

# LESSON 8

## MINDFULNESS AND SELF-TALK

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Write down four adjectives for each—positive or negative—the first things that come into your head!

Celebrity #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #5: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #6: \_\_\_\_\_

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Circle the negative words that you used to describe them and underline the positive words.

Count them up in the tally table below.

Positive	Negative

**Self-Talk:**  
Self-talk is basically your inner voice, the voice in your mind that says things that you don't necessarily say out loud.

**Often self-talk:** happens without you even realising it and can be a subtle running commentary going on in the background of your mind. But what you say in your mind can determine a lot of how you feel about who you are.



**Positive Self-Talk**      **Negative Self-Talk**

Positive self-talk is the stuff that makes you feel good about yourself and the things that are going on in your life.

It is like having an optimistic voice in your head that always looks on the bright side.

**Example:** "These clothes look pretty awesome on me! I can totally make it through this exam! I don't feel great right now but things could be worse!"

Negative self-talk is the stuff that makes you feel pretty bad about yourself and things that are going on. It can put a damper on anything, whether it is good or bad.

**Example:** "I look stupid in these clothes! Everyone thinks I'm an idiot! Everything is crap and nothing is going to get better!"

Negative self-talk is particularly bad as it brings you down all the time. It can impact on recovery from mental health difficulties and tends to make people pretty miserable. But being positive all the time isn't achievable either, and isn't helpful all the time. So how can you make your self-talk work for you?

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**My self-talk**

**1. Reality testing**

- What is my evidence for and against my thinking?
- Am I jumping to negative conclusions?
- How can I find out if my thoughts are actually true?

**2. Look for alternative explanations**

- Are there any other ways that I could look at this situation?
- What else could the reason be?
- If I were being positive, how would I perceive this situation?

**3. Putting it in perspective**

- What is the best thing that could happen?
- Is there anything good about this situation?
- Will this matter in five years' time?

**4. Using goal-oriented thinking**

- Is this way of thinking helping me to achieve my goals?
- What can I do that will help me solve the problem?
- Is there something I can learn from this situation, to help me do it better next time?

**Journal Reflection:**  
What did you notice about the thoughts going through your mind today?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Debrief**  
It might not seem like much, but self-talk is a really important part of our self-esteem and confidence. By working on the practice of positive self-talk, you're more likely to get things done and feel more in control of stuff that's going on in your life.

**Why should I practise?**  
The more you work on improving your self-talk, the better you will get. It's kind of like practising an instrument or going to sports training. It won't be easy to start with but will get better with time.

### Australian Curriculum

### PERSONAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING

#### Self-awareness:

##### Recognise emotions

- Examine influences on and consequences of their emotional responses in learning, social and work-related contexts.

#### Self-management:

##### Express emotions appropriately

- Forecast the consequences of expressing emotions inappropriately and devise measures to regulate behaviour.

##### Develop Self-discipline and set goals:

- Select, use and analyse strategies that assist in regulating behaviour and achieving personal and learning goals.

### HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

#### Being healthy, safe and active:

- Practise and apply strategies to seek help for themselves or others.
- Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing.

#### Learning intentions:

- For students to become aware of their self-talk.
- For students to develop strategies to change negative into positive self-talk.

#### Resources:

- Student workbooks.
- Speakers and laptop with internet access.
- Video Resource List.

### Outline:

#### Activity 1: Workbook Activity (20 mins)

- In pairs, students are to think of the six most famous celebrities they can and note them in their workbooks. Then they are to write down at least four adjectives for each celebrity. These can be anything at all that they think describes the person. Let them write whatever they feel—the aim of the activity is to see how many negative and positive things they write.
- Have the students circle the negative words used to describe them and underline the positive words.
- Each pair should count their words up in a tally, negative and positive. Collate as a class.

#### Activity 2: Discussion (10 mins)

- How many negatives vs. positives? There will probably be more negatives than positives. This is called the negativity bias and unfortunately we do it to ourselves as well with our **inner self-talk**.

#### Activity 3: Self-talk (20 mins)

- Self-talk is basically your inner voice, the voice in your mind that says things that you don't necessarily say out loud. Often self-talk happens without you even realising it and can be a subtle running commentary going on in the background of your mind. But what you say in your mind can determine a lot of how you feel about who you are.
- Go around the room and ask students one thing they have negative self-talk about or give an example of a time when they have had negative inner thoughts, e.g. 'I was shooting for a three pointer in basketball and all that was going through my head was that I'm going to miss, I'm going to miss...'
- It might be their skill at a particular sport, their attitude towards a subject at school or about a relationship they have.
- Students then complete the table in their workbooks with one of those thoughts in mind. (devised from: <http://au.reachout.com/challenging-negative-thinking>).
- Share with the group if they are comfortable doing it. For some this may be quite confronting.
- Finish the lesson with this song - **Video 812** from the Video Resource List.