

# FEELING GOOD ABOUT YOU

THE JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY  
THAT LEADS TO SELF-ESTEEM



## Module 3 – Worksheet 1

### Self-Talk

***“Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I choose to react to it.”***

**Charles Swindall**

You might have noticed there is a "little voice" in your head that provides running commentary on all that's happening. This little voice is the narrator of your life, and is constantly interpreting events for you (even at this very moment, as you read this, it may be saying, "What in the world are they talking about? I have no such thing!"). This voice provides what we call *self-talk* and is an extremely powerful force because it narrates your life and creates your feelings!

"What?" you say! Am I not at the mercy of my feelings, which just happen by themselves? The answer is a resounding "NO!" **Feelings do not just happen** because situations do not come complete with emotions attached. Feelings come after your little voice has interpreted and defined the situation for you. This interpretation then lets you know how to feel!

For example, a mother may try to make creative, yummy lunches for her two school-age children. She probably does this because one of her "shoulds" about being a "good parent" is to provide tasty lunches for her children. The hope is that they will know this, and love and appreciate the parent for these efforts. The son, who believes the same "should," interprets his parent's actions to mean, "she loves and provides for me." However, the daughter sees the wonderful lunches as an affront to her independence. Her self-talk says "my parents must think I don't know how to take care of myself or even choose what I want to eat, so they do it for me." Consequently, because of what her little voice has told her about the situation, the daughter is angry and resentful of her parents for not allowing her to be independent.

Notice that these are ***two different reactions to the same action***. The only difference is that each person interpreted the situation in his or her own way, and the little voice then let each know how to feel! (This is also why it's impossible to please everyone, all the time. Regardless of your intent, the individual interpretations of your actions are beyond your control).

It's quite liberating to know that your feelings are the result of your self-talk, because then you can be in charge of whether you are happy, sad, optimistic, self-confident, angry, content, or whatever. You are in charge of your feelings rather than at their mercy! Your self-talk reflects your thoughts and feelings, which help you create your self-image.

The first step to this awareness is to start listening to the little voice, and pay attention to what it is saying. If you don't like its message, you can interrupt it and CHANGE IT, thereby changing your feelings. This process of becoming aware of your self-talk may be slow. Be patient with yourself (remember compassion), and continue to recognize trigger thoughts.

### **Exercise: Self-Talk**

This page is for you to begin noting the most common messages your little voice is sending. These messages usually have something to do with your "shoulds," which come from your values, and are quite often self-critical. For example: "You should always put others before yourself – if you don't you are selfish"; "You should never show your feelings – if you do others will think you are weak or out of control."

Take some time to listen to your little voice and identify the messages it is sending you. Once you have become aware of several messages write them in the space below. If they are positive, congratulate yourself for being self-nurturing. If they are negative, write how you would like to change them into positives. Positive self-talk creates good thoughts about yourself, and is called *affirmations*. Since you will believe whatever you tell yourself, affirmations are the cornerstone of self-acceptance and self-love, and are an important part of building and maintaining positive self-esteem.

Major messages from my little voice are:

## Positive Affirmations to Interrupt and Change Negative Messages

Note: When writing affirmations, be sure to word them positively. For example, if your negative self-talk tells you "I am dumb and stupid and can't do anything right," you may be inclined to change this message to "I am NOT dumb and stupid," but this is still a negative message. Instead of saying what you are NOT, say what you ARE and what you want to be. The negative message can be changed to "I AM an intelligent, capable, competent person and can accomplish anything I wish."

My Positive Affirmations:

## Reflections on Self-Talk

- The "Little Voice" in your head is the narrator of your life.
- The "Little Voice" is your self-talk.
- Self-talk comes from perceptions and "Shoulds."
- Your self-talk creates your feelings.
- Because you're in charge of your self-talk, you are in charge of your feelings.
- You have the power to change your self-talk which will change your feelings
- Positive affirmations reinforce personal power and self-esteem.