

The "Not Good Enough" Story

UNDERSTANDING · CHALLENGING · WRITING A KINDER NARRATIVE

Many people carry an inner story that they are not good enough. It can feel true, even when there is little real evidence. Understanding where it comes from and how it works can help you question it and build a more balanced, compassionate view of yourself.

WHAT IS THE "NOT GOOD ENOUGH" STORY?

A persistent inner narrative that you are somehow inadequate. It can show up as self-doubt, harsh self-judgement, and a constant sense that you must do more to be accepted or safe.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Often a mix of early experiences, messages from important people, and cultural pressure. It can be reinforced by criticism, high expectations, or feeling that your needs went unmet.

WHY DOES IT STICK?

The brain is wired to notice and remember negative information more than positive. Repeated messages become internalised, so the story can feel like fact rather than belief.

HOW THE STORY SHOWS UP

It can be subtle or obvious. It may sound like:

INNER CRITIC

"I should be further ahead."
"I always mess things up."

COMPARISON

"Others have it together."
"I don't measure up."

PERFECTIONISM

"If it's not perfect, it's not good enough."
"I have to get it right or I'll fail."

FEAR OF JUDGEMENT

"What will they think of me?"
"I can't let people see my mistakes."

SELF-SACRIFICE

"My needs don't matter."
"I have to do more to be worthy."

THE COST

Believing the "not good enough" story can lead to:

- Increased anxiety, shame and self-criticism
- Difficulty recognising your strengths and achievements
- People-pleasing and overworking
- Avoiding opportunities due to fear of failure
- Strained relationships
- Reduced self-esteem and self-trust
- Feeling stuck, despite your efforts

CHALLENGING THE STORY

It is a belief, not a fact. You can learn to question it:

- Notice when the story shows up
- Look for the evidence — is it really true?
- Consider alternative explanations
- Remind yourself of your strengths and past successes
- Notice the impact of the story — does it help or hinder you?
- Speak to yourself as you would to a good friend
- Stay open to a more balanced, compassionate perspective

WRITING A KINDER STORY

You can't always change the past, but you can choose what story you carry forward.

1

AWARENESS

Notice the old story when it appears.

2

CHALLENGE

Question its accuracy and helpfulness.

3

REFRAME

Find a more balanced, compassionate view.

4

PRACTISE

Repeat the new narrative regularly.

5

INTEGRATE

Let the kinder story guide your choices.

REFLECTION

1 · WHAT DOES MY "NOT GOOD ENOUGH" STORY SOUND LIKE?

2 · WHAT WOULD I SAY TO A FRIEND IN THE SAME SITUATION?

3 · WHAT IS A MORE KIND AND BALANCED STORY I WANT TO HOLD?

SOURCES

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