

Stop Lying to Yourself

Many of us live in defeat because we continually lie to ourselves. Here's how you can reprogram your mind.

Every waking moment people talk to themselves. Surprised? Did you think you were the only one?

The question isn't "Do you talk to yourself?" But "What are you telling yourself?" Do you feed yourself the truth, or are you fooling yourself?

I have a close girl friend who audibly talks to herself, all the time. When I took a prayer team to Egypt some years ago, she roomed with me, and every morning while putting on makeup she giggled and chattered. I said, "You don't need our conversation—you're having fun all by yourself!"

Psychologists tell us that the average person speaks 40,000 to 50,000 things to himself daily, 70 percent or more of which are negative. However, the most exceptional professional athletes are said to reduce their self-talk to 20,000 or fewer statements, and less than 50 percent are negative.

Focused positive thinking and self-talk are critical if you are to move from victimization to victory. Why? Because "faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. 10:17, KJV). Your belief system is built on what you think and what you say to yourself, and not just on what you say aloud!

If TV commercials and other forms of repetitive advertisement weren't effective in selling products, no one would pay to air them. Ask yourself, "What am I continually advertising and selling to my subconscious mind (my inner person) via self-talk?"

Your subconscious has no power of judgment; it simply records data and experiences as they happen and then believes as true

what it's told. Abuse, specifically, is part of a negative marketing campaign the devil designed to sell you on your personal failure.

This is why the words of your mouth (what you say to others), the meditations of your heart (what you say to yourself), and the words of others (whom you listen to), whether positive or negative, greatly determine what you think, what you do, and who you'll eventually become. Your self-talk should always be acceptable in God's sight.

You're never unemployed; you'll always have the job of being your mind's gatekeeper. You determine what you'll allow yourself to see, to hear and to think. You're the one who must learn God's Word if you intend to challenge and capture any thought contrary to His will and bring it into line with truth (see 2 Cor. 10:4-5).

God holds you personally accountable for the temple He's given you to care for. So avoid negative friends and companions. Filter the movies you see, the music you hear, the downloads you watch, the magazines and books you read.

It's All in Your Attitude

It's been said, "Your attitude determines your altitude." Your attitude definitely affects your relationship with God and others as well as your own health—mental, emotional and physical—and, if negative, can lead to damaging self-talk.

Possibly nothing can adversely affect your attitude in the same way as does being injured by another person. Hurt people often struggle with forgiving the perpetrator, themselves and even God. The resulting thoughts, feelings of unforgiveness and bitterness sometimes produce not only a bad attitude but also physical illness and disease.

Perhaps one reason your attitude can cause sickness, disease and other forms of torment is that it also determines the

level of your stress. Some people “stuff” their stress, quietly bearing it while others “shout” their stress, outwardly venting it.

In either case, stress is a killer that accelerates and intensifies when our focus is anywhere other than where it needs to be. The Message paraphrase of Proverbs 3:5-8 says: “Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he’s the one who will keep you on track.

“Don’t assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil! Your body will glow with health, your very bones will vibrate with life!”

If you choose to live a glass-half-empty life, you are doomed to disillusionment. The natural law of attraction guarantees it. You find in life what you’re looking for, not what you’re looking at.

If your perspective on life, including your past, is miserable, you will stay miserable. It’s all about your perception.

Ten percent of what makes you who you are is what’s happened to you; 90 percent of what makes you who you are is how you’ve chosen to respond to what’s happened to you.

If you add to an unhealed past a bad attitude, the common pressures of everyday life and a continual barrage of negative self-talk, you can be driven to despair. And never forget that demonic spirits work overtime to assure you go that route.

People who have been hurt often harbor feelings ranging from disappointment and anger to hatred and rage (unrestrained anger combined with fear) toward those who hurt them. Healing begins when they surrender these feelings and learn to differentiate between the act and the actor—hating what was

done without hating the doer.

This is a scriptural response. The Bible tells us not to let the sun go down on our wrath because when we allow anger to simmer overnight, we give place to the enemy.

The most complex and difficult problem victims grapple with, however, is their feelings concerning themselves—feelings that often have no basis in fact. If you continue to respond to life's ups and downs according to your past experiences rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to direct your responses, you will only strengthen any negative stronghold within.

Debunk the Lies

What causes us to succumb to self-rejection? Is it because of what others have done to us? Is it because of what we've chosen to believe about ourselves?

We must clarify one important truth: God loves us just as we are. He loves us when we do right and when we do wrong; our sin doesn't affect His love for us. His love is truly unconditional—He loves us under every condition of life. We may grieve His heart, but we can never escape His love.

"God is love" (1 John 4:8), the Bible tells us. Love is His very nature. That's why even while we were bound to sin, God showed His love for us in sending His Son to die for us (see Rom. 5:8). The Lord loved us when we were His enemy, and there's nothing that can separate us from His love for all eternity.

Accordingly, our self-respect and self-acceptance should be based on His awesome love, not our works. Our self-worth (the value we place on ourselves) should be based on His having created us for His own purpose. God has programmed into each of us a kingdom potential, a life-assignment that only we can accomplish.

You might protest, "But what about the weakness I feel? What about my flaws? What about how I look, what I can't achieve, my education or lack of it?" Certainly some of those things are our responsibility—some we can and should change, and self-improvement is always in order.

The things we can't change we simply accept as we release them to God. Paul wrote, "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6, NKJV).

Being strong isn't the ultimate goal—being His is! When we belong to the Lord and rely on Him in obedience, He will demonstrate His strength through our weakness. He chooses the foolish things to confound the world's "wise" (see 1 Cor. 1:27), and in this way He receives the greatest glory.

The question isn't about your ability or inability but about your availability. It's possible that as you've sought to understand and make sense of the hurts and betrayals you've suffered, you've judged God as well as those who hurt you. If that's the case, I'm praying that this truth will till the soil of your heart and cause you to repent for calling into question the integrity of your heavenly Father.

Perhaps (like me) you have asked, "Why didn't God prevent the painful things I experienced?" "Where was He when they were happening?" "How could He have stood by and let them take place?" "Why did He allow this?"

Though these are perfectly reasonable questions, we'll never know the answers in this lifetime. But there are some things of which we can be certain: God was grieved when you were grieved. He suffered when you suffered. He was hurting when you were hurting.

But God is self-restricted by the law of His own nature. He created us not as robots but as moral agents with the ability to make decisions. God mysteriously allows sin to run its course until we are convinced that mankind is utterly

incapable of righteousness apart from Christ.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus took away Satan's power at Calvary, disarming him completely. The devil can hurt you now only if you choose to embrace fear and believe what isn't true.

When I was young, I experienced sexual abuse for several years. But once my hurtful past was reconciled to God's plan, it became a positive part of my new life. The abuse I suffered is no longer a liability. God has moved it from the debit column to the credit column. The pain of the old things died, and the old things became new (see 2 Cor. 5:17).

Remember, the memories don't cease to exist; they simply no longer provoke pain. Best of all, they take on new potential: It's common for those who have suffered to become counselors and ministers to others! God will use what were once your areas of great weakness to bring glory to His magnificent strength.

You will no longer have to run from, hide from or deny your past—you can allow Christ to reconcile and redeem it. You reach emotional maturity as you discover and internalize God's truth.

Part of that truth is that you are neither a victim nor a mere survivor—Christ has made you an overcomer! If you've been living your life as a victim and not a victor, you've believed lies. They may be lies about you, lies about others or lies about the devil.

But the most debilitating are the lies you've believed about God and His love. Ask Him to reveal these lies to you so you can list them. Then begin to reprogram your mind with the truth to counteract each one.

Here are some activities you can engage in that will help:

- Read the Word daily.
- Take negative thoughts captive and replace them with Scriptures that debunk the lies you believe about God, yourself and others.
- Clean up your self-talk!
- Become friends with emotionally healthy people.
- Walk away from the 90 percent of the population who don't want to be happy and join the 10 percent who do.
- Take advantage of every opportunity God gives you to use your experience to help others.

Finally, respect and receive yourself as a gift from God with kingdom purpose. Tell the Lord: "I respect myself, Jesus. You have made me to be Your handiwork, and I accept myself just as I am. Amen."

Put off false guilt today. We've all suffered from abuse. Even Christ was abused, yet the devil never had a place in Him.

Paul told Timothy, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:12, KJV). Jesus has redeemed you entirely, which includes the abuses you've suffered. Rise above the past, and let others see God's glory through you.

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