

Why You Should Stop Being So Hard on Yourself

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“We’re all our own worst critics.” Ever heard that one before?

Yes, it’s an obnoxious cliché, but it’s not just self-help fluff. Evolutionary psychologists have studied our natural “[negativity bias](#),” which is that instinct in us all that makes negative experiences seem more significant than they really are.

In other words: We’ve evolved to give more weight to our flaws, mistakes and shortcomings than our successes.

“Self-criticism can take a toll on our minds and bodies,” said Dr. Richard Davidson, founder and director of the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he also teaches psychology and psychiatry.

“It can lead to ruminative thoughts that interfere with our productivity, and it can impact our bodies by stimulating inflammatory mechanisms that lead to chronic illness and accelerate aging,” he said.