

positive self-talk



This exercise will guide you through beginning to identify your internal monologue. Put another way, it helps you begin to notice the thoughts that are going through your mind and consider the effect that they could be having on you.

Before we start deciding which thoughts are negative and which are positive, though, we need to simply observe our thoughts.

1

Eliminate as many distractions as possible and sit alone in a quiet spot with a notebook. Relax your muscles, breathe deeply and get comfortable.

2

Reflect on the kinds of thoughts that recur, day in, day out in specific situations. What thoughts go through your mind on a daily basis? What are you saying to yourself constantly? What story are you telling yourself? When you get out of breath on the stairs, is your internal story that “you’re out of shape” or is it that the stairs are a nice challenge? Become aware of your internal narrative.



3

Ask yourself: how do I feel when I think these thoughts? How do these thoughts, expectations or beliefs impact my actions? Are these thoughts helpful and realistic? Or are they damaging and unrealistic? If they are unhelpful, then what's really going on here? What are the facts? What evidence is there for, and against, what I'm telling myself? How might these unrealistic thoughts be doing damage? Write down the things that you observe.

4

Contemplate and write down some alternative, more helpful mental responses for specific situations. For example: In a situation where you've done something wrong or made a mistake, you might swap "Ugh! I can't believe I did that. I am such an idiot!" for "Hey, it was impossible to foresee how that would turn out. You made the best decision you could with the information you had, babe."

Or in a situation where you'd normally yell and use mental force to make yourself get something done, swap the internal drill sergeant for an inner cheerleader. Instead of "You useless piece of dirt, for [bleep] sake, get your [bleep] together!" Try "Yasssss! You got this girl. Woop woop. Slay all day you absolute f**** goddess. You (clap) got (clap) this!" It's going to work far more effectively, we promise!

5

Our brain has what's known as a "negativity bias". This means that your inner monologue will always notice and report back on the bad, ugly, irritating and annoying things, rather than noticing the good, fun, exciting and beautiful things. To combat this and help you see the world in a more balanced way (which is far closer to reality), always look for the upside or the positive. No matter what's going on, what positives can you find in the situation? Why is this good? What benefits might come from this event or series of events? What's the upside? Strive to reframe every negative with a positive. Try meeting every negative with, "this is good because..."
