

SELF-TALK

Identifying, Challenging, and Changing

Your self-talk, whether you are aware of it or not, either sabotages (negative) or supports (positive) you. Negative self-talk can result in unnecessary stress, anxiety, depression, self-doubt, etc. Positive self-talk encourages self-confidence, effective coping, achievement, and a general feeling of well-being. So, ask yourself, “Is my self-talk building me up or tearing me down?” “Is my way of thinking helping me or is it hindering me?”

Instructions:

1. Think of a recent time when you were experiencing negative or unhelpful thoughts.
 - a. What was the situation?
 - b. How did you feel?
 - c. What did you do?
2. Now, use this step-by-step guide and see if changing the way you think could possibly bring a better result.
3. Given what you have reviewed here, what is one thing you are willing to start doing that can help you better manage your negative thinking?

Changing Your Self-Talk

- **Catch it.** Recognize when you are having negative or unhelpful thoughts.
- **Control it.** Stop! When you find yourself thinking negatively say STOP to yourself (silently) to stop the downward spiral of thoughts leading to sadness, guilt, anxiety, self-doubt, hurt, etc.
- **Challenge it.** Challenge what you are saying to yourself using the various questions below.
- **Change it.** Change the negative messages you are saying to yourself to more realistic/positive ones in order to bring about more pleasant and helpful emotions.
- **Cherish it.** Enjoy the moment and the feeling you have just created!

Challenging Your Thoughts

- Is this thought helpful? What is a more healthy thought?
- What would I tell a friend in this situation? (perhaps follow this advice)
- What evidence do I have that what I’m thinking is really true? What is the evidence against it?
- Is there any other reason this situation could have occurred?
- Is there another way of looking at this situation? What are some other points-of-view?
- What is the worst/best/most likely outcome? If the worst did happen, how could I cope? Would I live through it?
- Is there anything I can do about this right now? If yes, take appropriate action. If no, accept and move on.