

Speak Kindly: Stop Beating Yourself Up

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Last week I had a conversation with a friend who was disappointed in herself for not achieving a goal that she intended to accomplish. As I listened to her talk about what she should have done differently, I was amazed at how hard she was on herself. It's strange that sometimes we actually think that berating ourselves for not achieving our goals will somehow make a positive difference. On the contrary, this kind of self-loathing only creates more trouble. Negative self-talk is a roadblock on the path to success.

To get a different perspective, imagine saying the following to a teenager who was attempting to fulfill an important goal:

- You don't have what it takes.
- You'll never get it right.
- Lower your expectations.
- You're too young.
- You don't have enough education or experience.
- Come on, you should have accomplished this goal by now.
- It's already been done.

How often do you say these kinds of things to yourself? A lack of self-acceptance can do more than sabotage our success. Current medical research suggests that it may actually interfere with our physical health causing illness in the body. So, as you continue to pursue the changes that are important to you, please remember the following:

1. Be patient with yourself.

If it takes you longer to get where you want to go, there might be a reason for it. If you could rise above your life and view it from a greater perspective you'd see exactly why things happen as they do. Allow for Divine timing.

2. Ask for help and guidance.

I still catch myself trying to go it alone during the most challenging of times. Slowly but surely I am learning that isolation not only slows down my progress, it makes me feel incredibly alone. You don't need to suffer in silence. Give someone an opportunity to help you. They'll get to experience the pleasure that comes from being a generous spirit.

3. Embrace your disappointment and begin again.

You will always face disappointment when you allow yourself to want more from life. As you learn how to live through it, you'll develop self-trust--a deep inner knowing that you can handle anything that comes your way.

4. Speak kindly to yourself.

Think of yourself as the teenager in the example above. When you're feeling discouraged, the last thing you need is a critical parent beating you up. Instead, give yourself a gentle, loving reminder that your goals aren't nearly as important as your relationship to yourself.

When you feel stuck or unsure of your next step, keep your heart and mind open with positive self-talk. As you do, you'll find that insight and wisdom suddenly appear to guide you in the right direction.

Take Action Challenge

This week, pay attention to how you speak to yourself. The moment you catch yourself being mean, counteract the negative message with positive, self-accepting words of encouragement. Try these statements:

- I have exactly what it takes to succeed.
- There is something even better coming along.
- I am strong and resilient.
- All is happening exactly as it should.
- The world is conspiring in my favor.

Remember that your thoughts direct the course of your life. Make sure you're headed in the right direction.