



The Dangling Conversation

The most important conversation you will ever have in your life...is with you!

“Yes, we speak of things that matter,
With words that must be said,
Can analysis be worthwhile?
Is the theater really dead?
And how the room is softly faded
And I only kiss your shadow,
I cannot feel your hand,
You’re a stranger now unto me
Lost in the dangling conversation.
And the superficial sighs,
In the borders of our lives.”

**The Dangling Conversation
Simon & Garfunkle**

If you happened be out boating on a lake and saw someone tumble from their boat into the water, would you attempt to help them? If you had a life preserver, would you hesitate for even a moment before you threw it to them? A more common situation might be a freeway accident where people will risk their own lives to help someone who is trapped in a vehicle. Stories are plentiful about everyday heroes and heroines who don’t let anything or anyone stand in their way when someone is in trouble, even total strangers.

It’s heartening to know that this kind of selflessness exists, isn’t it? And, if a friend, or perhaps even a stranger came to you and asked you to just take a few minutes out of your day to talk to them about a problem they were encountering, would many of us refuse to help someone who was severely troubled by a situation? My guess is that the answer would be “no”.

This is not a simple cultural issue, either. It’s the human condition to try and help where possible, and you’ve no doubt seen foreign video footage on the news of people using their bare hands to claw away debris after an earthquake, trying desperately to save who? Often just strangers, that’s who!

There is probably not one among you, the readers of this article, who would refuse to help someone in true need. Yet, when you are in trouble emotionally, angry, guilty, saddened, do you find yourself being particularly hard on yourself. Are you perhaps guilty of not being a best friend, a helper, a potential life saver to the one who matters most importantly in your life...yourself?

Self-talk is something that goes on all the time inside of us. It’s that inner voice that chatters incessantly, but which we often don’t even know is having a discussion with us, and it arises quite naturally from our parents, care-givers, and society in general until we are ready to take on the task ourselves. That may be why we don’t know that self-talk is going on...simply because it’s been going on for most of our lives. The self-talk we unleash upon ourselves is often of the most brutal kind, containing opinions about ourselves that we would never think of mentioning to a friend or stranger.

Guilt, embarrassment, anger, sadness...these are the progenitors of self talk. We harp upon ourselves for imagined failings or weaknesses. We admonish ourselves for perceived embarrassing slights. If someone makes a hurtful remark about us, our self-talk is often there to support the one who made the unkind remark, not us. If we do actually make a serious mistake, then our self-talk of disdain may not die down for weeks.

Dr. Albert Ellis, the famed Psychologist and author has not only labeled self-talk for what it is, damaging to ourselves, but he’s called it far more than that. He’s described it as unethical. In my lifetime, I’ve never met anyone who talked down to acquaintances on a constant basis. Only the obtuse would laugh at another’s mistakes continually. A bully, a thug, or a sadist would be the type

of individual who would take delight in seeing another person hurting. Yet, when we allow our self-talk to take on these qualities, we are truly being unethical to ourselves. We are hurting ourselves, and fully allowing that hurt to happen, by letting our own internal “bully” reign over us.

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The Ugly Side of Self Talk

www.MentalHealthHumor.Today.com

What should Self-Talk Be?

If this article has come to you as some sort of enlightenment, then welcome to the club. Self-talk comes to us in much the same way that death comes to the Lobster that is first put in a pan of cool water, which is then placed atop a stove burner. The water warms slowly until the Lobster is finally cooked. Our own self-talk starts at a young age. When we are older, it's just part of us. We were the ones who turned the burner on under our own pot. But, we can put a stop to it.

Perhaps we can best begin to describe what good self-talk can and should be by describing what self-talk shouldn't be. The opposite of bad self-talk is not false bravado or telling ourselves that we are something that we most certainly are not. By trying to make up for years of telling ourselves that we are bad, or undeserving, or clumsy, or fat, or stupid, or whatever your negative self-talk has been, there is the great chance that we will vastly overcompensate and just become another bully...either to ourselves or to those around us.

Good self-talk starts back at our first article and with some of the tools we've picked up along the way. (Are you beginning to pick up on a pattern by now?) We must first decide that we are going to be in charge; not that jabber-headed Magpie that lives somewhere near the top of our heads. Secondly, we're going to critically analyze these things that have been said about us by our inner self. We will decide which ones have some possible truth in them, and we'll begin to change and improve those. The others are going into the trash pile. We're going to do this in a cool, unemotional manner...figuring out a plan of action that will transform us into the person we would like to become. Finally, we're going to come up with some new self-talk that is based upon the truth about us, not a bunch of lies.

If you are honest with yourself, there are no doubt some things, perhaps many things, that you would like to improve about yourself. But, if you are just as honest, there are many things about you that are good, wholesome, honest, helpful, caring, patient, loving, and wonderful. Don't blush. We are being

honest with ourselves. Make a list of those good qualities.

Now, let's begin today to replace the false self-talk of yesterday with new, more honest, helpful, supportive self-talk of today. You will find that most good self talk will begin with the words, "I can", or "I am", or "I will". I recommend making complete sentences of your new self-talk phrases and place them where you can see them often during the day. When one of your old, negative self-talk phrases pops into your thoughts, make a determined effort to replace it with one of your new phrases. Instead of letting "I

never feel comfortable in an unfamiliar social situation" ruin your next business meeting, try exchanging that negative thought with, "I am open to new experiences and enjoy the friends in my life, even the ones I will meet today!"

If you can't come up with your own positive phrases, then perhaps you should look at some of the positive affirmations that have been developed by Louise Hay and the other authors at HayHouse.com. These are phrases that have universal appeal and cover countless situations. There are also books available with a different affirmation for every day of the year. Start making a concerted effort to look for the good things in life, whether it's the color of the sky, new flowers, the birth of a baby, a birthday celebration, or just the fact that you are alive in this world. Consider subscribing to a free motivational thought for the day, like the ones that are available from Nightingale.com.

No matter how you do it, make a concerted effort to stop being your internal bully and start being your internal friend. If you do this when the inner turmoil starts, then you'll be like our good Samaritan in the first part of this article who throws a life line when someone is in trouble. Just remember that if you aren't your best friend, that if you let negative self talk continue, that if you continue to be unethical to yourself, you will not be throwing a lifeline to the person who fell overboard – you. Instead you will continue to throw yourself the boat anchor instead.

