

Powerful Internal Messages

“Listen to yourself!” Has someone ever said that to you? Have you ever said it to someone else? Chances are good the answer is yes to both questions. That’s the phrase we use when we challenge another person for what we feel is an unreasonable, unprofitable, or unrealistic opinion. The very fact that we use the expression tells us two things right out of the gate. One: we do indeed receive internal input that affects our thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and expectations. And two: that input is not always reliable.

So then, how can we “listen to ourselves” in reasonable, realistic ways that can benefit our weight loss goals? How can we avoid being deceived by those powerful inner messages when they’re leading us down the wrong path? The key is learning to recognize the difference before we act, making honest assessments of their intent, and developing the skills to replace inaccurate messages with powerful positive ones.

Note what Steven Covey says in his popular book, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: “To try to change outward attitudes and behaviors does very little good in the long run if we fail to examine the basic paradigms from which those attitudes and behaviors flow.” [A paradigm is a fancy word for your own way of seeing something.]

One of Covey’s effective habits we can adapt for weight loss success is learning to project ahead to the desired outcome. In other words, after you determine what you would like the end of a situation to look like, visualize it. See it clearly, vividly, relentlessly, over and over. Suppose for example you decide to go for a walk after work. When you receive the internal message telling you to plop down on the couch and grab the remote instead, you will see it for what it is--a counterproductive urge that needs to be replaced by a productive one. So you replace it with a mental projection of you going on that walk. You feel your muscles working and becoming stronger. You feel the release of stress and the sense of accomplishment. Even during the walk itself, you spend some of the time visualizing yourself at a later time walking into a crowded room with the confidence that a strong, healthy body exudes. And ultimately, the desired outcome is achieved. The vision becomes a reality.

And remember, the ultimate purpose of projecting the outcome is to motivate you to action (you won’t reap many benefits from lying on the couch watching an exercise video).

Other experts have weighed in on this. Dr. Phil McGraw, in his book The Ultimate Weight Solution, recommends challenging your thinking by asking yourself four questions:

©2010 Forest Health Services, LLC

Barix and the Barix Clinics logo are registered trademarks of Forest Health Services, LLC. All other trademarks or registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved. Unauthorized duplication or modification is prohibited.

Is your internal dialogue true?
Does your internal dialogue serve your best interest?
Does your internal dialogue advance and protect your health?
Is your internal dialogue helping you to achieve your weight management goals?

If your response to any of these is no, then he recommends you replace your negative, disruptive thinking with optimistic and productive thinking. With practice, it becomes easier to recognize your faulty thinking or negative thoughts and replace them with ones that promote your journey to a healthful lifestyle.

Practice becoming aware of your thoughts, challenge your faulty thinking with Dr. McGraw's four questions, and examine the underlying paradigms that affect your behaviors.

Other ways of strengthening paradigms that influence your lifestyle habits include surrounding yourself with others who have healthful habits, and reading books and articles that support a healthful lifestyle. The more you change your environment in this way, the more the paradigms that influence your food, exercise and lifestyle choices will change in your favor.

Fill your mind with light, happiness, hope, feelings of security and strength, and soon your life will reflect these qualities.

©2010 Forest Health Services, LLC

Barix and the Barix Clinics logo are registered trademarks of Forest Health Services, LLC. All other trademarks or registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved. Unauthorized duplication or modification is prohibited.

Barix Clinics: 800-282-0066