

Published: Monday January 18, 2016

The inner bully

T. T. SRINATH

Soon after facilitating a workshop with senior managers of an organisation, I was invited by the CEO for a personal sharing session. During the course of the sharing, he asked me specific questions about some of his managers. In my enthusiasm to communicate what I believe I had understood about the persons in question, I revealed personal data they had shared with me. Soon after I left his room, I experienced guilt at having shared information that had been offered to me in confidence.

I felt guilty and ashamed. I imagined I had hurt a few persons, and I suddenly felt regretful for having acted tactlessly and disrespectfully. I was disappointed with myself.

While I recognised that my utterance was not intentional but impulsive and came, perhaps, from lack of clarity about what I should say, a voice inside my head began to chastise me.

I realised that my 'inner bully' had raised its head and was taunting me. The reason for my being self-critical came from the imagined gap between the picture I had of myself as an actual person and the picture I had of myself as I should be — the ideal person.

I thus felt humiliated by my own inner critic.

On sharing this distress with a colleague, he made me wise to what was happening to me, by telling me that I did not deliberately want to cause harm, and that being human, I also make mistakes.

He also said that I should acknowledge my inner critic or bully, as it is a part of me that needs compassion and understanding.

In saying so, he explained, perhaps, that it was time to forgive myself and, in so doing, be able to forgive others.

(The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at ttsrinath@gmail.com)