

Manage your 'self talk'

Most of us think primarily with a combination of mental images and inner chatter - and get our feelings or emotions from this mental activity. (This is not the only source of our feelings but it's enough to start with.)

Become aware of your thoughts and begin managing them and you will be directly influencing your emotions.

Pay attention to your negative self hypnosis

Begin to pay attention to your self-talk. That's the constant stream of chatter that goes on in your head (and mine, and everyone else's, by the way).

Notice what you say to yourself and how you say it. Do you constantly criticise yourself inside your head? Or do you constantly criticise others? Or complain about your life, your faults, or how life 'treats' you? Or internally rant about the injustices of life?

Do you constantly tell yourself you're at your wits end? Or that you can't cope with this much longer? Or that you'll fail at something? Or that you're going to have a panic attack?

Imagine that you had an 'invisible friend' that went around with you all day, every day, and was constantly whispering comments like these in your ear! How would you feel at the end of a day. At the end of a week? After a month of such indoctrination?

Well, guess what! You're already doing this to yourself - and in a far more effective manner than this invisible friend would do it. After all, if a friend treated you like that you likely would tell them to stop or you'd seek more amenable friends.

But because you are doing this to yourself and have probably been running such mental 'programs' since childhood you no longer even notice them and, as a result, they have powerful impact on your mood and on your attitude towards yourself and towards life.

Our negative self-talk is pernicious and demoralising and debilitating. And because we are so used to it we don't consciously pay attention to it and therefore do not challenge it. It goes on and on in the background and the effect is that we are giving ourselves powerful hypnotic suggestions to feel bad!

Gently replace the negative self-talk

I suggest 'gently' because there's no point in adding to the inner stress and discomfort further criticising yourself "I must not say this etc" - that would be adding fuel to the fire.

Each time you recognise that you are doing your self-criticising or self-undermining pause, remind yourself that it's just that old habit you've got into, and that from now on you're changing this habit.

Use a very soft and patient inner tone of voice for this.

Your inner voice should sound as if you are calming an upset 2-year old! Reassure yourself. Calm yourself. Remind yourself of the rationales and facts of the situation. Remind yourself of the value of handling things in a cool, calm, and confident manner.

Doing this once or twice won't make a lot of difference. It takes quite a while to replace the habits of a lifetime - but it's definitely worth doing so.