

The Social Times

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Something
to Talk About:
Controlling
Emotions

Ask Roger
Gets-It:
Cell
Phones

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MAKE SURE YOUR SELF-TALK IS POSITIVE... YOU WILL SEE GREAT RESULTS

Many experts believe that our thoughts, feelings, and behavior are all connected. Some psychologists have even researched this idea. Scientifically, they found that what our brains think can change how our hearts feel and how our bodies behave. Some people call this kind of thinking self-talk. **Many psychologists say that self-talk can help us or hurt us.**

Self-talk is when we “talk” to ourselves. It is kind of like having word bubbles within our thought bubbles.

Self-talk consists of thoughts we give ourselves. Some thoughts can make us feel bad about ourselves. For example, if you don’t do well on a math test, you might think, “I’m stupid. I’ll never understand math.” Another example is when someone only has one or two friends. She might think, “I’m not popular. Nobody likes me.”



I can do this.

Self-talk that tells us that we are “bad” can cause our hearts to feel sad about ourselves. If this happens, we might do things that make the situation worse, such as refusing to go to math class or telling the few friends we have to go away.

Clearly, self-talk that gives us bad feelings is not helpful.

The good news is that good self-talk can help us feel better about ourselves. Going back to the math example, instead of telling yourself that you are dumb, you could think, “Well, I’m glad that unit is over. I didn’t do great on that section, but I’m O.K. on the rest of it.” In the same way, instead of the person who has one or two really good friends thinking that she is not popular, she could tell herself, “I have two friends who are kind and stick up for me. That’s better than being popular and not knowing who I can trust.”

Self-talk that reminds us of what good things we do, and have, makes our hearts feel happy about ourselves. Then, we might do things that make things even better, like helping our friends learn math that we’re good at when they’re not, or increasing the number of friends we have by becoming friends with our friends’ friends.

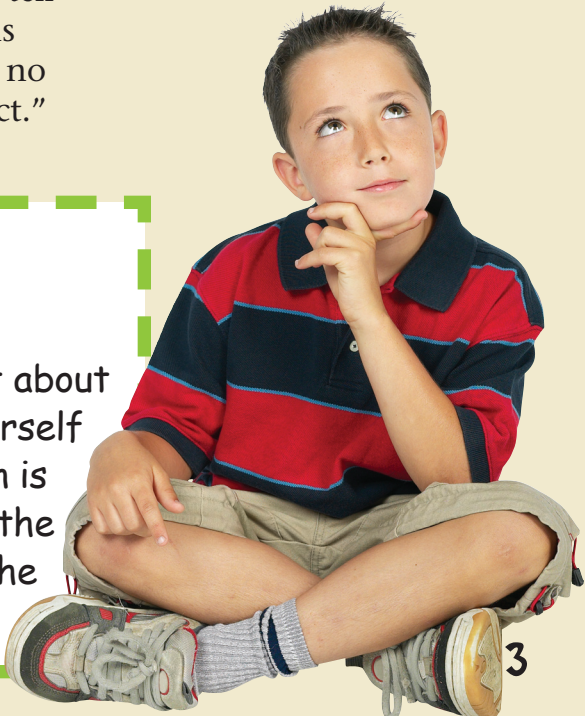
Self-talk that gives us positive feelings can be VERY helpful.

Some experts think that self-talk can help us reduce our worries. For example, if someone is worried about flying, he can tell himself, “Many more people are involved in car accidents than in plane crashes.” Or if someone is trying something again after having just made a mistake, she can tell herself, “I usually get this right. That last time was no big deal. Nobody’s perfect.”

A really smart teacher once said that the best thing about self-talk is that it gives us permission to back talk. We can talk back to negative and worry thoughts without getting into trouble!

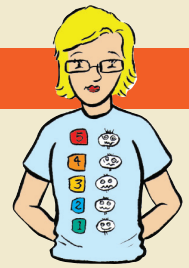
If you find yourself thinking “worry self-talk,” take a deep breath and tell yourself, “Let it go. This is just old worry talk. I’ll be O.K. My (parents, friends, coaches, pets) will help me.”

Positive self-talk is a powerful force against worries.



TRY IT!

The next time you feel yourself getting upset about something, stop for a minute and talk to yourself in your head. Ask yourself if the situation is devastating or annoying? Is it the end of the world or just a bump in the road? Does the self-talk help you think more logically?



ANGER SCALE

Everybody gets angry at one point or another. It is important that we keep a clear head about anger though. You can be angry with something that happened or with another person, or even with yourself.

How well you “handle” anger depends on how clearly you can think about it. For example, you might feel angry if someone beat you at a game of chess, but if you think about it logically, that person just played with you. Why would you get mad at someone who took the time to play with you?

On the other hand, anger can signal to you that you are being mistreated. That is serious! This could prompt you to tell someone about

it, or in other ways help yourself stay safe. Take a minute to go through the following scale for anger. You want to work at keeping your anger at a 3 or below. Anger is a very big emotion; it needs to be kept small so that you can work through it.



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Anger Scale

Rating	Example	What Can You Do to Control the Level?
5	Someone hurts you or someone you care about.	This is serious and you need to get help from an adult. Trying to solve this kind of anger on your own can be dangerous.
4	Someone steals from you.	This is really hard, and it usually means you have to get help. Taking the law into your own hands when you are angry is not a good idea.
3	Someone made fun of your religion.	This is a hard one. Remember that any time someone makes fun of another person’s religion, they really don’t understand religion. This is similar to someone making fun of your race or sexuality. Walk away and avoid that person. If it continues, get help from an adult.
2	Your favorite TV show is cancelled.	Who are you angry at? It doesn’t make sense to get mad at your mom or dad, and you probably don’t have the phone number of the person in charge of the network, so there isn’t really anybody to get angry with. Relaxation might help reduce the anger feeling.
1	Someone beats you at a game.	Remember it is just a game. Don’t ruin a friendship over a silly game.

GETTING ORGANIZED

Feeling organized for class can be a good and relaxed feeling. People use all kinds of organizational systems to make their lives more structured and relaxed.

Think about how it makes you feel when you can't find something you really need. It may feel like you are going to explode!

Ways to Keep Organized

- One good idea is called “next day success.” It involves spending a little time at home every night preparing for the next day. It is probably quieter at home than at school, and that makes it easier to think. Find anything that might be due the next day. If you can't find it right away, at least you don't have to panic like you might if you had waited until the morning. You have time to keep looking.
- Assignment books are really important. Always open that book when a teacher talks about a due date. Find the date on the calendar and write the assignment down. This way you can easily check to see if anything is due the next day. Write down other important things to remember too, like field trips or clothes needed for gym class.
- Use containers or pouches to keep your pencils and pens in one spot.
- Use the pockets in your backpack for specific things like pencils and pens and your assignment book.
- Consider using different-colored folders for each subject. This way you can look into your backpack and pull out the right folder without having to look through everything.
- If you have problems remembering, carrying, or even losing your books, ask you teacher if you can get a “home copy” of the book. This way you can leave your classroom book in your desk or locker and still have a home copy to use for studying at night.



Gets-It Knows!



Dear Roger,

Last week I was at a restaurant with a friend and her parents. All of a sudden my cell phone rang. I figured I'd better answer it because it might be my mother. Well, it wasn't my mother. It was my friend Sarah who just wanted to talk. I couldn't just hang up on her, so I talked for a while. After dinner my friend told me that I was rude talking on my cell phone at the table. I feel kind of bad about this, but I am also confused about why she would say I was rude.

– Chatty in Chicago

Dear Chatty,

This is a really good topic. Almost everyone has a cell phone, but we haven't really figured out the social rules for using cell

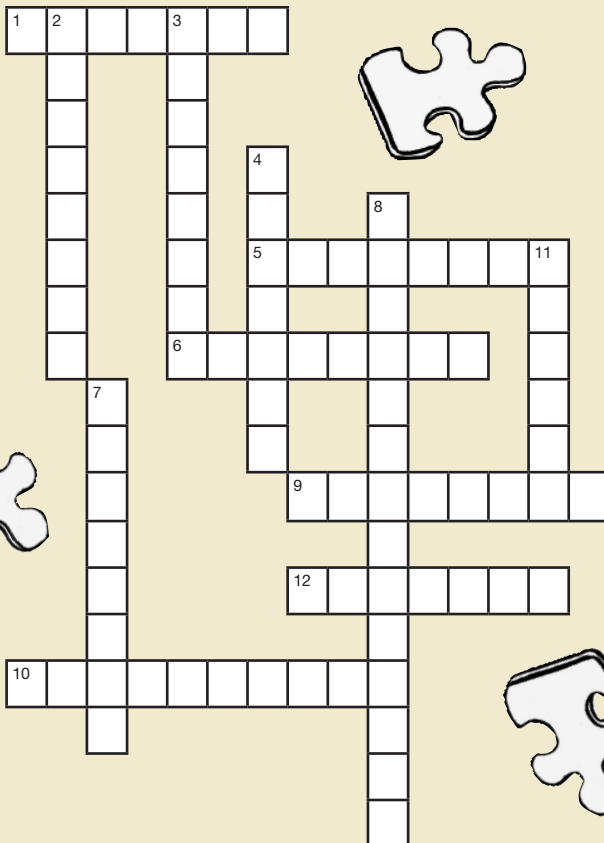
phones. Some people get upset if your phone rings when they are talking to you. Others think it is perfectly O.K. to answer your phone at any time, anywhere. What to do?

Here is a good idea. If you have a cell phone, always turn it to vibrate when you are in a social situation. This includes anywhere you are visiting with other people, like a restaurant or a party. If the phone vibrates, you can look at the number to see if it is an emergency or if it is just a friend who likes to talk. If you think you really need to answer it, say "excuse me" and then walk away from the people you are with. Remember that letting your phone ring when someone is talking to you is like interrupting, and interrupting has always been rude.

– Roger Gets-It!



Puzzle Time

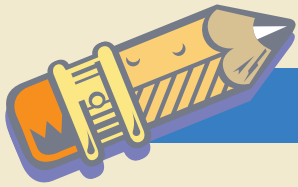


ACROSS

- 1) absolutely flawless
- 5) good, not negative
- 6) having word bubbles in our talk bubbles
- 9) words or ideas in your head
- 10) two words; how we feel about ourself
- 12) an idea rather than just a thing

DOWN

- 2) think through carefully
- 3) our thoughts can affect our _____.
- 4) being well liked by many people
- 7) two words; like sassing; speaking negatively in response to something said to you
- 8) when you are expecting one thing and another thing happens
- 11) someone with a lot of knowledge about something



Puzzle Time

A	Y	G	M	Q	P	X	G	B	W	H	V	K	B	V	G	J	S	M	L	E	L	Z	W	D	W	K	S	D	C
Q	Z	W	I	E	F	W	V	T	Q	I	R	A	L	U	P	O	P	N	M	H	B	Q	C	G	Y	N	R	H	Z
W	B	H	K	M	H	S	R	X	O	N	F	U	Y	R	P	T	I	M	S	J	O	X	P	O	T	D	F	J	P
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K	F	D	A	H	F	R	K	F	A	G	B	R	Z	F	X	T	I	C	K	L	A	T	F	L	E	S	T	O	Y
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Z	C	C	B	S	B	G	S	M	L	N	J	B	F	P	Q	P	B	M	S	G	Z	A	X	C	X	W	F	M	G

Word Bank: BEHAVIOR, BRAINS, FEELINGS, HEARTS, MATH, PERFECT, POPULAR, POSITIVE, SELFTALK, TROUBLE, TRUST

**An ostrich's eye is
bigger than its brain.**



WEATHER FACTOID

**Largest hailstone: 17.5 inches, 1.67 pounds
(Coffeyville, Kansas; September 3, 1979)**

I have always had problems controlling my emotions. It seems like I cry too easily, and sometimes I get way too mad about things.

When I was younger, I used to hit and bite when I got really mad. Clearly, this was not a good thing. I even got kicked out of my first preschool because I had “meltdowns” when things didn’t go right.

My mom worked hard with me on this, and eventually I learned to calm myself down without hurting others. This was important, because schools don’t allow meltdowns if you hurt people.

Mom signed me up for gymnastics and swimming lessons to help me relax my body. This worked well. I think maybe the exercise helped to calm my nerves.

Another thing we did was to use the STOP-CLOSE EYES-DEEP BREATH method. Whenever I felt my emotions getting too big, I would stop everything, close my eyes, and take a deep breath. Sometimes it helped if I sat down, too. This really did help to stop me from hitting, but sometimes I still felt like screaming. It was like my body needed to release the emotions.

Screaming or crying in front of other people was embarrassing, and I think it even scared some of the other kids in my class. My parents and I had a meeting with my third-grade teacher to talk about how to help me. The principal came to the meeting too, and he had an idea that worked for me. He said that I could come down to his office and use his private bathroom when I needed to scream. At first I thought this was kind of lame, but it worked! Sometimes I even calmed down on my way to his office and didn’t need to scream when I got there.

I still have big emotions and I still have to work at calming my body when I get upset, but now I have a plan. I have been using this plan for a few years, and I am able to keep myself pretty much under control when I am at school. I think an important part is that I have a place to go if I just can’t control the scream. Having a place to go helps.

