

THE BIG IDEAS

Thoughts Are Things
Let's choose them wisely.

First Step
Change your programming.

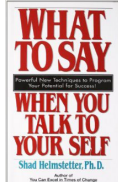
What Is Self-Talk?
5 levels. Go for Level IV!

Why
Imagine two versions of you.

The How
What area do you want to work on?

Self-Conversation
And "Shower-talk."

The Greatest Challenge
= Mastering your mind. Let's!



What to Say When You Talk to Yourself

Powerful New Techniques to Program Your Potential for Success!

BY SHAD HELMSTETTER, PH.D. · POCKET BOOKS © 1982 · 255 PAGES

“After examining the philosophies, the theories, and the practiced methods of influencing human behavior, I was shocked to learn the simplicity of that one small fact: You will become what you think about most: *your success or failure in anything, large or small, will depend on your programming—what you accept from others, and what you say when you talk to yourself.*”

It is no longer a success theory; it is a simple, but powerful, fact. Neither luck nor desire has the slightest thing to do with it. It makes no difference whether we believe it or not. *The brain simply believes what you tell it most.* And what you tell it about you, it will create. It has no choice.”

~ Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D. from *What to Say When You Talk to Yourself*

What do YOU say when you talk to yourself?

Is it empowering? Or not so much?

[Dr. Shad Helmstetter](#) tells us that inner dialogue that's going on all the time is THE most important thing we have going on. We become what we think about and our internal dialogue forms the bulk of our thoughts.

Therefore, if we want to optimize and actualize, we need to dial in that conversation. And, of course, helping us do that is what this book is all about.

I picked this book up after seeing Lanny Bassham recommend it. Lanny's the gold-medal winning author of [With Winning in Mind](#) (see Notes) whose work focuses on cultivating a powerful self-image. How we talk to ourselves is a huge part of creating a powerful self-image; hence, the recommendation. I'm glad I followed his rec. This book is fantastic. Get a copy [here](#).

Of course, it's packed with Big Ideas. I'm excited to share some of my favorites so let's jump straight in!

THOUGHTS ARE THINGS

“Every thought we think, every conscious or unconscious thought we say to ourselves, is translated into electrical impulses which, in turn, direct the control centers in our brains to electrically *and chemically* affect and control every motion, every feeling, every action we take, every moment of every day.”

Whatever 'thoughts' you have programmed into yourself, or have allowed others to program into you, are affecting, directing, or controlling everything about you. From the day we were born, we have received a staggering amount of programming. It would require an immense computer just to compute the number of individual pieces of information we receive from the world around us in just one year. Some of the programming is obvious, but much of it we are never even aware we are receiving.”

*“Always remember that
some of the greatest minds,
some of the greatest
achievers which this earth
has ever known, achieved
their greatness with only
three overriding attributes:
spirit, conviction, and hard
work.”*

~ Shad Helmstetter

Every single thought we have has a biological and chemical impact.

Thoughts are, in fact, THINGS!

(That's still hard for me to believe but it's true.)

Which, of course, begs the question: Are your thoughts good things or not so good?

As [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) tells us: "A man is what he thinks about all day long."

So, let's look at some Big Ideas on how to get those thoughts optimized!

The first thing we want to look at is how we've been programmed.

FIRST STEP: CHANGE YOUR PROGRAMMING

"Remember, the subconscious mind is listening and waiting for our instructions, and it doesn't care what we tell it; it just does it!"

~ Shad Helmstetter

"It is our programming that sets up our beliefs, and the chain reaction begins. In logical progression, what we believe determines our attitudes, affects our feelings, directs our behavior, and determines our success or failure:

1. Programming creates beliefs.
2. Beliefs create attitudes.
3. Attitudes create feelings.
4. Feelings determine actions.
5. Actions create results.

That's how the brain works. If you want to manage yourself in a better way, and change your results, you can do so at any time you choose. Start with the first step. Change your programming."

[T. Harv Eker](#) echoes this wisdom in [Secrets of the Millionaire Mind](#) (see Notes) where he tells us: "Your programming leads to your thoughts; your thoughts lead to your feelings; your feelings lead to your actions; your actions lead to your results. Therefore, just as is done with a personal computer, by changing your programming, you take the first essential step to changing your results."

Both Eker and Helmstetter use the metaphor of a computer to get the point across.

In short, imagine a monitor, a keyboard and a floppy disk. Laughing. Yes, this book was written in 1982 when floppy disks were awesome. If you remember them, high fives. If you're not old enough to remember floppy disks, God bless you. :)

Now, our old-school computer is only going to run whatever program is on the disk. If you want a better program, you need to erase the old floppy and program some better stuff on it.

Same basic idea with our lives.

If we're running our show on OLD programming, we're going to get results consistent with the quality of that programming. If we want to upgrade our lives, we need to upgrade the programming.

According to Helmstetter, that programming creates our beliefs which creates our attitudes which creates our feelings which determine actions which create results.

The best way to reprogram?

Change the way you talk to yourself.

"Self-Talk gives each of us a way to change what we would like to change, even if we haven't been able to do so in the past. It offers us a chance to stop being the old self and start to become a different, better self, a self which is no longer the product of conditioned response, but governed instead by personal choice."

~ Shad Helmstetter

WHAT IS SELF-TALK?

"What is Self-Talk and how does it work? The definition of Self-Talk can be simply stated: **Self-Talk is a way to override our past negative programming by erasing or replacing it with conscious, positive new directions.** Self-Talk is a practical way to live our lives by active intent rather than by passive acceptance.

With Self-Talk, we have a way to give new directions to our subconscious minds by talking to ourselves in a different way, consciously reprogramming our internal control centers with words and statements which are more effective, more helpful to every part of us that we would like to improve. The Self-Talk statements paint a new internal picture of ourselves as we would most like to be."

So, Step 1 in creating an optimized identity is to optimize our Self-Talk—"overriding our past negative programming by erasing or replacing it with conscious, positive new directions."

Shad tells us there are five levels of Self-Talk. We need to start by identifying our current Self-Talk and elevating it.

Here's a quick look at the five levels:

Level I Self-Talk = The Level of Negative Acceptance. This is dominated by thoughts like, "I can't . . ." "I could never do that," "I'm tired and just don't have the energy I used to have," and other such gems.

Unfortunately, this is the dominant form of Self-Talk for most people. It needs to go. :)

Level II Self-Talk = The Level of Recognition and Need to Change. This is dominated by phrases such as "I need to . . ." and "I should . . ." It's slightly better than Level I but not where we want to spend our time. As Shad tells us, the problem is that it recognizes a problem but offers no solution.

Level III Self-Talk = The Level of Decision to Change. This consists of phrases like, "I never . . ." and "I no longer . . ." Now, you're committed to change and are clear on what you're going to stop doing and say things like, "I no longer smoke," and "I never put off doing things that are important."

This is powerful because you're programming new instructions to your subconscious mind!

Level IV Self-Talk = The Level of The Better You. This is the most powerful kind of Self-Talk. This is all about "I am . . ." statements like "I am in control of my life. I am a winner! I am healthy, energetic, enthusiastic, and I'm going for it!"

As Shad tells us: "Level IV Self-Talk inspires, encourages, urges, and implores. It tugs at our hearts, touches our hopes, and paints the pictures that color our dreams. It excites, demands, and pushes us forward. It strengthens the armor of our spirit and hardens the steel of our determination. This is the Self-Talk that challenges us to do battle with our fears and end up the victor. It is the Self-Talk which stirs us to action, fills us up with self-belief, and plants our feet firmly on the solid bedrock of success."

This is the level we want to spend most of our time at as we optimize and actualize! Let's take a quick look at Level V and then come back to this for a moment.

Level V Self-Talk = The Level of Universal Affirmation. This is the Self-Talk of the ancient mystics who experience oneness with God/the Universe. It's awesome. And... Shad advises us to focus on establishing a solid relationship with OURSELVES before we jump too quickly to this level!

So, back to Level IV.

"It is one thing to learn about something; it is quite another thing to put something that is learned into practice."

~ Shad Helmstetter

Shad tells us: "There are hundreds of examples, already written, of this special, powerful, reprogramming Level IV Self-Talk: *'I am a winner! I believe in myself. I respect myself and like who I am. I have made the decision to win in my life and that's what I'm doing!'* Can you imagine going through the rest of your life with that kind of Self-Talk on your side? Think of the programming that kind of direction would create. It is yours for the taking. It is yours the moment you decide to choose a better way. You deserve the best out of life. Perhaps it's time to do something about it!"

Take a moment to imagine the rest of your life with your current Self-Talk.

Now imagine the rest of your life with the super-empowered Self-Talk.

Which destiny do you want?

MORE ON THE WHY: TWO OF YOU

"If there were two of you, and one of you became a positive, productive Self-Talker, and the other did not, for whom would you cast your vote? I know which one I would vote for, every time."

That's a Big Idea.

Let's slow down for a moment and REALLY absorb the *WHY* here.

Imagine two versions of you.

One develops strong Self-Talk. The other does not.

Which life do you want?

Are you ready to commit the energy to mastering your Self-Talk?

(Awesome.)

THE HOW

"If you would like to change an old habit, seek out your old programming, recognize it for what it is, make a minor decision to do something about it, and erase it and replace it with something better."

The book is PACKED with examples of specific Self-Talk phrases to deal with various areas of your life you'd like to master. Check out the book for the detailed examples.

For now, know that you want to start by identifying the challenge(s) you'd like to master and the current Self-Talk you engage in. (Shad tells us to identify the Top 10 most disempowering things we say to ourselves. And says if you can't find 10 you aren't trying! We ALL have work to do!)

Once we've identified areas that have opportunities for optimization, we want to go to Level IV and create a script of positive, present-tense declarations of how you'd like things to be.

For example, Shad shares some awesome Self-Talk on dealing with fear and anxiety.

He shares a dozen or so passages like this to conquer worry: *"I do not fear problems. I solve them. I do not ignore problems, I confront them. I do not avoid problems, I conquer them!"*

Plus: *"I never worry. I turn 'worry time' into positive, constructive, 'solution time.' I keep my mind alert and open to all solutions—and solutions come quickly and easily to me."*

In Shad's model, you'd write those down (along with another constellation of a dozen phrases like them related to the issue you want to solve) and then you'd read them aloud to yourself three times a day.

And, if you were really feeling it, you'd record yourself (or someone you love) saying these phrases and groove that into subconscious via what he calls "tape-talk."

SELF-CONVERSATION + SHOWER TALK

"It's a healthy idea to stop now and then and ask yourself the question, 'Who's in control here?'"

Once aware of how programming works and where it comes from, who do you suppose is responsible for what is programmed into your own mind? You are, of course."

~ Shad Helmstetter

"There is, however, a less conspicuous and safer way to use self-conversation, and it is a way I recommend you try at your next available opportunity. I refer to it as 'shower talk' and it works like this: Tomorrow morning, when you step into the shower, say 'Good morning!' to yourself. Say it out loud, and say it with a smile in your voice. Greet the day with your chin up, your attitude high, and tell yourself just how great the day ahead is going to be. 'You look *great* today! You feel good, you're in good shape, and you're ready to tackle anything!' And then respond—give yourself an answer back. 'I feel *terrific*! Today especially! I feel good, I like who I am and I'm glad to be alive and going for it!'"

Even two or three minutes of that kind of rousing *internal* motivation can get you started on the right foot, facing the day, looking forward to it, and get you moving and believing in a way that can change an average day into an exceptional day. And it *works*! Think how much better that kind of invigorating, positive day-starting, confidence-building self-dialogue can be than the other ways we often use to start our day."

That. Is. Awesome.

100% wacky. And equally awesome! :)

So, Self-Talk is when we repeat things to ourselves that help us re-program at the root level. There's no "dialogue" with yourself, just one-way goodness.

Self-*Conversation*, on the other hand, is when we actually strike up a conversation with ourselves. You can use it to fire yourself up in the morning and you can use it to help solve a challenge.

For example, you could be having a bad day and have this chat with yourself—we'll pretend it's me and me chatting:

"Hey, Brian! How are you?"

"You know, I'm having a challenging day."

"I'm sorry to hear that! Quick question for you: What's the most empowered thing you could do right now to feel a little better?"

"Hmmm... Good question. Probably take a deep breath and go spend some time with the family."

"Awesome. See you when you're back!"

That's obviously a hyper-simplistic example, but you get the idea.

Self-*Conversation* reminds me of [Tal Ben-Shahar](#)'s 110-year-old you exercise where he has you imagine hopping into a time machine and having a fifteen-minute chat with the 110-year-old version of yourself.

The point of Tal's exercise is the fact (!) that we already have all the wisdom we need. He talks about how individuals diagnosed with cancer often radically change their lives. It's not that they suddenly got more *information* on how to live but that they finally tapped into that wisdom.

All the wisdom we need is pretty much already there. We just need to take the time to check in and tap into that reservoir of wisdom.

Self-conversation is a fun way to do that—whether that's in the shower or at your desk or while you're washing the dishes.

Try it out!

(Oh. Gotta go! Brian wants to hang out again. Hah! :)

"You can do so much. You can, if you choose, break through the wall that stands between you and anything you would like to change or achieve. Give yourself the will to do it. Give yourself the belief, the attitude, the emotion, and the action that will get you where you want to be."

~ Shad Helmstetter

THE GREATEST CHALLENGE YOU WILL EVER FACE

"Learning to manage, control, and direct the resources of your mind is the greatest challenge you will ever face.

The key to all management, the management of others, the management of your resources, and the management of your future is Self-Management. ...

Talk to yourself! Learn the words—the *right* words—and use them. Make Self-Talk an everyday, unconscious, self-directing habit. Talk to yourself in a way that is *kind, loving, caring, strong, demanding, and determined*. Talk to yourself in the right way, every day.

When you do, you will give yourself the greatest gift you will ever give."

The greatest challenge we will ever face is mastering ourselves.

And the greatest component to mastering ourselves is to master our mind.

We get that right—we learn how to reprogram our minds—and our beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviors follow with a grace and power that will astonish us.

Here's to creating incredible Self-Talk and giving ourselves the greatest gifts we'll ever give and receive!!

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

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[With Winning in Mind](#)

[Then Magic of Thinking Big](#)

[How to Stop Worrying and Start Living](#)

[The Strangest Secret](#)

About the Author of "What to Say When You Talk to Yourself"

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Shad Helmstetter, PhD, is the bestselling author of *What To Say When You Talk to Your Self*, *Who Are You Really* and *What Do You Want*, and ten other life-changing books. His books are published in many languages in more than sixty-four countries worldwide. Dr. Helmstetter is one of the most respected behavioral researchers of our time and has appeared on more than 1,200 radio and television programs, including repeat appearances on The Oprah Winfrey Show, ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN News. Connect: ShadHelmstetter.com

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.