

THE POWER OF WORDS

IN THE MIDST OF A CRISIS
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DON'T GIVE POWER TO YOUR PAIN!

THE POWER OF WORDS

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Why So Negative?..... | 5 |
| How Negative Self-Talk Holds Us Back..... | 9 |
| How Positive Self-Talk Boosts Us Up..... | 15 |
| Flip the Script..... | 20 |
| Conclusion..... | 29 |

THE POWER OF WORDS

Introduction



Hey, are you listening?

We don't always pay attention to the conversations around us. When we get bored or think we've heard it all before we tend to tune out, catching only one word in a dozen. We fake out the person we're with, nodding and catching the gist. Sometimes we even get away with it.

While this might be okay when the conversation isn't important, there comes a time when you know you ought to be listening. If you're talking to someone who matters to you, whose opinion counts, you probably want to listen up...especially when the one doing the talking is you.

THE POWER OF WORDS

We don't always listen to the words in our head. We tend to tune ourselves out, figuring it's all the "same old same old." After a while, we might not be hearing it anymore. This becomes a real problem when the self-talk turns negative.

Negative self-talk is what holds us back. It keeps us from accomplishing the things we could and can affect our health if it goes on long enough. On the other hand, positive self-talk is what gets us where we want to go. It boosts us when we need a jolt to set us into motion. It inspires and enables us to get to where we want to go.

In times of crisis, we tend to listen more. We are looking for answers, clarity, direction, as well as opinions. Technically, we're trying to find the shortest distance and quickest escape from the crisis we're facing. The voices of uncertainty, the looks of confusion, the thoughts of despair and fear can consume our speech internally and externally.

In this book, you're going to find a discussion of both positive and negative self-talk. You're going to discover just why it is we get so negative and how to flip the script, to change self-talk over to the positive. Once you're done, you're never going to ignore what you've been trying to tell yourself ever again, nor will you allow yourself to fall into the trap of negative self-talk when you've got the powerful positivity of an inner dialogue designed to inspire in your arsenal.

So, isn't it time you listened up? The journey toward positive self-talk begins here.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Why So Negative?

Why are we so obsessed with being negative?

Before you discount this idea completely, think about the stories you see in media. Whether you're browsing headlines on your favorite news site, or still enjoy finding out what's going on in the world by watching the news on TV or indulging in a newspaper, you're going to find one glaring thing in common: we seem to love bad news. In fact, the negative news stories far



outnumber the positive ones, which usually get kind of buried back where they're hard to find with the odd exception generally found in human interest pieces.

In our personal lives, we likewise get caught up in the negative things going on from day to day over the positive. Even planning for life events such as the birth of a child or a wedding can very quickly devolve into worry over the aspects of the situation that can go wrong. If we're staying on the positive side of things fairly well, you'll find any number of people willing to

bring you down through stories of their own disastrous wedding vows, or hair-raising tales of just how difficult it is to be a parent. How does this happen? Why is negativity so easy?

"I'm Not Negative!"

We start when we begin by denying the negativity exists in the first place. When we start thinking this is just how life is, that the bad is just...status quo. Nothing necessarily is going to get any better, but isn't that just how things are? We focus on things such as politics, the economy, our personal lives, and justify things by telling ourselves things like this have happened before. It's how the world works, isn't it? This particular trap is made worse when we become defensive when challenged in our beliefs. We really don't want to hear things

THE POWER OF WORDS

could be better. Why? Because when we do, it means something needs to be fixed. There are some things that need to change. Change is not always easy or comfortable. It takes being intentional no matter the difficulty. No one wants to hear there's work to do to make things better. It's all just so much easier if things are fine the way they are.

"We Don't Have a Problem"

This belief extends to our relationships with others. We put up with angst, anger, and abuse, so we don't have to confront a situation with someone else or accept something is dreadfully wrong. Instead of healthy evaluation of our behavior and an opportunity to understand the other person, we think the worst. Our fear of conflict keeps us in toxic relationship cycles that we begin to accept as "normal". We paste on a smile, put on our Masks, and tell ourselves maybe we should just be happy with what we have. Perhaps if we just tried harder.....

"I Like Being Alone"

Enjoying solitary activity is one thing. Hiding from the world is quite another. In times of crisis, as Covid-19, society may be called to an extended period of social distancing which is totally understood. However, when we stay in rather than go out, it could be because we don't want to deal with new situations or people. We find the world complicated and vastly simplify things by not dealing with it at all. Over time, we find less and less reason to go out, descending into depression, and discovering after a while, it has become even harder to leave. Talking to people becomes complicated, and our social skills get rusty. We're alone with our thoughts, inviting obsession, especially into the world of the negative.

"I'm Fine the Way I Am"

When we no longer work to improve ourselves, we grow stagnant. Negativity breeds where there's nothing new to challenge it. We stay in the same patterns over and over, including indulging in bad habits and negative behaviors, some of which might be damaging. It becomes easier to escape into the world of drugs and alcohol than it is to change your life situation. Negativity creeps in, growing cycles of self-blame followed by self-medication. You know you should be doing more with your life, but by this point, you don't know where to begin, nor do you have the energy to try.

THE POWER OF WORDS

“I’m Too Busy for That”

It’s so easy to get busy. Eating right? Enough hours of sleep? Both are impossible when your schedule is already full. How many meals have you skipped to work through lunch? When is the last time you exercised? The problem is, the less you care for your physical needs, the fewer resources you leave your body to deal with the task of living. You lose focus and energy alike. You feel weak and lethargic and start dragging. The mood drops, in part because of low blood sugar, but also from poor diet and lack of exercise. The brain requires nutrition and stimulation, but you’re not giving it either. Thoughts go downhill.

“I Don’t Need Anyone”

Asking for help has become something of a thing to be ashamed of in some circles. We’re raised to be self-sufficient, to manage things on our own. The problem is, not everything can be done without help, nor can every problem be solved by one person. We work best in teams, where we can brainstorm



solutions. Trying to manage without help leads to frustration. Frustration culminates in resentment and anger. We don’t ask for help, but then we get mad no one is offering. Life becomes impossible, and negative moods rise.

“What’s Wrong with My Friends?”

If your mood isn’t good when you’re with them? Plenty. Some friends live to drag you down. They want to be the center of your universe and don’t like competition. People like this will refuse to listen to your problems and are always more than willing to show you how much worse they have it. Around this kind of narcissist, you feel invisible or unheard. Or worse, you

THE POWER OF WORDS

have friends who like to find the flaw in your plans. They tell you all the ways you're doing something wrong, usually under the guise of "friendly advice." In truth, their job is to destroy dreams and keep you right where you are. The last thing they want is for you to succeed because it would prove they could have succeeded, had they tried. So long as you fail, they're justified in not taking the risk themselves. Is it any wonder you're feeling negative when you hang around people like that?

Yikes! With so many reasons to be negative, it's no wonder positivity can be so hard. Let's move on to discover how this all impacts self-talk, including some long-term ramifications of *listening* to negative self-talk.

THE POWER OF WORDS

How Negative Self-Talk Holds Us Back



Where self-talk is concerned, negativity becomes disastrous. When we start telling ourselves the 'bad news,' we begin losing ground. We find ourselves less likely to try new things. We drop goals and all the plans we worked so hard to craft. We begin to pull back, withdrawing from the world and our relationships with each other. We sink into despair.

To understand how this happens, let's first look at what self-talk is. Once you have a clear understanding of how this inner dialogue works, it becomes easier to see how negative self-talk holds us back.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Self-talk includes many components. It starts in the inner dialogue no one hears but us. Some think of it more as a monologue, a commentary on what's going on around us and what our place is in this world. It becomes a dialogue when you start answering back to it, either in agreement or by arguing against what was said.

Not everyone is comfortable with this concept. After all, if you hear voices in your head, aren't you considered crazy? This isn't the case. What we're talking about is our thoughts, pulling input up with conscious and unconscious belief systems. This is how we process things by thinking them through.

The problems begin when this conversation takes a darker turn and become negative.

As we've already seen, the mind loves negativity. It's so easy to find the disasters in our day to day lives. The problem is, we're not just thinking how things can go wrong, we're letting those thoughts affect us. Let's journey through some of the more common effects?

We Limit Ourselves

When we constantly hear we're going to fail, sooner or later we start believing it. At some point, this can translate to a general lack of trying anymore, whether unconscious or conscious. We truly can convince ourselves we're going to fail, just because we've become convinced this is so. This causes us to then convince ourselves that we're happy where we are.

We Convince Ourselves We're Not Good Enough

Perfectionism is one of the most common outgrowths of negative self-talk. We're constantly pointing out our flaws. We create a world where there's no such thing as 'good enough,' and we start falling into a world of intense unhappiness, resulting from never measuring up to some unrealistic ideal. We stop trying because we can't attain the levels of "perfection" we think we ought to be able to.

THE POWER OF WORDS

We Become Depressed

How can we live when there's so much wrong around us, and so much more wrong *with us*? Every piece of negative self-talk becomes another dagger, another reason to despair. Depression sets in. Nothing seems interesting anymore. Everything is just so much work. Can't do anything right. There's no longer any point in going on, much less trying.



We Hurt our Relationships with Others

The negative tirade in our head starts spilling out into the world around us. We start expressing these negative thoughts. We become more critical, harder to live with. People who love us become frustrated or angry under this constant barrage of negativity. They start closing themselves off from us, going out of the way to avoid contact with someone who has become a hurtful part of their lives. Friendships disappear, marriages end, eventually, if left unchecked, the negative person is left alone with their thoughts.

What just happened? What started as negative self-talk has just seemingly destroyed your life. Is it really that bad? Can negative thoughts really take hold in such a fierce way and do so much damage?

To answer that we have to look at our brains and how they work when confronted with negativity.

There's a whole lot of brain chemistry in the answer. Let's try to make this simple:

THE POWER OF WORDS

- We start with negative self-talk and add in a little stress. Put together, you're triggering a burst of adrenaline. This dumps all kinds of brain chemicals into your system, including things like dopamine, epinephrine, and norepinephrine. Whew, that's a lot!
- These chemicals now move throughout the body, moving through the bloodstream, and brain alike. They're the same chemicals released when we're in 'fight or flight' mode, meaning a threat has been perceived. When that happens, they set the body up for quick action.
- Now that the body has been alerted, cortisol has been added into this particular biological stew. Cortisol is a stress hormone, and it's not good for you if it's triggered often. When released chronically, it will actually shrink the parts of the brain associated with pleasure.

Think about all this for a minute. Negative self-talk is perceived as a stressful situation, even to the point of crisis within your body. Triggered often, meaning having these thoughts often, will make it harder and harder to have pleasurable thoughts.

If this still isn't enough, studies have shown a handful of other responses as well. Look at these other effects on the body, all as a direct result of negative thought:

Negative Self-Talk and Your Body

Wow. You're no longer affecting just your thoughts. This kind of thing affects the heart, digestion, mood, sex drive, and can cause you to gain weight over time. That's a lot of negative impact on your body from a series of negative thoughts.

Negative Thoughts Limit Your Thinking

When you're in that fight or flight mode, your focus narrows down to a tiny pinpoint of need. Your decision-making capability disappears into those two choices: fight or flight. There's no room to think through options or to discover alternatives to the situation.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Negative Thoughts Trap You in Fear

How can you possibly move when you're so frozen into the idea everything is about to go terribly wrong that you lose all forward momentum? Reaching for a goal of any kind might as well be the equivalent of planning a trip to the moon without a spaceship.

Negative Thoughts Lock You in Anger

With so much negativity telling you failure is your only option, it's no wonder you get mad. The problem with anger is that it's hard to think clearly when you're raging about something, especially when rage results from feeling attacked or being told unfairly that you're going to fail. Either way, you're not in a place to make good decisions.

Negative Thoughts Cause Stress

Stress is the evil catchall for all ailments for a reason. The fact is, stress is at the heart of numerous health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, IBS, ulcers, and numerous other problems. In short, negative self-talk, your words to yourself, has the power to make you sick.



If this seems unfair, then think back to where mankind started. Fight or Flight used to serve a purpose. These quick reactions of being able to spot danger are what kept our ancestors alive.

Unfortunately, (or fortunately depending on how you look at it) times have changed, and our automatic responses

aren't anywhere near so healthy for us now.

This is why it's so incredibly important to make the shift over to positive self-talk.

Let's look at this in more detail in the next chapter.

THE POWER OF WORDS

THE POWER OF WORDS

How Positive Self-Talk Boosts Us Up



It only makes sense that if negative self-talk holds us back, positive self-talk can boost us up. Right?

The answer to this particular question is a loud and resounding, “Yes!”

Just as there is actual brain chemistry at work in conjunction with negative self-talk, so too is there a series of things happening within our minds when we indulge in positive self-talk.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Here the important chemicals to keep in mind are GABA and Serotonin. Positive self-talk creates a flow of both in the brain, providing a variety of positive impact, including:

Reduced Anxiety

Positive self-talk focuses on a better outcome by asking what good things can happen instead of seeking out new disasters.

Higher Feelings of Self-worth

By looking at accomplishments of the past and encouraging similar results for the future, positive self-talk reminds you of your value and abilities, raising self-confidence.

Higher Levels of Happiness

It's easier to feel contentment with where you are in life when positive self-talk is there to remind you life is good. Positive self-talk also puts an emphasis on gratitude, reminding you of what you have, and how many people have supported you in your journey to get this far.

Better Problem-Solving Skills

Positive self-talk looks for solutions rather than obsessing on the problems. It also reminds you to look outside the box, to be bold and try new solutions.

Able to Rise to the Challenge

There's less fear of failure when positive self-talk includes reminders that even disaster holds valuable lessons in how better to try again. There's an inherent optimism in positive self-talk you won't find anywhere else.

Less stress

Positive self-talk calms. It reminds you problems are transitory, and just part of the journey. You're assured you have the skills you need to get through even when things are tough, and that worry and fear have no place in the process.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Improved Performance

When the going gets tough, it's positive self-talk urges you to keep going when you want to give up. It's what teaches you to dig deep and try again when you fail. It pushes you to be your best. As a result, you can't help but rise to the occasion.

The Ability to Fall in Love

Love requires optimism, daring, trust, and a whole host of confidence that can only come from positive self-talk. Positive self-talk encourages you to dare what the pessimist would not. It gives you enough hope of success to try, and then try again when necessary. It encourages intimacy and the melding of two lives into one.

Protection from Depression



Studies have also shown positive self-talk acts as a protection against depression, leading even those with PTSD and other mental health challenges into healthier thought patterns and improved quality of life. While some of this particular journey might include therapy and medication, the one factor that will come back time and again is that the highest success in serious challenges lies in a positive attitude and ability to see success as part of a healthy future.

The effects run deeper than this, though. The physical body has also been shown to benefit from positive self-talk. Check out these perks, which are a direct result of thinking positively:

Increased Energy

It's not uncommon to feel like you can take on the world when you're feeling good about your life. Positive self-talk helps you lay out plans for the future and then raises excitement until your body responds with a burst of energy to get those things done.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Improved Immune System / Less Likely to Get Sick

Studies have shown people with a history of positive self-talk are less likely to get sick. When they do get sick, they tend to heal faster and not experience illness as severe as those who are more negative in their lives.

Pain Control

There have been several experiments in using positive self-talk as a means of pain control with surprising results. People who expect less pain are not as likely to experience pain in medical procedures as those who expect things to hurt. The mind truly can block pain receptors in ways the medical community is still working to understand. Thankfully, using positive self-talk is an easy and non-addictive method of handling chronic pain, and helps in more sudden onsets such as headache or body aches. Still not sure? Ask any athlete, and they'll tell you pain is really a "mind over matter" situation.

Better Heart Health

A study of individuals with heart disease found that those with positive self-talk had a lower risk of mortality and an improved prognosis and overall heart health than those who were negative in their outlook.

"Feeling Good"

Positive self-talk encourages physical health overall, leaving people with the idea that they're 'feeling good' over those who are more negative. Why? The answer might be simpler than you expect. Anyone is going to feel miserable if all they do is sit around thinking how miserable they feel. The negative person will manage to inflate every ache and pain to monumental proportions. The converse is also true. The positive person will be less likely to notice the trivial health imperfections, giving the impression they're fine when they might not be at their peak health.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Better Long-Term Health

Overall health tends to improve when you're positive. In part, this is because positive self-talk tends to encourage you to take better care of yourself. Reminding yourself to eat right, get adequate sleep, and to drink enough water will lead to better health naturally. Encouragement to exercise adds strength to the physical body. A general feeling of being concerned for your well-being and wanting to take care of yourself might lead you to be more proactive in taking care of health concerns or keeping appointments. All of this works together to make for a healthier you.

Would it surprise you to learn people who engage in positive self-talk also tend to live longer and report lives where they experience more satisfaction and higher levels of contentment?



There's no doubt positive self-talk is good for you. One could argue it's necessary for a healthy life. Hold onto this idea as we flip the script and turn negative self-talk into something more productive.

Flip the Script



How do you replace negative self-talk with positive self-talk? You start by being intentional. Things aren't going to change without a directed effort. Changing your life means you need to make a commitment to change.

What follows in this chapter is a list of tips you can use to stop negative self-talk in its tracks. As you work through this list, you're going to find it easier and easier to look for the positive. Your eventual goal will be to build in the habit of positivity, where your default setting will be to look more optimistically at the world around you. It's this change that will allow you to live more fully in the moment. You'll feel more engaged with the world around you, and more fully 'there' than you've ever felt in your life.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Notice When You're Critical

We don't always listen well to what we say to ourselves. This is something which needs to change immediately if you want to live a life of optimism and hope. Start listening to the messages you're sending yourself. When you catch yourself thinking something about yourself that you'd never say to someone else, it's time to nip this thought in the bud. No good comes from harsh criticism.

Understand What Triggers You

We all have negative self-talk statements of the repeating variety. These habitual offenders are the results of certain triggers, usually something reminding us of an event in our past we'd like to avoid experiencing again. Understanding those triggers becomes crucial if you wish to attack those statements and nip them in the bud. Once you know your triggers, ask yourself how you can avoid them. Or better yet, with the help of a counselor, start defining what sets them off, and work to defuse them completely. In this scenario, those statements will never hold power over you again.

Try a Reality Check

Is everything you tell yourself accurate? Chances are it isn't. We have a way of inflating the importance of things on our minds and misremembering important details. This is especially true when strong emotions are involved. With this in mind, ask yourself whether what you just said to yourself is true.

Name Your Enemy

Don't like the negative voice in your head? Give it a name you can call it, something silly that will help put things into perspective. For example, when you start calling an anxious little voice by 'Wendy Worrywort' or some such thing, it's a lot harder to take it seriously.

Give Negativity an Outlet

It can be very hard to go from a constant dialogue of negative self-talk over to a constant stream of positivity. If you find it overwhelming, allow the occasional rant. Negativity confined to a certain topic or time frame gives it an outlet without having to affect your mood.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Settle for Middle Ground

Having a hard time-wrenching something very negative over to a positive? Allow yourself neutrality. Some thoughts are neither good nor bad, they're somewhere in between. If you can shift negative self-talk into neutral self-talk, it's still a victory.

Play the Advocate

Is that negative statement true? "You can't do anything right" Well we know that's not true so why are you hearing it? Start asking questions. Chase down the root of the negative self-talk. Keep going until you find the exaggeration or untruth which started it all and replace the lie with the truth. "I can do a *lot* of things very well."

Remind Yourself of Your Value and Worth

Is that negative self-talk a statement you'd say to a friend? When a negative thought comes up, ask yourself how you would reword it to say it to a friend. If you can't find the words, maybe you shouldn't be making these kinds of statements at all.

Think Long-term

Are you getting too caught up in the moment? You might be worrying about something which really isn't going to matter down the road. It'll be easier to let it go. Most things seeming to be disastrous today have little or no bearing on the future.



THE POWER OF WORDS

Bring it into the Light

Things we've only ever said in our heads have a way of sounding ridiculous when spoken out loud. Say out loud the statements your negative self-talk is providing. If they seem silly or downright crazy when you actually hear them with your ears, they probably are.

Just Stop it!

Stopping yourself mid-thought has a way of cutting off the momentum of negative self-talk, bringing it to a halt. Tell yourself to stop the second you catch the thought. Or try snapping your fingers as a reminder you're not allowing those thoughts anymore.

Reword the Message

Take your negative self-talk and start switching out the negative words for positive ones. Try to be more encouraging and optimistic in your word choices. Avoid black and white thinking and words like "always" or "never" as you might wind up replacing a negative with another form of a negative without realizing it.

Question Everything

If rewording the message isn't working, see if asking questions instead might work. For example, instead of a statement along the lines of "I can't make this deadline" ask, "What can I do to make this deadline?"

Meditate

There is nothing more powerful than the feeling of emptying yourself of any kind of talk, good or bad. Relax into deep meditation in a quiet space to calm your mind entirely. By practicing mindfulness, you return to the world in a better place with a more positive emotional base. Listen to your self-talk before and after meditation, and you'll see how much it changes.

Journal

Writing should always be positive when you're working on positive self-talk. Spending time ranting on paper is only going to strengthen poor emotional reactions. Instead, write about things you're thankful for, or some positive thing that happened during the day. Try to recreate the feelings that went along with the event.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Take Notes

Much like writing in a journal, the goal here is to express yourself on paper. The main difference? You want to track strong emotions as they happen. When you recognize negative self-talk emerging, scribble down a quick notation to express the thought and feeling that came with it, along with what was going on before it happened. Use this to determine patterns and triggers for negative self-talk.



Confine Negativity on Paper

As a last writing exercise, try writing down the negative thoughts as they occur. Leave extra space under each one so you can go back as you think about it and write something underneath each more empowering and positive in its place.

Relax

Everyone needs a break now and again. Negative self-talk rises when you're stressed and tired. Doing something entirely fun helps shift your way of

thinking. Keep a list of favorite activities and make a point to indulge in one every week or so to help keep your mood and self-talk more positive.

Examine the Opposite

If negative self-thinking is looking at an outcome you don't like, flip it over and look at the other side of things. For example, instead of seeing yourself flunking a test, visualize what it would look like to pass it.

Recognize What's Normal

Accept having negative thoughts is part of life. Everyone feels this way sometimes. There's no need to beat yourself up for experiencing negative self-talk. It's what you do with it that counts.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Stay Relevant

When re-wording your negative self-talk, choose your words carefully. The effectiveness of the change is reflected in your word choice. Finding the appropriate word will make your positive self-talk that much more powerful. That said, don't stress about finding the ultimate word. Your goal here to be relevant, not perfect.

Talk in the Third Person

Most negative self-talk tends to use "I" statements, such as "I can't do this." Studies have shown that by using the third person, you create a certain distance emotionally from the statement. By using your name instead puts the power and control back in your court. In this case, if your name is Tom, the appropriate response might be to say to yourself, "Tom, you've got this! You know you can get through this task!"

Give Yourself Instructions

Sometimes the positive self-talk doesn't seem like enough. While the statements you're using might look good on the surface, if you're overwhelmed and really stuck in a morass of negativity, it might be time to give yourself some instructions. Start by deciding what the very next step is and then the one after that. Tell yourself you're going to perform these steps one after another, making sure you obey each. This will set you in motion and break the hold negative self-talk has over you. At the same time, it will help you concentrate on positive action to drive yourself forward.

Let it Pass

Sometimes the best recourse is just to let the negative self-talk babble away in the background. Not every word or phrase needs to be analyzed or rewritten. There's a lot to be said for ignoring things you don't need to hear.

What's Your Catchphrase?

Having an inspirational phrase that makes you feel strong and powerful will take you out of a situation where you're feeling things are spiraling out of your control. Use your hero phrase when you need it, saying it out loud if necessary, to break the negative self-talk cycle and pull yourself back on track. Consider a scripture from the Bible.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Positive Affirmations

How many times have you been told to use positive affirmations as a way of blocking negative self-talk? The reason it comes up on every list is that they work. Work out a series of statements you'd like to adopt as part of your new positive self-talk script. Write these down on paper and post them absolutely everywhere. Be sure to read them aloud



often. The more often you repeat these positive affirmations, the more likely you are to absorb them into your daily dialogue. Keep at them until you find yourself reciting them without thinking. Use positive affirmations to replace those negative self-talk statements you repeat over and over again, thereby breaking one habit to build another.

Know Yourself

This one requires a little outside help. Ask your friends and co-workers to identify your best attributes. Knowing what you're good at, and how you stand out from the crowd gives you instant ammunition against negative self-talk. Use these attributes to create positive self-talk statements.

Get in the Last Word

Never let negative self-talk win an argument. We tend to focus on the last thing said. Be sure to counter whatever negative statement crops up with something positive. If you must, silence the entire exchange by shutting it down with a hearty "I'm right because I said so!"

THE POWER OF WORDS

Celebrate

When things go right, be sure to take the time out to congratulate yourself on the accomplishment, however small. These small celebrations create a positive energy burst, giving a hearty shot of endorphins to your brain, leaving you feeling good long after the party is over. Negative self-talk doesn't stand a chance against this.

Remember the Past

At some point, you got it right. Think back to a time when you succeeded. Silence negative self-talk by reminding yourself of this and other such times.

Tell a Story

How does this particular adventure end? When you're feeling pressured by negative self-talk to think everything is going to be a failure, instead picture a scenario where everything works out. Create this future in lush detail, making a story of it you can tell yourself. This is your goal now. Use this story to focus on the good things you are going to accomplish.

Put it Off

Give yourself time to express worry, fear, and other negative emotion later. By telling yourself you can worry all you want at a set time in a designated place, you're telling yourself it's ok to experience the emotion, but you're also putting a control on how that's going to be expressed. This puts the power back in your hands where it belongs.

What's the Worst That Could Happen?

Rather than trying to silence worry about the outcome of a situation, allow the negative self-thought to take it all the way to the unhappy ending. What kind of outcome are you looking at? How likely is it? Studies have shown people who predict a dire outcome typically predict something way worse than what actually happens. In your own life, you can probably think of situations where you expected something dire to occur only to find out the worst wasn't anywhere near as bad. As you play out your own scenario, remind yourself the reality is probably somewhere in between best- and worst-case outcomes.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Grab a Distraction

Find something good and or healthy to occupy your mind when the self-talk turns negative. Burying yourself in a project requiring concentration keeps you from obsessing over a less than helpful thought. It will dissipate.

Get Confrontational

Are your thoughts causing you anxiety? If negative self-talk is leaving you feeling like you can't cope, it might be time to do something brave. Confronting your fears means negative self-talk can't touch you anymore. This is not an easy method to take on and might require help from a counselor or someone trained in handling fears, but it's also very empowering and will lead to a lot of positive self-talk on the other side of the process.

Practice

Realize habits take a long time to form. When trying to change a behavior, it can take just as long, if not longer, to create a shift in thinking. Keep trying. When you fail, simply start again where you left off. You will need to be persistent to change from negative self-talk to positive. Hang in there and don't give up. Eventually, this process will become a new habit. When this happens, your life will never be the same.



In the end, be kind to yourself. You've had a lot of practice in negative self-talk. A lot of compassion and genuine love and concern for your own well-being will go a long way, especially when you catch yourself messing up. In the end, using positive self-talk is about treating yourself with love. Keep this in mind as you move forward on your journey.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Conclusion

Are you listening? Hopefully, by now, you are.

In this book, you've explored some pretty dark places. You've seen negativity, and its horrifying effects on your mind and body. You've had a glimpse of the power behind Positive Self-talk and have hopefully started experimenting with switching your statements. You're exploring positivity in a way you never have before and have hopefully discovered the power that lies in Optimism.

What an exciting crossroads you're standing at right now!

As you move forward, think about how positive self-talk is about to change your life. It starts here, with you and a single thought. What do you think it will be?

It'll be exciting to find out, won't it?



Never again underestimate the Power of Words!