

# SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

TOPIC THIS ISSUE: SELF-TALK

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## WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN YOU TALK TO YOURSELF?

By: Clifford N. Lazarus, Ph.D.



Charlene was very hard on herself and often put herself down. While she'd never dream of verbally abusing or even harshly criticizing others, she nevertheless thought it was perfectly acceptable to treat herself in this manner. So, while other people thought well of her and seemed to like her very much, Charlene couldn't understand why she felt unhappy most of the time and suffered from low self-esteem.

**We talk to ourselves more or less continuously.** Our brains are always active and a lot of what they do is telling us about ourselves. This "self talk" takes place silently, of course, in the privacy of our minds.

Just like statements that come from other people, **our inner statements can affect us dramatically.** Unfortunately, many people give themselves a hard time by talking to themselves in harsh and unkind ways, perhaps because critical parents, teachers and others have led them to believe many negative things about themselves. Are you among these self-critical individuals?

**Self-talk, for an unfortunately large number of people, consists of telling themselves what's wrong with them.** They often repeat such statements as, "I'm stupid," "I'm selfish," "I sound like a fool," "I always manage to say the wrong thing," "I'm a complete failure," and other self-defeating phrases. And it gets worse. We've had clients whose main message to themselves was, "You're such an idiot, such a total incompetent that you don't deserve to be the least bit happy."



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Negative self-talk will usually lead to **anxiety and depression** and can have other unfortunate results. Self-fulfilling prophecies are quite common: **You start believing your own propaganda and bring about what you fear.**

Happily, the converse is also true. **Positive self-talk will tend to achieve desirable outcomes and generate good feelings.** When faced with a difficult situation, Harriet says, "It's hopeless and I can't stand it!" Glenda says, "There is no reason to get upset. I'll take it easy, step by step and I'll probably do just fine." The difference in attitude is obvious. Glenda has a much greater chance of success because of her positive outlook.

**Does it help to change what you say to yourself?** It sure does. Tell yourself often enough that you'll fail and you almost certainly will. Tell yourself often enough that you'll succeed and you greatly improve your chances of fulfillment and satisfaction.

**Talk to yourself of past successes, of times you've done really well, of times you've overcome obstacles, of times you've felt good.** Just as you felt good then, you can feel good now. Just as you overcame adversity then, you can overcome adversity now.

It's probably true that most successful people have failed more times than others simply because they've tried more things. Abraham Lincoln twice failed in business and lost seven elections for various offices. But he kept believing in himself and in what he wanted to do.

#### Successful people. . .

- *don't focus on failures (there is no point in doing so)*
- *see mistakes as learning experiences for growth and understanding*
- *don't indulge in self-recrimination*

Remember, the difference between the foolish and the wise, is not that the wise do not make mistakes. **Rather it is that the wise learn from their mistakes instead of telling themselves they're stupid for making them.**

#### The bottom line:

"Say unto yourself what you would have others say unto you."

Remember: **Think well, act well, feel well, and be well.**

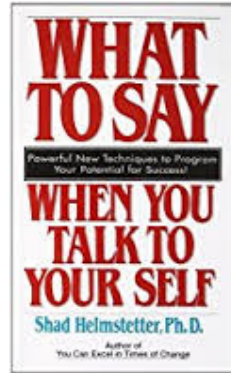
## The Five Levels of Self-Talk

By: Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D.

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**Live by active intent-not passive acceptance!**

*Self-talk paints new internal pictures of ourselves as we would like to be. Self-talk is a way to override past negative programming by erasing or replacing the negative things we tell ourselves with positive and conscious new thinking. The subconscious is waiting for directions and will obey the directions you give it.*



**The Five Levels of Self-Talk**

**Level I—Harmful Self-talk**

These are thoughts about ourselves that are negative. We see something we don't like and we think negatively about it and accept it. "I can't....*if only*

*I could....I wish I could but I can't*" etc. Level I is the most used form of self-talk and it works against us. **Remember, the unconscious mind is listening for instructions.**

**Level II—Recognizing the Need to Change**

"I need to.... I ought to.... I should...." This form of self-talk recognizes a problem but it **does not create a solution**. This thinking puts us back on Level I if we don't make a change. If we completed the sentences that we are thinking, such as, "I need to get more organized....*But I'm not*" we have another negative thought.

**Level III—Decision To Change**

This level of thinking works *for* you. **You recognize a need to change but you also make a decision to do something about it.** You state this decision in the present tense— as though the change had already happened. Example: You want to quit smoking, so you think and say, "I *don't* smoke, I have no desire to smoke" or you want to be a more organized person, so you say and think, "I *am* an organized person".

**What you are doing is reprogramming your subconscious.** Your subconscious will automatically react by seeing to it that you do not smoke or that you organize yourself. The subconscious now has new directions. The subconscious will believe anything you tell it if you tell it long enough and often enough and strongly enough. For Negative or Positive.

**Your subconscious mind will create a new picture of you in the control center of your brain.**

**Level IV—The Better You**

This level of thinking is the most effective, needed the most and the least used. **"I am organized...I have a good memory"**. On this level we deal with problems in a whole new way that is productive and self-activating.



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Level I and II say, “I can never remember names”

Level IV says, “I have a great memory, I can remember any name.”

Level IV replaces Levels I and II with positive self-talk. We need to use this level of thinking the most and Level I the least. **Level IV thinking challenges us to do battle with our fears and doubts.** It also fills our mind with self-belief, self-respect and creates *positive programming*.

### Level V—Universal Affirmation

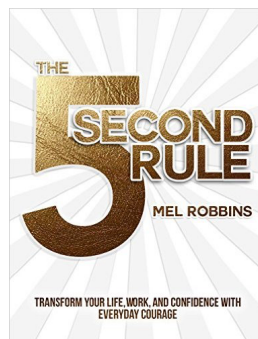
Level V helps us to **have a more universal acceptance of ourselves and others.** We can feel one with the universe, believing that we matter and that we have meaning in our lives. We rise above the worldly, mundane things of life and understand the power we have to change ourselves.

An affirmation of oneself is always in our mind and heart. What we believe about ourselves, we become—so, “I choose to believe the best about myself. I choose my thoughts. **No thought at anytime can dwell in my mind without my permission.**”

***I focus on those things I can control. If I can’t affect it or direct it, I accept it.***

## THE 5 SECOND RULE

By: Mel Robbins



**Because of the way your brain is wired, when your thoughts and feelings are at war, when there is a discourse between what you know you should be doing and what you feel like doing, your feelings are always going to win.**

If you don’t feel like doing it, you won’t do it— **that’s why you need the 5 Second Rule.** And no, I’m not talking about the 5 Second Rule that relates to dropping

food on the floor; and as long as you pick it up within 5 seconds it’s okay to eat...I’m talking about something that will literally change your life – if you let it. This is **a tool for hyper-intentionality, action, and identifying moments in your life where there is tremendous opportunity and joy.**

I first shared the idea about 5 years ago on a TEDx stage, and it’s now one of the top 20 Tedx talks in the world. It’s been viewed over 6 million times in over 37 countries – and the feedback we’ve gotten from people who have applied what

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they learned from that talk is incredible.

I discovered the 5 second rule about 7 years ago. Before I worked for CNN, before I gave the TEDx talk, before I was a contributing editor for SUCCESS magazine, before I had written a book, launched and sold two businesses – in fact, I discovered this tool in what was probably the worst moment of my life to this day.

My husband had a restaurant business that went from uber successful to total failure in a matter of a few risky decisions, and we found ourselves in a financial free fall. We were at risk of losing everything we had spent our lives building – and I was having a hard time dealing with it. All of a sudden getting out bed was the hardest thing in the world to me. My alarm clock would go off in the morning, and I knew what I was supposed to do, I was supposed to get up and get my kids off to school. But instead I kept hitting snooze. Over and over again. Every night I would lie in bed and think about what I needed to do. I needed to get a job, so we could pay the bills. I needed to start being nicer to my husband, and not let this financial crisis weaken our relationship. I needed to be a mother that could deal with this kind of crippling fear, so that my kids didn't start to feel it too. I knew what I needed to do, but I simply couldn't do it. You know things are really bad when your kids start missing the bus because you're oversleeping every day. And that was kind of a wake up call for me.

The 5 second rule was something that I developed to get myself to take action when I didn't want to. I was so busy feeling sorry for myself that something that is so simple became so difficult.

And if you don't struggle with getting out of bed in the morning then your issue is somewhere else, trust me. **We all struggle with SOMETHING.**

Do you ever find yourself making to-do lists and then not following through on them? Like every single day? Or thinking to yourself, "What the heck is wrong with me? I know what I'm supposed to be doing, why can't I just do it?" Trust me. I AM YOU.

***But this is what I've found:***

- 1. Knowing what to do will never be enough.***
- 2. Knowing why you need to do it will never be enough.***

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So what we need is something that's going to launch us into a state of action. Because if you're sitting around waiting for motivation, I'm here to tell you it's not coming. If you don't start doing the things you don't feel like doing, you will wake up one year from today and be in exactly the same place.

**So here's the one-liner definition of the 5 second rule:**

***If you have an impulse to act on a goal, you must physically move within 5 seconds or your brain will kill the idea.***

So if you have a goal of gaining more respect in the workplace, you have to raise your hand the next time you're in a meeting and you have a great idea. If you have a goal of losing weight, you can take action right now by researching healthy meal options and setting daily reminders on your phone that will prompt you to go to the gym.

If you have a goal of launching your own business, and you have no idea where to start, get on Google right now and research other companies in your field of interest, see what they're doing and decide what you'll do the same and where you'll differentiate yourself. Then google a free business plan template, and then fill it out. Get serious about it and put your intentions in writing.

Whatever your goals are, show the world, and yourself, that you're serious by taking action, however insignificant that action may seem, **RIGHT NOW.** Because when you physically move, your brain starts to build new habits. When you do something you're not used to doing, you are in the act of building new habits and erasing existing ones.

**The fact that you took the time to read this article tells me that you are already taking the time to invest in yourself, which makes me even more excited to see how this simple change in habit changes your life.**

