

Humans are constantly engaging in an **internal dialogue**. Unfortunately, many of us do not make the time or effort to assess how well we are **thinking** and **speaking to ourselves**.

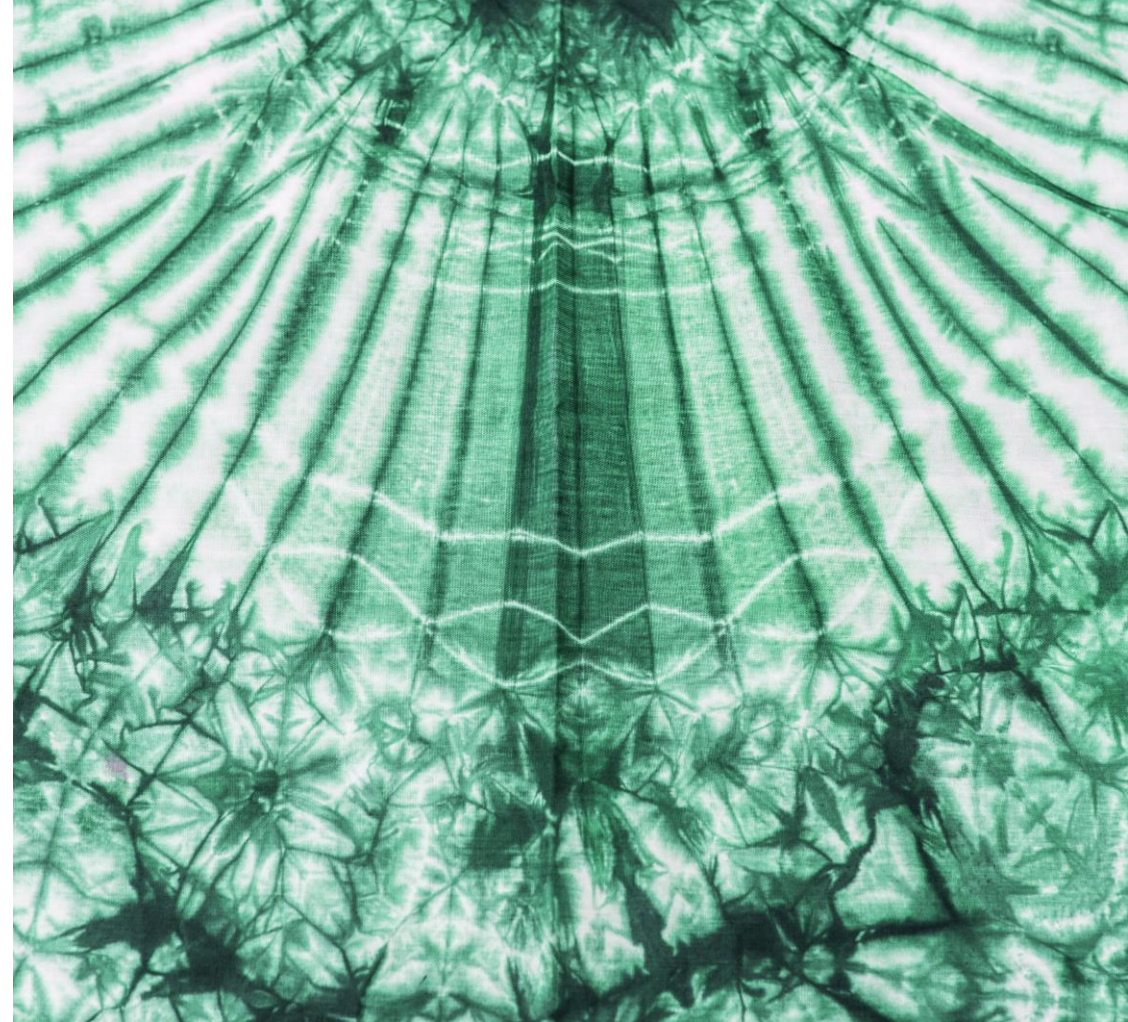
Furthermore, many of us are not very helpful or effective in how we choose to **talk to ourselves**.

When we choose to improve our **self-talk**, we can directly impact our professional and personal performances and have more quality experiences in life.





- Our **thoughts** and **beliefs** can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, if you tell yourself, “I can’t do this,” it’s unlikely that you will put forth the levels of effort and dedication needed get the results you are aiming for. In turn, poor results and failure go on to confirm your initial thoughts: “See, I knew I couldn’t do it!”
- **Ineffective thinking** and **self-talk** can turn repetitive and patterned. Patterns in our thoughts and **self-talk**, once established, become automatic and more difficult to challenge in the heat-of-the-moment.
- **Ineffective self-talk** tends to be associated with adverse internal (e.g., higher anxiety) and external (e.g., lower-quality performances) outcomes that make it difficult to thrive and excel at work.



# The **PROBLEMS**

Sources: CCL staff (2023); Richards (2022); Santos-Rosa et al. (2022)



# HOW did we get here?

Sources: CCL staff (2023); Richards (2022); Santos-Rosa et al. (2022)

- Many of us are overly critical of ourselves. While self-reflection and maintaining high standards for ourselves are often helpful and healthy practices, we can go overboard and **unfairly punish ourselves verbally** when things don't go well or as planned.
- When we doubt our capabilities, it's natural for our **thoughts** and **internal speech** to reflect this held belief. Unfortunately, **ineffective internal dialogue** can easily spiral downward, even when there is no evidence or rationale for our (degree of) doubt.
- **Self-talk** is done internally and often is not observable or accessible to outside entities. This means, our **internal thoughts** and **dialogue** can remain hidden and shielded from others. Others who may be able to directly challenge our views and provide an alternative (and potentially more accurate) perspective.



# BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE SELF-TALK

Research has found the following benefits are associated with **effective self-talk**:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased confidence and self-esteem</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved performance outcomes and results</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better able to cope with emotions and mental stress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased optimism and resilience</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased motivation and engagement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Higher levels of reported fun</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less performance anxiety</li></ul>	

Sources: CCL staff (2023); Richards (2022); Santos-Rosa et al. (2022)



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**SELF-TALK** episode//part 2  
**COMING SOON!**

**Part 2** will provide strategies and tools to consider as you refine and adjust your **self-talk** so it can work for you at work (and at home)!



Our **internal dialogue** is more than just fleeting thoughts. Our **self-talk** provides insight into what we believe and how we perceive ourselves, others, and the world around us. Furthermore, how we **talk to ourselves** has a direct impact on our physiology, confidence, interpersonal relationships, well-being, and performances. Unfortunately, many of us are tuned out to our **self-talk** and how it may be impacting us personally and professionally. Might it be time to get tuned in?!





Our words are powerful. Too often we aren't even aware of our words; and therefore, failing to harness the power they hold!

## To TRY –

### CATCH DISTORTIONS and FLAWED THINKING PATTERNS

Research is clear, humans are prone to thinking in flawed and inaccurate ways. It's hypothesized our brains have evolved to distort reality as a way to cope with prolonged stress and enhance survival (e.g., worst-case scenario thinking can identify potential threats).

Distorted thinking over time can lead to ineffective thinking patterns. Ineffective thinking patterns have been associated with poor or unhelpful professional outcomes such as faulty decision making, increased anxiety and rumination, higher susceptibility to burnout, and high interpersonal conflict.

**Where to start:** At strategic times throughout your day (e.g., before/after meetings, after receiving feedback, analyzing data, etc.), stop and assess if your thoughts are falling into any of the following distorted thought patterns:

- 1. All-or-nothing thinking** – The tendency to view a situation in either/or, extreme terms. (e.g., “If they cancel this project, then none of my work here matters.”)
- 2. Catastrophizing** – Jumping to the worst-case scenario. (“He says he has difficult news; I bet we're all going to get fired!”)
- 3. Overgeneralizing** – Taking an incident or isolated experience and generalizing too broadly. (e.g., “They never take me seriously.”)
- 4. Labeling** – Branding ourselves with unfair and ugly characterizations. (e.g., “I'm so incompetent and don't deserve this job.”)



# STRATEGY #1: INSPECT YOUR THOUGHTS

Sources: CCL staff (2023); Richards (2022); Santos-Rosa et al. (2022)





# STRATEGY #2

## BECOME A COACH

Sources: CCL staff (2023); Richards (2022); Santos-Rosa et al. (2022)

When dialoguing with others, we often take a coaching approach that provides them with ample support and helpful feedback. However, when we talk to ourselves, we take off our coaching hat and put on a critic's hat.

### To TRY –

#### MAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE SHIFT

When our internal dialogue turns self-defeating, low quality, or stuck in the past, it can negatively impact how we perform and feel at work. Furthermore, research has found that leaders who used dysfunctional self-talk were cited by their staff as struggling to embrace change, less creative, and less resilient in managing setbacks and hardships.

Shifting our self-talk and using language that is future-focused, moving towards goals, and constructive can lead to more optimal outcomes and less job strain.

**Where to start:** Use coach-like tactics to improve your self-talk.

- 1. Use second- or third-person perspective** – When engaging in self-talk, eliminate “me/my/myself/I” and replace them with “you/your/your name.” Using second- and third-person self-talk frames the message as coming from an outside source (such as a coach), and helps to depersonalize the information and avoid subjectivity.
- 2. Speak in terms of growth and development** – Ask yourself if your self-talk is helping you move closer to your goals. If not, pause and reword your message to meet this criteria. (e.g., “You didn’t hit the mark this time, moving forward you will do...”)
- 3. Reject being a Pollyanna** – The best coaches do not avoid reality or live in the past. Rather, they hold firm to their vision and focus on what’s next. Effective self-talk aims to support where we’re going and how we’re going to get there.



# STRATEGY #3: BUILD ON WHAT'S RIGHT

Sources: CCL staff (2023); Richards (2022); Santos-Rosa et al. (2022)

It's natural for our thoughts to turn to the negative and what's going wrong for us. However, the most effective self-talk builds on our wins and what's going right in life. As a result, our self-image and confidence is enhanced, which can elevate our work output and increase our professional opportunities.

## To TRY –

### 1. RELISH COMPLIMENTS

When others provide us with praise and acknowledgment, trust them! We can get in the habit of brushing off others' feedback because we're convinced they were just being nice or it was done out of obligation. Instead of quickly dismissing compliments, savor these moments and visualize the messages being passed to you.

### 2. CLEAN THE LENS

Our negative self-talk can cloud the lens in which we see ourselves, others, and the world. With effort, we can revamp our self-talk and see life more clearly.

**Where to start:** Building more effective self-talk means enriching our thoughts through intentional, daily practices –

- **Three good things** – At the beginning or end of each day, take a few minutes to identify and re-experience three good things that happened at work within the last 24 hours. Then, summarize how these good things can be repeated, how they positively impact your work, and how they can be used in your self-talk moving forward.



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**DEEP WORK** episode//part 1  
**COMING in 2024!**

In a distractible world, how do we find the space and time to work at a **deeply-concentrated** and **focused place**? Find out in our first episode of the new year!