



### SUMMARY UNIT 3 : Chapter 3 : Self-Talk, Part 1

We think in three dimensions: words, pictures, and emotions. This three-dimensional form of thought is referred to in the world of psycholinguistics as “self-talk.”

Your self-talk is the conversation that you carry on with yourself all of the time. This self-talk that’s going on in your mind doesn’t just evaporate into thin air. Each statement of fact is recorded in the neurons of your brain. If your self-talk is very negative, destructive, or even invalid, it doesn’t change the process. Your subconscious is a literal mechanism; it accepts what you tell it. It doesn’t say, “Oh, that was stupid, you don’t want that.” It doesn’t argue with you. It records, literally, what it is that you tell it. If you say “This is terribly hard for me,” your subconscious says, “Okay, this is really difficult.” “I’m clumsy.” “I’m stupid.” “I’m shy.” The more you tell yourself what is wrong with you, you keep building, internally, an image or an expectation that is far beneath the potential you have.

**I x V = R**

**Imagination  
Vividness  
Reality**

Let’s take a look at self-talk. The language we use could be Portuguese, it could be Spanish, or French, English, or Mandarin. The words we use as a human being give us images. We record pictures. Whether you are in Japan, or London, or South America, you don’t record the actual words. The words give us images, and it is the image that we record. Along with every word or every image, the biggest and most powerful influence is the emotion that goes along with it. While I am speaking to you, you speak to yourself at least three times as fast. When I stop, you speed up to six times faster.

It is this inner dialogue that goes on when you can’t sleep, or while you are driving in your car, or at work. Every thought accumulates to build a belief. Not one thought, as one thought usually has very little significance. It is the repetition of that thought which builds a belief. Remember the formula  $I \times V = R$ .



## Self-Talk, Part 1 Continued

You won't need to tell yourself the truth. You can just tell yourself what you think is the truth about what is happening at work, at home, what is happening in this situation. It is how you describe to yourself what you see around you that is being recorded. It is not accurate, necessarily, about what is actually happening.

You don't need repetition of the actual events. Something that occurred that was pretty awful may have happened one time. You don't need to have it keep happening. All you need to do is think about it a hundred times. Use the formula  $I \times V = R$ : Imagination times Vividness equals Reality.

Suppose you have a child who is embarrassed in the second grade. Something happens and the awful event is recorded. How many times? On the way home, if the child's self-talk goes back and recalls it, it is as good as if it is happening again. Then the child gets home and you say, "How did school go?" "Oh, I hoped you wouldn't ask," and she reiterates the awful event again—three, five, seven times. She's not able to sleep, thinking about the awful thing. Waking up, she faces the situation again, her self-talk keeps repeating it in her mind. This is what accumulates. These thoughts accumulate to become beliefs.

Giving sanction to this repeated self-talk—accepting what is said—allows this oftentimes distorted view of what happened to become a part of your image of reality. It is the image of what you consider to be "you." And from that point forward, you will behave like the person you have convinced yourself that you are.

So now, when you are immersed in a negative climate or a negative environment, you must become a disputer. Martin Seligman, the author of "The Optimistic Child" and a very good friend of ours, teaches people to become disputers of information that is coming their way. Not negative disputers, but those who, inside, ask, "Who are you to tell me that? What makes you so right?" See, little kids are frightened to death and can't do that. But big kids need to be able to do that. As we get employers, friends, or other people around us who are significant, who tell us bad things about ourselves, if we accept those things uncritically, if we give sanction to them, they become part of our reality and we behave like we have convinced ourselves that we should—even if that's not how we would prefer to behave.