Reframing Negative Self-Talk

What is Negative Self-Talk?

Negative self-talk is any unkind, untrue, unproductive, discompassionate, fearful, all-or-nothing, limiting, ungodly, unhealthy, or discouraging self-talk. For example, "No one appreciates me, I'm always taken advantage of!" It is any thought that makes you feel self-defeated, ugly, fearful, weak, insecure, incapable, angry, hopeless, guilty, unlovable, unworthy, depressed, discouraged, unsupported, worthless, and so on. The goal is not to eliminate it completely… A little self-criticism can be a good thing.

Most Negative Self-Talk Begins With:

* I can’t…
* I am not…
* I will never…
* I should…
* I always…
* No one…
* I wish…
* They must think…
* Why can’t I…
* I don’t have…
* All men/women/people are…
* What if…(fear-based)
* It’s all your/their fault…
* Nothing will ever…

What is Empowering Self-Talk?

Empowering self-talk is any intentional, kind, true, encouraging, helpful, accountable, biblical, allowing, grateful, and compassionate self-talk. For example, "My time is valuable and I give myself permission to say ‘no’ and ask for what I need.” It is any thought that makes you feel comforted, soothed, safe, relaxed, energized, special, strong, capable, lovable, free, forgiven, flexible, talented, attractive, accepted, in control, smart, supported, and so on.

Most Empowering Self-Talk Begins With:

* I can…
* I am able…
* I will…
* I allow myself to…
* I have…
* I sometimes…
* Right now, I am…
* Some people think…
* I could be…
* I choose to…
* Some men/women/people are…
* Some things are…
* I’m sorry…
* I played a role in…

Where Do Negative Thoughts Come From?

* ​**Others** - Family, Teachers, Friends, Pastors, Bosses, Co-workers, Coaches, Celebrities, Spouse, Parents, etc.
* **Self** - Distorted thinking patterns; Disordered mindsets; Misbeliefs; Inner vows, Identity challenges, Need for approval, Prejudging, etc.
* **Media** - TV, Movies, Music, Magazines, & Advertising
* **The Enemy** – Spiritual wickedness, fiery darts from the enemy. Ephesians 6:16, “Above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

​To heal negative self-talk, we need to:

* Correct distorted thinking patterns
* Correct misbeliefs
* Heal disordered mindsets, such as rejection
* Stop seeking others’ approval - Those who have a lot of negative self-talk often have an excessive need to be approved by others; becoming grounded in your identity and understanding God’s perspective will help you break free from this
* Know God’s point-of-view
* Get grounded in your identity
* Break agreement with disempowering inner self-vows (Ex. "I will never depend on anyone ever again!)

Distorted Thinking Patterns

* **Stewing** - Dwelling on or repeating negative thoughts in your mind.
* **Magnifying** - Blowing things out of proportion; Overreacting to a minor issue and drawing a negative conclusion.
* **All-or-Nothing Thinking** - Black-n-white thinking; Swinging between the extremes; Everything is a complete success or failure.
* **Assuming the Worse/Fortune Telling** - Negatively assuming what others are thinking; Predicting the future with limited information or knowledge; Catastrophizing.
* **Personalization** - Taking things too personally; Thinking everything happening around you is related to you or is about you.

Healthy Thinking Patterns

* **Mindfulness** - Be intentional about stopping yourself from dwelling on bad experiences/thoughts; Practice being present and “in the moment”.
* **Forgiveness** - Practice forgiveness as a way of life; Give yourself and others permission to make mistakes.
* **Think Win-Win** - This is thinking that sees both sides of a situation and finds solutions that are mutually beneficial.
* **Assume the Best** - Assume positive outcomes, think “what if it does work?”, “what if I can do it?”, “maybe he didn’t mean that?”, etc.
* **Not All About You** - Consider that you may have nothing to do with other people’s reactions; Be more others minded.
* **Cultivate An “Attitude of Gratitude”** - 1 Thessalonians 5:18, …Giving thanks in all circumstances. Thankful people are happy people.

What is a Misbelief?

A misbelief is a wrong or false belief or opinion of something or someone (e.g., heresy, delusion, illusion, error, mistake, misconception).

Our Beliefs Affect Everything

* Your beliefs become your thoughts
* Your thoughts become your words
* Your words become your actions
* Your actions become your habits
* Your habits become your values
* Your values become your destiny

Stop Seeking the Approval of Others

Those who have a lot of negative self-talk will often have an excessive need to be “approved by others”. Becoming grounded in your identity and understanding God’s perspective will help you break free from this.

Reframing Negative Self-Talk

To reframe negative self-talk, practice these 4 Steps:

1. Stop it
2. Write it
3. Rethink it (see questions below)
4. Reframe it

Rethink the thought by asking these questions:

* Is this thought true?
* Does this thought make you feel empowered and comforted?
* Is it Reasonable, Rational, & Realistic?
* Can you do something to resolve or change this? Do you need more information?
* What would your best friend/God tell you?

Start PRACTICING Today!

* Be compassionate towards yourself
* Let go of the need to be perfect
* Discern between things worth getting angry or anxious about; most things aren’t
* Give yourself permission to make mistakes and learn from them
* Don’t make things “such a big deal”; downplay the negative & magnify the positive
* Take control of the way you think; keep track of your negative thoughts
* Practice inner self-praise
* Comfort yourself like your own best friend
* Learn to say things to yourself that are calming & soothing
* Let go of the need for other people’s approval
* Become your own best friend and safe person