



November 2007

## SELF TALK: Changing your inner dialogue for success

Most people talk to themselves – not always out loud! – but definitely inside their own head. These conversations with yourself, is known as inner dialogue. Today I would like to 'talk' to you about this type of talking-to-yourself to see how changing what you 'say' can change how you feel and how successful you are.

Lets look first at the different voices that form part of your inner dialogue. I have several different voices – I believe most people do too. Firstly, there is my voice – the voice that is **Me**. This is my intuition, body wisdom and spirit. But surprisingly my voice is often drowned out by the other voices. I have the **Commentator** – a voice that provides a running commentary on what I'm doing in the moment. I have the **Critic**, the **Worrier** and the **Nag**. The **Ideas** voice pops up sometimes, as does the **Music Channel** which often picks up the last catchy song on the radio and replays it over-and-over, even if I don't like the song! There are probably more voices, but these are the main voices of my inner dialogue and they have a big influence on how successful I am – or not. Pause for a moment and see if you can identify your voices. 'Who' is 'talking' to you the most just now?

### Switching off the voices

Your inner dialogue is often responsible for your emotions. How often have you had inner conversations along the lines of: *"What have I done? Why-oh-why did I do this?"*, or *"I'm useless! I'll never get this right!"* or *"You are so lazy! If you only had got up when the alarm went off, well, then you wouldn't be late and in trouble—again"* (Note: sometimes the voices talk as "I" and sometimes as "you". When the voice uses "you" sometimes it takes on the identity of someone who plays this role in your outer world). When your inner dialogue is criticising, nagging or worrying, it's difficult to feel good about yourself or hold your head high. When these voices are prominent, it's easy to begin feeling down, out of sorts and even cross or angry with yourself.

A useful tool is to learn how to switch off the voices for awhile to give yourself some inner peace. This is much easier than you might imagine. First of all, welcome your inner dialogue voices – they are looking out for you, and they help keep you safe. Now have a conversation with them – it's not as daft as it sounds – tell them that you love them, yes, even the nag, and that you know they are just doing their job, but for awhile you want to have inner

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peace. You can reassure them that they can 'pop-up' if they become aware of any danger that they feel you need alerting of, but for while you want some quiet and peace inside. Now imagine in front of you is a large volume control dial. See yourself reaching for this dial, and turn it down, slowly to zero. Inner peace – at last! Try it. It is amazing how powerful this little exercise is, and once you have mastered it, you can have inner peace whenever you want to.

### Listening to your 'Me' voice

The voice of 'me' is the voice of your body wisdom and intuition. When the other voices are silenced for awhile, you will be able to access this voice and know what is really important to you. How do you know whether the voice you are hearing is your 'me' voice? I think people 'know' this in different ways. For me, when I hear the voice of 'me' there is no doubt or questions around it. It is who I am. It feels so right, even if logically it doesn't make sense, it is my soul's desire. I have learnt that when I pay attention to the voice of 'me' that my decisions are sound and it guides me well. When I ignore it, or when 'me' is overshadowed by my critical or fearful voices – then these are the times when I go off track and into areas that are not serving me well.

### Being gentle with yourself

Identifying your inner dialogue voices and learning to silence them for periods is great, but know that you are human and from time-to-time we all get into negative self talk. So learn to recognize it and gently coax yourself into a better place with your inner dialogue. Let me give you an example of this:

Imagine that you had a 10 page report that needed to be finished by the end of the day. But long past going-home-time, only 8 pages have been completed. At this point, the vast majority of people beat themselves up. Their critic, worrier and nag will be loud and strident making you feel unworthy, not up to the task, and your self esteem and self worth will be down in the depths. If you allow this continue, how hard will it be to complete the last 2 pages on the following day? And how long will it take you? Probably ages – because your energy levels and enthusiasm will be low.

Now, imagine the same scenario – with a report that is 2 pages short of being finished. And have this inner dialogue: "I needed to have finished that report – and I haven't. Who do I need to let know? How can I get this finished tomorrow in double quick time? I know I have let myself down, but I am going to get this right. I am going to find a better way of doing

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this” With this self talk, the following day you will finish the report quickly. By acknowledging yourself and other people involved in this, you have stayed in your integrity too.

We all make mistakes. We all also promise things and then sometimes don't deliver. The important lesson is not the mistakes, but how we deal with them. Learning to be gentle with yourself with positive self talk allows you to put things right quickly and move on. Allowing your negative voices to beat yourself up, just prolongs the negative feelings and emotions. So... start talking to yourself in a loving way!

### ...and Finally

I hope you have enjoyed reading this Tip. If your self worth and esteem have been taking a battering from your critical and fearful voices, call me on 01305 772220 to have a chat how coaching can help you reach a better place, or if you prefer, email me – [jennie@reddandelion.co.uk](mailto:jennie@reddandelion.co.uk)

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