

Be Careful of What You Say...

“Think twice before you speak because your words and influence will plant the seed of either success or failure (in the mind of another).”

---Napoleon Hill

Most of us realize that what we say, and how we say it, is of vital importance to any relationship. Whether it's a spouse, child, employee, supervisor or even the sales clerk at a department store, our words have impact.

This is also true of the one relationship we have on a 24/7, 365 basis...the relationship with ourselves.

Think about it. The one person you're with all the time is *you*. Doesn't it make sense that what you say to yourself, no matter how benign it seems, has an effect on your attitude, productivity and general state-of-mind?

When it comes to dealing with an employee or colleague, you may be complimentary, uplifting and encouraging in how you address them. But, maybe when you make a mistake, or things don't go your way, you might be overly critical with yourself. Maybe you might call yourself a name, or label your behavior in a negative way.

This kind of self-talk is damaging. It limits you. In fact, it undermines your potential, robs you of joy, and causes you to be less than what you could be.

Napoleon Hill also said, *“If you do not conquer self, you will be conquered by self.”*

Isn't that true? All too often we can be incredibly competent as a manager or supervisor, doing everything necessary to lift-up our people to produce great results. But, we can turn-around and be our own worst enemies. Pearl Strachan Hurd said, *“Handle them carefully...for words have more power than atom bombs.”*

Social scientists, doctors and psychologists have proven that self-talk matters. In fact, cancer patients often will utilize positive affirmations and visualizations to treat themselves. The results often are astounding. Many cancers will go into remission.

The same can be true of daily life. Negative self-talk is a cancer, causing internal discomfort, subliminal self-sabotage, and limiting productivity and potential.

By changing the way we program our mind, the way we talk to ourselves, will dramatically improve your life professionally and personally.

Here are some ways you can transform the way you talk to yourself (and about yourself):

- Eliminate the word “should” and replace it with “will” or “can”.
- Stop focusing on problems, focus on solutions. Stay in the present and future. The past is over.
- Focus on your strengths, not your weaknesses.

- See “problems” as “challenges”.
- See “failures” as “learning opportunities”.
- STOP calling yourself negative names or giving yourself negative labels.

For example, let’s say business is down. You automatically think that you could be doing better, saying to yourself, *“I’m a poor leader; I’m terrible at business; and you have no idea how I’m going to increase sales. Closing sales has been such a struggle. Other people are so much smarter than I am”*.

Will thinking this way motivate you to do what is necessary to find solutions? No...this is only going to keep you in a place of waiting, feeling un-empowered to make change.

How would it feel if you thought like this instead:

“This is a good opportunity to research the competition to find out new ideas or gaps in my service/product.

“I can find the solution for this because I’ve gotten this far, I know we will attain our goals.

“I am focused on making sure my team has what they need to be successful. I will ask them what I and/or the company can do to help support success.

“What are the possibilities? What am I learning from challenge and how can I use it to grow my business?”

The first example sets up failure; the second, success. The words we use, and how we use them, will charge us with positive or negative energy...and this energy gets passed along to others. Which would you rather have? The choice is totally yours to make.