

## The Poisoned Parrot



Imagine you're given a parrot. This parrot is just a parrot - it doesn't have any knowledge, wisdom or insight. It's bird-brained after all. It recites things 'parrot fashion' – without any understanding or comprehension. It's a parrot.



However, this particular parrot is a poisoned and poisonous parrot. It's been specifically trained to be unhelpful to you, continuously commenting on you and your life, in a way that constantly puts you down, criticising you.

For example, the bus gets stuck in a traffic jam, and you arrive at work 5 minutes late. The parrot sits there saying: "There you go again. Late. You just can't manage to get there on time can you. So stupid. If you'd left the house and got the earlier bus you'd have arrived



with loads of time to spare and the boss would be happy. But you? No way. Just can't do it. Useless. Waste of space. Absolutely pathetic!"

How long would you put up with this abuse before throwing a towel over the cage, or getting rid of the parrot?

Yet we can often put up with the thoughts from this internal bully for far too long. Decades. We hear that 'parrot', believe the 'parrot', and naturally get upset. That then affects the way we live our lives – the way we behave towards others, how we are, what we think about others, what we think about the world, and how we think and feel about ourselves.



Who do you think you are..!

We can learn to use the antidote: just notice that parrot, and cover the cage! "There's that parrot again. I don't have to listen to it – it's just a parrot". Then go and do something else. Put your focus of attention on something other than that parrot. This parrot is poison though, and it won't give up easily, so you'll need to keep using that antidote and be persistent in your practice!



Eventually it will get tired of the towel, tired of you not responding. You'll notice it less and less. It might just give up its poison as your antidote overcomes it, or perhaps fly off to wherever poisoned parrots go.

*Adapted from "The Malevolent Parrot" – Kristina Iving*