

Sweet Talk Yourself

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Recently a friend commented that she notices that women don't know how to sweet talk to themselves. I expect that is true for many men, as well. Consider that it has been estimated that up to 90% of some people's self talk is negative. In *The 100 Simple Secrets of Happy People*, David Niven reports on the work of J. Brebner (1995). It was concluded, "When an unhappy person must interpret the world, eight in ten times he or she will see the negative in an event. When a happy person must interpret the world, eight in ten times he or she will see the positive." So how did those brains become so differently programmed?

Most of our self talk is a looping and internal audio tape which was embedded unconsciously in during childhood. Caregivers pass on their automated messages to their charges. The negatives sound like, "Don't do that!" "Stop crying." or "I'll give you something to cry about." "You can't do that." "Don't be so stupid." "Behave yourself!" "Do as you are told." For many, the job of giving those demeaning, abusive squashing and debilitating messages is transferred from the caregivers to the internal self. We continue the dirty work.

However, the wonderful feature of being an adult is that now we are responsible for our own decisions including our internal chatter. If you decide to embark on re-programming your negative rants, take it easy. Notice how many years those put down lines have been caring their groove. Give yourself time and patience to do the repair work. Identify which messages would be helpful for you to write on cue cards, record to play back to yourself, write in your journal, chat in a mediation or ask a support person to repeatedly say to you. Please cooperate by breathing in the message.

Two books I think are excellent in aiding in the internal change is Jean I. Clarke's book, *Growing Up Again* and Richard Carson's *Taming Your Gremlin*. Here are some sample affirmations written in present tense to get you started. Note which ones are missing from your brain's tapes:

I deserve love.

I am a good and loving person.

I can do it.

I can trust myself.

I am in control of my life.

I now have choices.

I have intelligence.

I am okay just the way I am.

I can get what I want.

I can succeed.

I can make mistakes and learn.

I can choose who to trust.

I belong here.

I can feel all of my feelings.

I can think and feel at the same time.

I can know what I know.

I can initiate, grow and learn.

I can be active and quiet.

I can think and speak for myself.

My needs and wants are important.

I can be independent and interdependent.

I can be powerful and ask for help at the same time.

I can be creative, competent, productive, and joyful.

I can trust my inner wisdom.

I am lovable at every age.

Give yourself these affirming messages ten times more than you imagine you need to hear them. Practise, practise and practise and you will get to the hall of self. Renovate your interior and enjoy the sweet self talk.

Patricia Morgan is a certified counsellor, speaker and author of *Love Her As She Is, She Said: A Tapestry of Women's Quotes and four booklets*. She can be reached at 403-242-7796 or www.lightheartedconcepts.com