

# HOW TO AVOID NEGATIVE SELF-TALK



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## Introduction

Do you have a nagging little silent voice that always seems to have something to say? Everyone does. This is simply a part of the human survival process. Especially when you are about to attempt something that you have never done before, this voice can be very negative. The reason why you are here now is because, going all the way back to the first humans, this questioning voice promoted survival.



It ensures that you think about something before you do it. The first humans lived in an incredibly dangerous environment. Their minds were constantly presented with stressful situations. So their mental chatter was always going, always questioning behaviors, stress levels were very high, because survival was not a day-to-day issue, but usually an hour to an hour or minute to minute proposition.

Fast-forward to the present time. You and I live a very safe existence, compared to the earliest humans. So we don't need a questioning inner voice constantly monitoring everything that is going on around us. Unfortunately, we still have basically the same brain as earlier man. This is why you have an inner voice always giving you unwanted and unrequested advice.

Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, this voice is often negative.

In this short report you will learn how to turn negative self-talk into a positive conversation. You will also understand how to listen to your negative inner chatter, recognize it for what it is, and ignore its advice. We will take a look at exactly what self-talk is and why it happens, and illustrate some common types of negative thinking so you can identify them for what they are. If that nagging inner voice seems like your enemy, it can be at times, until you control it. You can learn to embrace it, and to change how it influences your behaviors, and that begins with defining exactly what self-talk is.

## What is Self-Talk & Why Does It Matter?

Psychologists define self-talk as "a constant internal conversation". It is an absolutely normal phenomenon for all human beings. Psychologists will tell you that self-talk can be negative or positive, and conscious or unconscious.

Self-talk is not always a silent inner voice, however. You sometimes talk to yourself out loud. Quiet or verbal, the way you talk to yourself can have a massive influence on how your life turns out. Think about it. When you make a mistake you may quietly call yourself "stupid" or an "idiot". If this happens a few times a day, over time you begin to believe that assessment.

You subconsciously wind up directing your behavior towards instances where you will fail or make more mistakes in the future. This happens so you can reinforce your repeatedly stated opinion that you are not very bright.

### **This is why self-talk definitely matters.**

The opposite is also true. You may tell yourself positive things all the time, and in this way you can program yourself for positive behavior and results. Your brain "hears" you saying good things about yourself constantly, and it begins to expect good things to happen to you. This becomes a subconscious but very real expectation, so you act accordingly, and you enjoy more successes than failures.



Psychologist David Sarwer is the Clinical Director at the Center for Weight and Eating Disorders at the University of Pennsylvania. When taking on new patients that want to get their weight under control, one of the first things he does is stand them in front of a mirror and have them practice positive self-talk, using neutral language rather than negative, while they evaluate their bodies.

This type of verbal, conscious self-talk can be very powerful, so you must watch what you say. Instead of saying "My stomach is fat and disgusting", say "My stomach is round, and it is big. It is bigger than I would like it to be." This is simply making a declaration, and not talking down to yourself.

### **Can Your Inner Voice Predict the Future?**

Here is an example of how self-talk can actually predict future results. Imagine you are a college student. You have a big test coming up soon on a subject you usually struggle with understanding. You convince yourself that there is no reason to study because you know that you are going to fail the exam. What happens? You wind up not studying enough, you fail the test, and the negative side of your inner voice says, "See, I knew I would fail, and I did."

This can lead to self-doubt and false beliefs in other areas of your life. Before you know what is happening, failures, mistakes and poor performance seem to crop up no matter what you do. You begin to believe that you have bad luck, and that you were destined to be less than a success in many endeavors.

The key to controlling negative self-talk is to be more aware of what you are actually saying to yourself.

## How to Be More Conscious of Your Thoughts

*"Never doubt yourself. You can accomplish much more than you ever dreamed of."*

As you read those two sentences, what were your thoughts? Did you verbally or silently doubt your abilities as those sentences passed through your mind? Did the opposite happen, and you said "Yes I can!", agreeing with those statements? Whether you agreed or disagreed, you probably did so unconsciously.

Even though unconscious thoughts happen all the time, and automatically, you can learn to be more conscious of the beliefs and emotions that you are experiencing.

Here is a simple way to become more conscious of what you are thinking. Put your brain to work. It is believed that the conscious part of your mind can process approximately 40 bits of information every second. That seems pretty powerful, doesn't it? However, your subconscious mind is able to handle roughly 40 million bits of info each and every second!

This means you should put your subconscious to work to program yourself to be more conscious about what you are feeling and thinking. Researchers say the best way to get your subconscious to solve a problem is to ask it a question. Your subconscious is so good at handling massive amounts of information, that when you ask it a question it begins immediately to attempt to answer that question.

Ask your subconscious mind why your inner voice is so negative. Ask it why you suffer from self-doubt, and why your self-dialogue always expresses negative, self-limiting beliefs. You can do this anytime of the day or night, and right before you go to sleep is an excellent time to ask yourself these questions.

This is because experts say a lot of subconscious homework happens at night while you sleep. You are not conscious, but that does not mean that your subconscious is going to take the entire evening off. This simple way of



employing your subconscious to help you become more conscious of your thoughts and self-dialogue can work wonders, so don't underestimate its powerful ability.

## Being Consciously Conscious

You can also turn your conscious mind to the task as well. Several times throughout the day, consciously ask yourself if you have experienced any self-limiting thoughts or negative feelings caused by your silent inner voice.

To do this, you want to consciously separate your thoughts from yourself. Realize that you are not your thoughts. Understand that both positive and negative self-dialogues are absolutely natural. Just because you have a thought, and it is negative or self-limiting, that does not mean you have to behave in that manner. You are in absolute control of your actions when you consciously remind yourself a thought is simply that ... a thought.

If you experience negative self-talk because you have failed at something in the past, and you are about to experience a similar situation, ***remember that failure is just a thing. It is not who you are.***

It is an event, an occurrence, an experience. Learn from it and move on. A lot of the time past experiences guide your future self-talk, so it is important to make a conscious attempt to remind yourself that your thoughts are not who you are, and that you can consciously dictate your actions.



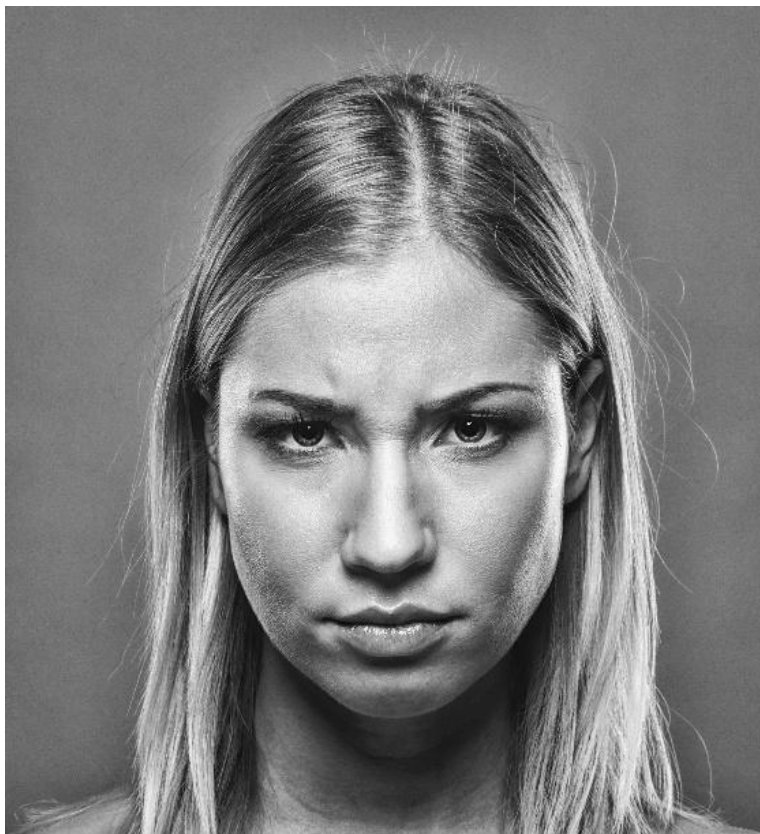
## Types of Negative Thinking

The number of negative thought patterns you may experience is limitless. Every human being is uniquely different, so you may suffer some type of negative thinking that is different from someone else. However, there are 7 negative thought patterns that are common to a lot of people.

**1 – All or nothing thinking** – This is also called "black-and-white" thinking. This mindset can keep you from seeing all sides of a situation or experience, and life generally occurs in a gray area, with very few situations that are rigid and absolute.

**2 – Sweeping generalities** – Look out for words like never, forever and always. If you are struggling to find employment, don't tell yourself, "I will never get a job". This type of over-generalization can turn your negative thoughts into realities.

**3 – Negative filtering** - This happens when you focus on only the negative side of a situation. You refuse to consider any positive aspects of an experience, and you filter out all positive thoughts.



**4 – Expecting unrealistic results** – When you use the word "should" a lot, this could be because you are expecting too much of yourself, of others, or of a situation. For example, saying, "I should have been able to finish that assignment on time," when the workload was impossible.

**5 – Jumping to conclusions** – This negative self-talk has you trying to predict the future, making negative assumptions.

**6 – Overreacting** – If you turn any small situation into a total catastrophe in your mind, believing situations and events are much worse than actually are, this is a form of negative self-talk.

**7 – Personalization** – Everything is not about you. When you attach random events and occurrences to yourself, you are personalizing the situation.

## How to Replace Negative Thoughts with Positive Ones

When you recognize some of the unrealistic and harmful self-talk categories just covered, you can begin to replace those ideas and feelings with the following techniques.

**Question the reality of your thoughts** – This is a simple way to identify unrealistic and irrational thoughts. Be honest with yourself. Are you thinking realistically?

**Flip the script** - Consciously make your negative thoughts positive. If you are scared or fearful that you will not receive the big promotion you have been hoping for, think on the positive side. Think about how great it will be when you DO get the promotion.

**Look at the situation objectively** – Don't automatically assume that your ideas or thoughts are correct. Act as an outside observer, an impartial one, and view your thoughts or a particular situation objectively.

**Release your thoughts** - When you identify a negative thought, release it. Instead of worrying constantly about being able to pay your bills, tell yourself that you are becoming more in control of your financial situation, because you are aware of the need to develop and stick to a budget.



**Exercise** - Physical exertion lowers stress levels. Exercise additionally causes the release of "feel good" chemicals in your brain that help you put a positive spin on a negative situation.

**Write your thoughts down** - Many negative thoughts lose their power when you write them down, and can see them for how unrealistic or silly they are.

**Smile** - Go to the nearest mirror and smile at yourself. You just can't enjoy negativity when you are smiling, and when you smile around other people, your entire environment enjoys positive vibes.

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