

Tea With Helga
Conversations with
Your Inner Editor
edited by Diane Gallo



During a writers workshop for the International Womens' Writing Guild at Skidmore College, workshop leader Diane Gallo asked participants to share an example of their inner critic's comments. One woman raised her hand and announced she had named her inner editor "Helga" and gave her tea and cookies to keep her occupied while she worked. Helga became an immediate celebrity on campus and thereafter all inner editors were named Helga. The following are selected excerpts of Helga's criticisms paired with participant responses - edited by Diane Gallo - with an able assist from Maureen Mylander & Virginia Laken.

HELGA SAYS

Helga says: No matter what you write,
it won't be good enough.

I say: No matter what you write,
you'll feel better if you write it.

Helga says: The plot is uninspired.

I say: I'll fix it.

Helga: Only 45 minutes and I can stop.

I say: These are the most important minutes
of my day. I might even double them.

Helga says: No one will like it.

I say: They'll still like me.

Helga says: You write garbage.

I say: Garbage is a transitory entity
defined by perception.

Helga says: It won't make any difference.

I say: It will to me.

Helga says: No one wants poetry.

I say: You mean it won't make you
rich. It tells the truth. It's powerful.

Helga says: This is *so* trite.

I say: You're right. I'll send it out
right away.

Helga says: This is taking a long time.

I say: Time. What is time?

Helga says: You should look at your
e-mail before you begin.

I say: Do it and get it over with.

Helga Says: This is too hard!

I say: I love a challenge!

Helga Says: I can't write now, I'll be Interrupted.

I say: But right now, I *do* have a moment - let's go for it.

Helga Says: You can't write about the Affair, members of the church might read it.

I say: The affair is truth and I promised to keep true to me.

Helga says: You think you're a big shit

Big smile: I do.

What does Helga say to you?

Please send your favorite Helga-ism along with your best response.

[click on contact Diane](#)

I was seeking mental health, social adjustment, mature realism, self-actualization, empowerment and all the other psycho-babble concepts. Twelve years later, I can see all that meant was I was looking for my inner bitch. And I found her. And I'm happy to have her on my side.

--Judy Simmons
writer & editor