



Say something positive to yourself

Most people carry on silent conversations with themselves much of the day. This is called self-talk. Self-talk affects your thoughts. It affects your motivations. And it affects your behaviors. What are you saying to yourself? Do you give yourself a pep talk? Or do you weaken your own efforts? It's good to understand self-talk. And to understand the effect it has on you. This can help you develop or maintain a positive attitude.

What you say is what you get

You've probably heard the term "self-fulfilling prophecy." Self-talk is very much like that. You think about something enough that it happens. When your self-talk is positive, "I know I can do this," you are giving yourself permission to succeed. And chances are you will. When your self-talk is negative, "I'm going to have a terrible time," chances are you will.

Thoughts are linked to behaviors

Self-talk shapes your thoughts. And it shapes what you do. If you think, "This job is perfect for me," you'll be more willing to apply. You'll do better during your interview. But if you think, "I'll never get this job," you may not even bother to apply.

Physical and mental effects of self-talk

Negative self-talk increases stress. It can make physical symptoms such as headaches and stomachaches worse. Negative self-talk can cause you to behave in self-destructive ways. Thoughts like "Nobody cares about what happens to me, so why shouldn't I have another drink?" can lead you to make damaging choices. Positive self-talk is one of the best things you can do for yourself. Thinking and acting in a positive manner will lead to higher self-esteem. It can give you more confidence. It will help make you happier and healthier.

Changing your self-talk script

If you are trying to change your self-talk from negative to positive, you may find resistance from within yourself. You may tell yourself, "There's no use trying" or "I can't do this." Be patient. It will soon fade. You've probably been using negative self-talk for years. And it takes at least 30 days to break an old habit or establish a new one. Here are a few things that can help you as you rewrite your new positive self-talk script:

- Record yourself making positive statements. Listen to the tape often.
- Write positive statements on sticky notes or index cards. Place them where you can see them. Read them when you are at a loss for a positive thing to say. Take a cue from what you have written.
- Talk positively to yourself. Even when you don't want to or don't feel like it. Often you can make something positive happen just by talking yourself into it.

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