
WHAT TO SAY

The International SELF-TALK Best-Seller
NEW Updated Digital Edition

WHEN YOU TALK TO YOUR SELF

Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D.

Best-Selling Author of “*The Gift*”

WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU TALK TO YOUR SELF

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What To Say When You Talk To Your Self

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Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D.

Best-Selling Author of *"The Gift"*

This book is dedicated, in loving memory, to my parents, Fred and Nora Helmstetter—to my mother, who taught me persistence and perseverance, and to my father, who taught me that there is always a better way.

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INTRODUCTION

To The Digital Edition

Although this edition of *What to Say When You Talk to Your Self* has been updated to make it completely fresh and cogent for today's digital reader, from the first edition to now, it is remarkable how solidly the concept of Self-Talk has not only withstood the test of time, but has also proved how incredibly, vitally important Self-Talk is in each of our lives.

In fact, the discoveries in the field of mind/brain science that made the first edition of this book possible have expanded—or rather exploded—into every area of our culture. In just twenty-five years, the concept of “Self-Talk” itself has grown from a relative breakthrough in the field of personal growth, to a broad and enlightening understanding of human behavior, and how it works in the lives of every one of us.

Today, most people in our computer world now understand that we get “programmed” from birth on, throughout life, and that we end up living out those programs—for better or for worse. But what hasn't changed is that many people—who want to do better in life—still struggle to get rid of the old programs that are negative, or harmful, or are holding them back.

And in that quest, I can assure you that this updated edition will guide you well. The complete story of Self-Talk, how we get programmed and what to do about it, is all here, fully intact and ready to help.

Presenting this new edition also gives me the opportunity to recognize the many tens of thousands of readers, in many languages around the world, who have read this book in its printed format, and who have attested to the efficacy and the practical simplicity of making the new Self-Talk a part of their everyday lives.

If what is magic today becomes the science of tomorrow, then what was the “magic of Self-Talk,” just a few years ago, has now become the science of a whole new way of life.

Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D.

May, 2011

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CHAPTER ONE

Looking for a Better Way

*You are everything that is, your thoughts, your life, your dreams come true.
You are everything you choose to be.
You are as unlimited as the endless universe.*

Life, for most of us, should be pretty good.

We have all heard what life is *supposed* to offer: endless opportunities, the fulfillment of our dreams, and a chance to live each day in a way that brings happiness and success. Most of us want and need at least a successful job or career, a good family life, and reasonable financial security. We expect that from life. We know deep inside that we deserve our fair share and we have every right to attain it.

Why are some people, day to day, happier, more productive, and more fulfilled than others? What makes the difference? Is it Kismet, a kind of fate, which in some mysterious way charts our destiny and leaves little of the steering of our course through life up to us?

Is the control of our lives in our hands or isn't it? And if we can, or *should*, control our lives, what goes wrong? What holds us back? If we truly would like to do better, be the way we really would like to be, and be happier and more successful every day in every area of living, *what is the wall that stands in our way?*

AN UNLIMITED LIFE OF PRACTICAL POTENTIAL

Imagine living a life which did not give in to the barriers and the battlements, the hassles and the hurdles of everyday living. Imagine a life filled with the vitality of achievement and the enrichment of daily self-fulfillment. To me, for a long time that kind of life sounded like an impractical dream, a cardboard box filled up with daydreams and wishes. To live a life of hope, promise, expectation, and achievement was to live the life of someone who lived only in the pages of a book.

When I was quite young, I had a soaring imagination. Long before I learned what we could *not* do, I dreamed of doing what I knew we *could*. I remember, as a young boy, lying on my back in the cool, wet grass late at night, my mind sinking into the depths of the crystal-clear stars that blanketed the summer sky above me. I could reach out and touch those stars. I could imagine any dream and see it come true.

It was only later that my dreams gave way to more practical considerations. Star-filled heavens, dew-soaked grass, and princely dreams of imaginary kingdoms bowed to more rational requirements. As I began to pursue my education in earnest, I began to learn what we could *not* do. In time I became more intent on studying the laws and the limits of man, than on learning the far-reaching extremities of mankind's potential.

I learned all of the "shoulds", "musts", and "cannots." I was told that it was bad to have your head in the clouds and it was good to have your feet on the ground. So I extracted my head from the magical excitement of the universe and got down to business learning about the more practical matters of survival and acceptance. From time to time I had the nagging suspicion that there was more to all of this than was meeting the eye—I just couldn't see it yet.

It was years before I decided it was time to stop and look at the stars again. But I did. The result of that one small decision changed my direction and my life.

By the time I stopped and sank once again, upwards, into the stars, I had completed a twenty-year odyssey which took me from the backroads of a farmland village to the towering offices of New York's Madison Avenue; from a quiet countryside of wheat fields to the negotiating tables of three-piece-suited attorneys and well-groomed marketers. My odyssey took me to snow-covered Midwestern college campuses, and to palm-lined streets of Western universities.

Somewhere, during that time, I began to wonder and dream again, as I had as a young boy years before. What if we *could*? I wondered. What if we could find what's stopping us and turn it around? What if there *is* an answer and no one else has looked in the right place? What if any of us, at any time, could reach up *and touch the stars*?

I began the first part of my search by studying "human behavior." That's something you can get a degree in without ever really figuring it out. It is also something that older people seem to know more about than younger

people. No matter how many educational degrees my professors could profess, I suspected that some of the older, wiser people I knew had figured out what human behavior was all about long before we were taught courses in the subject.

I next studied motivational marketing. That teaches us what makes people do what they do even when they don't want to do it. When I completed my course work, it was my final opinion that you can never really get anyone to do anything they don't want to do unless you use force. I decided that in most of the free world, "force" is called advertising.

In time I found myself walking the hallways of academic psychology. It is a good field and it deserves our respect. A lot of people have lived richer lives because someone who cared took the time to listen.

Eventually I embarked upon a journey of my own. Nowhere in my studies of mathematics, business, religion, or psychology, had I found a concrete solution to the question of how the average individual could touch all the stars in his or her heaven and still keep both feet on solid ground. I knew there had to be a better way, something that was obvious, perhaps, something that might have been overlooked. I believed that mastering one's future must surely start with managing one's "self." And if we could accomplish that, we could manage and master at least a part of what we call "life."

As I continued to study the inner workings of the human mind, I began to look for the answers—the "solutions" which others most certainly must already have found. I found dozens of answers. But I discovered only one solution.

CHAPTER TWO

The “Answers”

There is always an answer, of course. There are countless self-help “answers,” which any of us can find in any bookstore. If we are to believe what we read on the dust jackets of self-help best-sellers, all any of us has to do is read the right book and, beginning tomorrow, we will be able to change what we would like to change, live better, and find the achievement each of us is seeking.

Having spent more than twenty years studying most of the literature of “success,” I have found a consistent, unfulfilled promise—the promise of our success, waiting just around the corner.

I have learned that I can be hypnotized, processed, or reborn (and not just in the religious sense). I know that I can attend seminars which will give me “the answer.” I can become a goal-setter and a “true achiever.” I can learn to organize my day, set my priorities, and accomplish more than I ever dreamed possible. I can learn to “think positively,” be more creative, relate to others and become “centered.” I have learned that success is mine for the taking; all I have to do is accept my destiny of achievement and greatness. I have read great words of wisdom and been told that I can change anything in my life I choose to change.

As much as I have been a student of success, I have also been a skeptic. For many years I read and studied and listened. And I wondered: If there are so many “keys” to success, why aren’t they working? Why are there shelves full of self-help best-sellers? It seemed to me that if the books were working as they ought to work, we wouldn’t keep needing new ones. If there are so many answers to our questions about what to do to make life better, why have so many people failed at making these great ideas work? Or if they work for a time, what makes them stop working?

Have you ever attended a “pep rally” or a meeting in which someone gave a rousing motivational speech? Why didn’t it last? Have you ever been inspired to change, to achieve, and then stopped? Where did the inspiration go?

The problem is not with the books. The problem is not with the seminars or with the motivational talks. There are a lot of self-help ideas and techniques that are good. They *should* work—and they *could*. But they don't work, or they don't keep working, because of something that all of us overlooked: *That's not how the brain works.*

The human brain, that incredibly powerful personal computer control center that each of us has, is capable of doing for you anything reasonable that you'd like it to do. But you have to know how to treat it. If you treat it just right and carefully give it the right directions, it will do the right thing — it will work for you in the right way. But if you give your mental computer the wrong directions it will act on those wrong directions; it will continue to respond to the negative programming that you and the rest of the world have been giving it without even being aware of it.

THE 148,000 “NO’S!”

I'll give you an example of some of the negative programming most of us have received. During the first eighteen years of our lives, if we grew up in fairly average, reasonably positive homes, we were told “No!” or what we could *not* do, more than *148,000 times!* If you were a little more fortunate, you may have been told “No!” only 100,000 times, or 50,000 times—however many, it was considerably more negative programming than any of us needs.

Meanwhile, during the same period, the first eighteen years of your life, how often do you suppose you were told what you *can do* or what you *can* accomplish in life? A few thousand times? A few hundred? During my speaking engagements to groups across the country, I have had people tell me they could not remember being told what they *could* accomplish in life more than three or four times! Whatever the number, for most of us the “yes's” we received simply didn't balance out the “no's.” The occasional words of “belief” were just that—occasional—and they were far outweighed by our daily doses of “cannots.”

This negative programming that we all received (and still receive) has come to us quite unintentionally. It has come to us from our parents (who wanted to protect us); it has come to us from our brothers and sisters, from our teachers, our schoolmates, our associates at work, our life mates, advertising of all kinds, the morning paper and the six o'clock news.

Leading behavioral researchers have told us that as much as *seventy-seven percent* of everything we think is negative, counterproductive, and works against us. At the same time, medical researchers have said that as much as seventy-five percent of all illnesses are self-induced. It's no wonder. What if the researchers are correct? That means that as much as seventy-five percent or more of our programming is the wrong kind. Until very recently no one understood well enough the human mind—how it really works. The result was that without knowing what they were doing, and with us not recognizing the immense effect this “casual” programming was having on us, “they” have been programming us in the wrong way. Everything and everyone around us, without being aware of it, has been programming us.

Unfortunately, most of it was the wrong kind of programming—and we took it to heart. Year after year, word by word, our life scripts were etched. Layer by layer, nearly indelibly, our self-images were created. In time, we ourselves joined in. We began to believe that what we were being told by others—and what we were telling ourselves—was true. No matter how innocently given or subtly implied, we began hearing the same words and thoughts repeatedly; hundreds, even thousands of times we were told, or we told ourselves, what we could not do, could not accomplish. *Repetition is a convincing argument*. Eventually we believed what others told us and what we told ourselves most; we began to live out the picture of ourselves we had created in our minds.

In time we became what we most believed about ourselves. And in so doing, we created a wall, which for most of us will stand invisibly but powerfully between us and our unlimited futures for as long as our old programming remains in force. Unless the programming we received is erased or replaced with different programming, it will stay with us permanently and affect and direct everything we do for the rest of our lives.

Fortunately, that doesn't have to be the case.

THE END RESULT OF YOUR OWN THOUGHTS

I was quite young when I first heard the Biblical passage which reads, “As a man thinketh, so is he.” I recall shaking my head, thinking that could not be. How could we possibly *be* what we think? After all, isn't our physical self one thing and our private thought another? Little did I (or most of us

then) understand that the Biblical passage had hit the nail of truth squarely on the head. It would be years later, however, after much research, and following the discoveries through which modern-day neuroscientists had begun to unlock the secrets of the human mind, that I would come to know just how correct—how *scientifically* correct—that Biblical passage had been.

In the last two decades we have learned more about the workings of the human brain than was known throughout all history prior to that time. We now know that by an incredibly complex physiological mechanism, a joint effort of body, brain and “mind,” we become the living result of our own thoughts. Through scientific discovery we have proved the relationship between our own “mental programming” and whether we will succeed or fail in any endeavor we undertake in life, from something as important as a lifetime goal to something as small as what we do in a single day.

Have you ever considered just how much of what you do—how you act, how successful you are—is dependent on the conditioning, the programming you received from others and on the conditioning you subsequently bought and kept giving yourself? It is virtually impossible for any of us to do anything, no matter how insignificant, without being affected by our conditioning. Every step you take, move you make, or word you say is affected.

It follows that if every action you take, of any kind, is affected by prior programming, then the end results of your actions are equally affected—in short, how successful you will be at *anything* is inexorably tied to the words and beliefs about yourself that you have stored in your subconscious mind. And what is stored there, for most of us, was decided for us by someone else.

Think for a moment what you might do differently tomorrow if you were someone else— someone whose programming was different from yours. Or what might you do differently if you had been brought up with a completely different, more positive set of attitudes and beliefs and feelings from those which you may have now—attitudes and beliefs and feelings which in every case would assure you of having an abundance of self-belief, enthusiasm, and achievement?

WHAT COULD YOUR FUTURE HOLD?

If you had just the right kind of successful new mental program, would you be doing the same thing for a living that you are doing now? Would you be doing your job in exactly the same way? What about your personal life? Would you change anything, improve anything? Would you have reached any more goals than you have reached? Would you have more money in the bank or any more financial security than you have now? What about your day-to-day life—would it be less frustrating and more rewarding? And, with different preparation or conditioning, what could your future hold? Would it be the same as your future holds for you today, or would it be better?

What if each and every day, from the time you were a small child, you had been given an extra helping of self-confidence, double the amount of determination, and twice the amount of belief in the outcome? Can you imagine what tasks you might accomplish more easily, what problems you would overcome, or what goals you could reach? After all, success, ultimately, is up to the individual. It isn't the pen—it's the writer; it isn't the road—it's the runner that counts.

Why is it, then, that some accomplish nearly any task more easily than others, achieve their goals more readily, and live their lives more fully? Could it be that those who appear to be “luckier” than the rest have actually only gotten a little better programming, or perhaps have learned how to erase their old negative programming and replace it with something better?

After examining the philosophies, the theories, and the practiced methods of influencing human behavior, I was shocked to learn the simplicity of that one small fact: You will become what you think about most; *your success or failure in anything, large or small, will depend on your programming—what you accept from others, and what you say when you talk to yourself.*

It is no longer a success theory; it is a simple, but powerful, fact. Neither luck nor desire has the slightest thing to do with it. It makes no difference whether *consciously* accept it or not. *The brain simply believes what you tell it most.* And what you tell it *about you*, it *will* create. It has no choice.

At the time I first recognized that this one simple clue could lead to a breakthrough in individual attitude and performance, most of what we thought we understood about the human brain was little more than speculation. Medical researchers and mind/brain scientists had not yet explored or mapped the mazes of the brain to the extent to which they have today. Few of the brain's complex electrochemical mysteries were fully

understood. Even today the brain is only just beginning to give up its secrets. Each day more progress is made and researchers have learned to anticipate an unending drama of new discoveries.

There was good reason for my excitement over my own rediscovery of the ancient truth which told us that “what we think is what we become.” There were tens of thousands of devout believers who, through one religion or another, were professing the same “truth.” To them it was inevitable, I suppose, that scientific research would one day prove their claim: that we control with our own minds most everything in our lives, including our health, our careers, our personal relationships, and our futures.

But to me it was the scientific understanding of *how* the process *worked* which so ignited my interest. What if, I wondered, we could begin to understand the workings of the mind so thoroughly that we could actually learn how to change or override our old programming and replace it with a specific, word-for-word new program? And what if we could do it in such a way that we could affect and improve our attitudes and our behavior fast!—not through years of difficult study or training, but easily and simply, anytime we chose to!

That is exactly what the brain will do. An understanding of that simple function of our own personal computer—the human brain—is what has been missing from most of the books and most of our motivational talks. An understanding of that one simple requirement of our mental machinery can help us make a simple but vital change in how we accept programming from others—and, more importantly, what we say when we talk to ourselves.