

Choosing Resilience

by Redirecting Your Self-talk You're under pressure and looking for some help in steadying yourself. You are trying to keep going, even though you are still feeling off balance. You may even find yourself bobbing and weaving, considering all kinds of options. What's going on?

First, let's define bob and weave. Like a boxer avoiding the face-off, you duck from your focus. This is where you think you've figured out WHAT you want to do next, but then find yourself jabbing at every idea that floats by. You may have some false starts, and feel like a dog in a city park—running everywhere.

Or maybe you're stuck. It's time to take a good seat and find a new beginning. You may have a bad case of the 3Fs: you're in Flight, Fight or Freeze mode—letting the stress and worries overcome you. The 3Fs are common ways of dealing with our fears—that usually don't serve us very well.

So talk to yourself. Do you not yet know what you want? Are you running away from first steps and a commitment to making a new beginning? Or are you feeling frenzied, confused, and overwhelmed?

With these questions in mind, let's look at the process of self-talk a little more closely. As I've mentioned before, the conversations we have in our heads on a daily basis determine how we live our lives. Gandhi once said,

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,
and your values become your destiny.

Read this over again and think about a belief that shows up in your words and habits.



Redirecting Your Self-talk

In this Activity, adapted from the book *Choose on Purpose*, you will take some time to reflect on how your beliefs turn into self-talk. It's a chance to look at your "pause-abilities." We all have continuous loop conversations in our heads that affect how we behave, and how we respond to what's going on in our environment. This activity will help you examine the kinds of conversations going on in your head more closely.

Purpose: See the internal dialogue you carry on with yourself more clearly and direct it towards different results.

STEPS

1. Focusing on what you talk to yourself about during this time of transition, complete the following sentences:

I have to

I have to

I have to

I need

I need

I need

I'm afraid that

I'm afraid that

I'm afraid that

Please don't turn the page until you have completed these sentences above.

2. Now go back to these sentences and change the words in each of the groupings as follows (actually cross them out and rewrite them):

I have to: Change to *I want to*

I need: Change to *I choose*

I'm afraid that: Change to *I doubt that*

3. What changed for you when you changed the wording?

4. How does this different mode of self-talk affect the dialogue you have with yourself?

5. What are the greatest stressors and/or fears that popped out for you as you changed these statements?

6. The words *I want*, *I choose*, and *I doubt* all move you from the victim mentality of external requirements, needs and fears to the internal ownership of choice and believing in your own potential. (Note, here doubt is movement on the continuum from fear to hope, from *I'm afraid that* to *I doubt that...*). Given that:

What one statement, changed to the words of responsibility, choice and acceptance (*I want*, *I choose*, *I doubt*) is most key for you to imbed in your

self-talk every day? (See the conversation that follows for my personal example of how this process has affected my own work.)

My experience

Here is how examining my self-talk affected the major change I undertook in my career. When I began this project, I sought help from my coach Pamela, and used a combination of physical movement and goal setting. She helped me understand how my fear of being 5 percent short in energy and enthusiasm for my project was in my control.

My statement was:

I'm afraid that I have 95 percent of what it takes to bring this project to life, but that my 5 percent fear factor will overtake my confidence.

As I worked with Pamela, looking at my self-talk on this matter, I eventually changed my statement to:

I doubt my 95 percent confidence will be overtaken by my 5 percent fear.

This revolutionized my approach to my work. I began to recognize on a daily basis how I would use excuses of other responsibilities in my life to run away from biting the bullet, facing my “5 percent fear factor” and dedicating the time to work on this project. I learned how much “Flight” was my escape from stress and fear. By running away into other projects I allowed my fear to gnaw away at my confidence. This stopped it.

What are you willing to stop, or start, in order to start bouncing back?

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