



Don Eash Coaching

CABIN PRESSURE

THE RIGHT ALTITUDE

Your Perfectionism Diagnostic

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SECTION 1 — YOUR ZONE

Warning

Total score: 59 of 120

You scored 59 out of 120, which places you in the Warning zone. What's notable about your profile isn't that everything is running hot — your Standards and Control scores are relatively moderate, and your Cost is not yet catastrophic. But the pressure is concentrated in one place, and that place is relentless. Your Inner Critic is doing almost all the damage, scoring 21 out of 24, and it's being fed by a fear engine that's running at nearly full capacity. The system isn't failing everywhere. It's failing where it hurts most — inside the conversation you have with yourself.

SECTION 2 — THE SHAPE OF YOUR PRESSURE

The five categories of your assessment, scored side by side. The loudest one — the category where the data clusters highest — is highlighted. That's the one driving the rest of the document.



Each category is scored from 0 to 24, with 24 being loudest. Total possible: 120.

SECTION 3 — YOUR LOUDEST CATEGORY: INNER CRITIC

Your Inner Critic scored 21 out of 24. That's not a tough internal voice. That's a prosecuting attorney who never rests, never grants a recess, and has convinced you that the trial is deserved.

SECTION 4 — THE PRESSURE AUDIT

YOUR ENGINE: FEAR

Fear is your primary engine, and at 13 out of 15, it's not just present — it's dominant. When fear runs this high alongside a near-maxed Inner Critic, it creates a specific pattern: you don't avoid hard things, you do them — but you do them braced for impact. Every meeting, every deliverable, every visible moment carries an undercurrent of anticipated judgment. The fear isn't that you'll fail spectacularly. The fear is that you'll be seen clearly, and that what people see won't be enough.

This engine doesn't announce itself. It disguises itself as diligence, as preparation, as caring deeply. But the tell is in the aftermath — the replaying of conversations, the scanning of faces for reactions, the quiet dread before feedback. Fear-driven perfectionism doesn't look dramatic. It looks exhausting.

Your other engines are comparatively quiet. Duty at 4 means you're not driven by obligation to others. Achievement at 6 means accolades aren't the point. Wiring at 7 suggests some natural tendency toward precision, but nothing that would explain the intensity of what you're experiencing. This is a fear-dominant system — the Inner Critic is the voice, and fear is the power source. Address one without the other and nothing changes.

SHRINKING IT 10%

1. Name the fear in real time. When you catch yourself rehearsing, revising, or bracing before something visible — pause and say the quiet part out loud, even if only to yourself: I'm afraid of being seen as not enough. Naming it reduces its authority.
2. Track the gap between what you feared and what actually happened. After any meeting, presentation, or decision that triggered the dread — write down what you were afraid would go wrong, then write what actually occurred. Fear survives on vagueness. Specifics starve it.
3. Choose one moment per week where you go in without your armor. No over-preparation, no scripted responses, no pre-defended position. Let the moment be imperfect. Notice that the catastrophe your fear promised does not arrive.

That's the 10%. It feels small. It isn't.

SECTION 5 — THE RELEASE PRACTICE

The release practice for fear-driven Inner Critic perfectionism is interruption — not reassurance. Telling yourself it's fine or you're doing great won't work, because the Inner Critic has already built the case for why you're wrong. Instead, the practice is to catch the critic mid-sentence and ask one question: Is this thought protecting me, or is it punishing me? You don't need to answer perfectly. You just need to break the momentum. Most of the time, the voice isn't keeping you safe. It's keeping you small.

Start doing this three times a day — once in the morning when the anticipatory dread begins, once after a moment that triggers the replay, and once at night when the catalog of the day's shortcomings starts playing. You're not trying to silence the voice. You're learning to recognize it as a pattern, not a truth.

WHAT'S GOING TO RESIST

The resistance here will sound like: But what if the one time I stop listening is the time I actually miss something important? That's the fear talking through the voice of the critic, and it's sophisticated. It will tell you that self-compassion is complacency, that easing up is how people get caught off guard. Expect this. The resistance isn't evidence that the practice is wrong. It's evidence that you're close to something that matters.

Defend the practice for two weeks before you change anything else.

SECTION 6 — THE MIRROR

Your mind will tell you the rework is necessary. The data won't lie.

Track two things daily. First — how many times the Inner Critic fires a clear, identifiable shot during your day. Not vague unease, but the specific moments where you hear yourself being internally prosecuted. Second — how many of those moments you interrupted, even briefly. You're tracking awareness first, intervention second.

WHAT YOU'LL SEE

By week two, you'll start noticing patterns — specific triggers, specific times of day, specific people or situations that activate the voice. That recognition alone begins to change the dynamic.

WHAT FIGHTS THE DATA

Around week three, you may feel worse before you feel better. The critic will argue that paying attention to it is self-indulgent, that you should just push through. That's the system defending itself. Keep tracking.

SECTION 7 — THE PERMISSION SLIP

This is the section you're going to fill out. Not later. Now.

The Permission Slip is designed for a specific kind of leader — the kind who can grant permission to everyone on their team but cannot grant it to themselves. Fear-driven perfectionism makes every act of self-permission feel like a risk. These three experiments are small enough to survive and significant enough to teach you something real.

SHIP AT 80%

Choose one deliverable this week — an email, a document, a recommendation — and send it when it's 80% of what your Inner Critic would demand. Notice what happens. Not what you fear will happen. What actually happens.

What I'm shipping:

The standard I'm lowering:

What I'm afraid will happen:

FULLY DELEGATE WITHOUT REVIEWING

Hand off one task completely to someone on your team. No reviewing their work before it goes out. Let their version be the version. The fear will say this is reckless. It isn't. It's trust.

What I'm delegating:

Who owns it now:

What I'm not allowed to do (check, redo, hover):

LOWER ONE STANDARD FOR TWO WEEKS

Pick one recurring task where your standard is visibly higher than what the situation requires. For two weeks, do it at the level everyone else considers sufficient. Watch whether anyone notices. Watch whether the outcome meaningfully changes.

The standard I'm lowering:

What "good enough" looks like:

What I expect to feel:

SECTION 8 — THE FIRST 30 DAYS

WEEK 1

Week one is about awareness, not action. Before you can change the pattern, you need to see it with precision. Your only job this week is to become a reliable observer of your own Inner Critic.

1. Start a simple log — phone notes, pocket notebook, whatever is closest. Every time the Inner Critic fires, note the trigger, the thought, and how your body responded. No analysis. Just capture.
2. At the end of each day, review the log and circle the one moment where fear was most clearly the driver. Write one sentence about what you were actually afraid of.
3. Have one conversation with someone you trust — not about the framework, not about perfectionism — just tell them you're paying closer attention to your internal patterns. Say it out loud once.

The resistance this week will be subtle. You'll forget to log. You'll tell yourself it's obvious and you don't need to write it down. That forgetting is the system protecting itself. Set three alarms if you need to.

By Friday, look at your log. How many Inner Critic moments did you capture? If the answer is fewer than ten, you're under-counting — not because you're doing it wrong, but because the voice is so constant it sounds like your own thinking. Go deeper next week.

WEEK 2

Week two is about interruption. You've been observing. Now you start intervening — not by arguing with the critic, but by breaking its momentum. Small interruptions. Repeated.

1. Use the question from the release practice every time the critic fires: Is this thought protecting me, or is it punishing me? Don't force an answer. Just ask.
2. Identify your top three triggers from last week's log. Before you enter those situations this week, name the fear out loud — to yourself, in your car, wherever. Preemptive naming reduces the ambush.
3. Complete the Ship at 80% exercise from the Permission Slip. Choose something low-stakes enough to survive but high-enough visibility that the fear will activate.
4. At the end of the week, write down the gap — what you feared would happen versus what actually happened — for every situation where you felt the dread. Keep this list. You'll need it.

The critic will get louder this week. That's not failure — that's what interruption feels like from the inside. The voice is used to running unopposed. Expect pushback and keep going.

Count your interruptions. How many times did you catch the critic and break its rhythm? The number matters less than the consistency. If you interrupted even once a day, you're building a skill that compounds.

WEEK 3

Week three adds behavioral experiments. You've been watching and interrupting. Now you test the fear's predictions directly. This is where the evidence starts accumulating.

1. Complete the Fully Delegate exercise from the Permission Slip. Pick the task, hand it off completely, and do not check the output before it ships.
2. In one meeting this week, speak without rehearsing your point beforehand. Say something unpolished. Notice the response.
3. Start the Lower One Standard experiment. Choose the task, lower your standard to sufficient, and commit to two full weeks at that level.
4. Review your gap list from last week. How many of the fear's predictions actually came true? Write the ratio down somewhere visible.
5. Ask one colleague for direct feedback on something you recently delivered. Listen for the gap between what the critic told you and what they actually experienced.

This is the hardest week. You're doing things the fear specifically warned you not to do. The Inner Critic will present compelling arguments for why this is the week to stop experimenting. That argument is the experiment working.

By Friday, you should have at least three data points where reality diverged from what the critic predicted. If all three fears came true, we have a different conversation. But they almost never do. Almost never.

WEEK 4

Week four is integration. You're not adding new experiments. You're reviewing what you've learned, deciding what sticks, and building the practice you'll carry from here.

1. Review all four weeks of logs, gap lists, and Permission Slip results. Write a one-page summary — not for anyone else, just for yourself — of what you now know about your Inner Critic that you didn't know 30 days ago.
2. Identify the one interruption technique that worked best for you and commit to using it daily for the next 90 days. Make it automatic.
3. Have a direct conversation with your manager, a peer, or a coach about one thing you've been over-managing due to fear. Name it specifically.
4. Set one concrete boundary with the Inner Critic — one situation where you will no longer allow the voice to run the show. Write it down as a commitment, not an aspiration.

The temptation this week is to minimize what you've done. The critic will say four weeks isn't enough, that you haven't changed anything real. That's the old pattern asserting itself. What you've built in 30 days is not a cure. It's a counter-voice — and that voice gets stronger with use.

The question for week four isn't whether the Inner Critic is gone. It won't be. The question is whether you can hear it and choose not to obey it. If you can do that even 30% of the time, you've shifted something fundamental.

SECTION 9 — AFTER 30 DAYS

Perfectionism at the Warning level doesn't require a dramatic overhaul. It requires consistent, specific intervention at the point of greatest pressure — and for you, that point is clear.

Fear told you that the only way to stay safe was to never stop auditing yourself. That was never safety. It was a cage with a familiar lock. You now have the combination.

Your access code is valid for 365 days. Retake the assessment any time within that window to see what's shifted. The comparison builds on everything in this document.

If the data says the practice isn't reaching the engine, that's not failure. It's information. A coach or therapist can help you get to what the plan can't.

— Don