

A 5-MINUTE GUIDE ON HOW TO TALK WITH YOURSELF

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The way you talk with yourself can make a big difference in your happiness and health. You can put obstacles in your way, or you can empower yourself to achieve more.

Self-talk is what psychologists call the inner dialogue you carry on with yourself. It's usually filled with conscious and subconscious beliefs that started in your childhood.

It's also a habit that you can reprogram if you want different results. You can convince yourself that you're inadequate or you can remind yourself that you have the potential to learn and grow. Positive self-talk builds your confidence and makes it easier to persevere.

Learn how to take control of your self-talk. Try these strategies for becoming a better friend to yourself.

General Principles for Adjusting Your Self-Talk:

- 1. Increase your awareness.** The first step in changing your self-talk is becoming **more familiar with it.** Many of the messages that you send to yourself are so automatic that they can escape your notice. Keeping a journal may help you to pay more attention.
- 2. Plan ahead.** Have alternatives ready for the patterns you want to change. Make a list of positive affirmations to replace your old put-downs. You can browse online for ideas or use your own words.

3. **Identify your options.** Negative self-talk can narrow your vision. Read self-help books or observe others to see different ways to respond to conflicts and setbacks.
4. **Depersonalize situations.** Do you blame yourself for things that are beyond your control? Most events have multiple causes. **Distinguish between taking responsibility for your actions and beating yourself up.**
5. **Develop compassion.** Be kind to yourself! Imagine you're speaking to a close friend. Avoid harsh words or insults.
6. **Seek moderation.** Distorted self-talk tends to become more exaggerated over the years. Check the accuracy of your statements and stick to the facts.
7. **Be patient.** It often takes considerable repetition to replace your old messages with more constructive wording. Hang in there. Eventually your new affirmations will seem natural and authentic.

Specific Strategies for Adjusting Your Self-Talk:

1. **Use present tense. The only time when you can take action is now.** Keep your self-talk focused on the present moment instead of reliving the past or trying to anticipate the future.
2. **Say your name.** Research shows that addressing yourself by name is often more effective than using pronouns. Maybe it encourages you to be objective or makes you feel like you have company.
3. **Look in the mirror.** Reinforce your messages by looking yourself in the eye. Repeat affirmations while gazing into a mirror in your bathroom or in your car.

4. **Create reminders.** Stay on track by surrounding yourself with cues to speak to yourself with kindness and respect. Spend time with family and friends who boost your spirits. Write inspiring quotes on sticky notes and put them on your office phone or closet door.

5. **Speak out loud.** Repeat your affirmations out loud when you have privacy. It may be awkward to tell yourself that you're amazing in the middle of a coffee shop, but **you could record a message on your phone that you can listen to anywhere.**

6. **Consider therapy.** It can be challenging to change self-talk that you've been reinforcing for years. Talking with a professional could help you to gain more insights and ideas. Ask your doctor for a referral or consult the online Psychologist Locator at The American Psychological Association.

Enjoy a happier and more meaningful life by transforming your self-talk. That little voice inside you can be a powerful tool for reducing stress and helping you to reach your goals. Ensure that it's lifting you up and guiding you toward success.