



Exercise: Taming Your Self-Talk

One of the most dramatic impacts on our ability to deal with negative emotions in the workplace often comes from negative “self-talk”. **Self-talk**, or what you tell yourself *about* yourself, can play a powerful role in shaping your daily experiences. If your self-talk is frequently negative or unfair, it can have serious consequences for your confidence and your effectiveness as a manager. Your thoughts about yourself influence your interactions with workers and other managers, and unrealistically negative thoughts are almost certain to interfere with your work.

Do you find yourself regularly thinking things like the following?

I’m not good enough to succeed.

I’m not talented enough to do this.

I’m an impostor. They must have made a mistake when they hired me.

It’s a joke having me lead this project.

I can’t run this meeting. I’m going to look like a fool.

If these or similar thoughts seem familiar to you, then you may have a problem with negative self-talk. One way to combat unfair self-talk is to challenge it with meaningful questions that expose its flaws and help you evaluate yourself more accurately.

Next time you find yourself immersed in negative self-talk, stop and ask yourself five simple questions:

When I have had this thought in the past, how often was I right?

When I have felt this way previously, did the things that I feared actually come true?

What would I say to a close friend having thoughts like this in a similar situation?

Does this thought serve any useful purpose?

Would other people agree that there is strong evidence to support this thought?

You may also find the exercise on Challenging Troublesome Thoughts particularly useful.