacher gives challenging exams, but I will be prepared with all the support I will have and studying I will do.
  - Even if I don't end up using math in my daily life, I know I have to take the course and pass it to get my degree.
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1. What is an 'inner critic'?

2. What is an 'inner guide'?

3. Provide an example from your own life where you experienced either the inner critic or inner guide or both.