

On Robert Firestone
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I'm bigger on self-help literature than most people. There's the idea prevalent that reading science fiction or true crime is cool, but giving time and effort to reading about what's holding you back from living as well as possible is decidedly uncool. And more, it's a useless expenditure of energy; even if you went looking for it, there's nothing of worth to be found in self-help writings. That's sure not how I see it, nor has it been my experience.

I'll mention a self-help theorist who's been very much worth my time recently, Robert Firestone. He's a psychologist who's 90-years-old now, and until about a month ago, I'd never heard of him. What else don't I know about?

Firestone is known for what is called voice therapy. The basic idea is to identify the negative, critical voices or messages inside you telling you who you are and what you deserve (or better, don't deserve) that direct how you conduct your life, figuring out where they came from (most likely from your childhood), and doing something about them. One of the possible outcomes and the inner voices that were the residue of negative early-life experiences that I found intriguing personally is taking on the role of a "persecuted misfit" in life's movie.

Rather than me going on about Firestone's approach, check out this *Psychology Today* article, and if it seems worth your time, use the internet to look deeper into this perspective.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-human-experience/201804/voice-therapy>

You may have to use a cut-and-paste to get to it, or get to it through its author and title. It's by Robert W. Firestone and entitled "Voice Therapy: Five Steps to Defeat the Enemy Within," and it was posted in *Psychology Today* on April 4, 2018. I don't know if that means it is only online and not in the print magazine. There are a ton of

articles and books and assessment inventories on Firestone's take on things available.

I'll just offer here that Firestone's orientation has been most useful to me. And, more generally, I'll affirm that, really, life can be better for you than it is, and that, really, it's OK to give serious attention to helping yourself.