

# Mind Over Chatter:

*Giving the Small Talk in Your Brain the Boot?*



Presented by

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Intentional Talk

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# What's the Chatter, and What Does It Matter?

Chatter:

*To utter in a rapid, usually thoughtless way; to talk foolishly without stopping; noisy talk; click repeatedly or uncontrollably; talk socially without exchanging too much information; speak (about unimportant matters) rapidly and incessantly; make noise as if chattering away.*

~ American Heritage Dictionary

How Does It Show Up?

Disclaimers ... Assumptions ... Limiting Beliefs ... Lack of Choice ... Conditions



# First, a short parable...

"A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner:

'Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time.' When asked which dog wins, he reflected a moment and replied, 'The one I feed the most.'"

~ Harold Kushner, Living a Life That Matters



# Disclaimers

Disclaimers offer up a proactive apology or “out” for what you are about to say. They put the person speaking in a position of weakness. It's like saying “I don't trust what I know or think. Whatever I say after this could be wrong, and I don't take total responsibility for it. I'm not confident. I don't want you to secretly think I'm an idiot, so I'll call myself that out loud, and it relieves the pressure of having to be right.”



Some examples:

- “I don't know about this, but...”
- “This may be wrong/stupid/crazy, but...”
- “I don't have a degree in this, but...”
- “It's only my opinion, but...”
- “I probably did this wrong...”
- “I'm not an expert, but...”
- “I'm not the brightest bulb in the pack...”
- “Who am I to think/say/do...?”

*What are some disclaimers that you find yourself using, or hear others use?  
What purpose do they serve?*

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# Assumptions



Assumptions stem from lack of information, or information that comes from second-hand sources. They don't have solid evidence to support them. Gone unchallenged, they provide an excuse to not take a risk or move forward.

Some examples:

"It's going to be difficult"

"I need a degree to do that"

"I won't like it"

"He probably hates me"

"No one will help me"

"Everyone will think it's a silly idea"

*What assumptions do you make around ideas or people who are new to you? **What assumptions that you've had** before have been proven wrong? What did you learn?*

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# Limiting Beliefs



Limiting beliefs put an emotional glass ceiling on our capabilities. They are the type that's most likely to have roots from outside ourselves (messages from parents, siblings, friends, co-workers, society). We internalize the messages that limit us, and have disbelief at the ones that say we are limitless.

Some examples:

"I'm not smart enough"

"I'm too old"

"I'm too fat"

"I'm only good at this one thing"

"I can either have this, or that, not both"

**Where have limiting beliefs shown up for you? What's true about them?**

What are the limitless beliefs you hold about yourself?

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## Lack of Choice (aka Victim)

Sometimes, we don't want to take responsibility for our situation. That's when we can fall into language that conveys lack of choice. We're trapped and can't do anything about him, her, the job, the house, the car, the government, the weather... The truth: we always are responsible for how we choose to react. There is nothing for which we are not responsible!



Some examples:

“There’s nothing else I can do”

“It’s not my fault”

“He made me do it”

“It’s just the way I am”

“I have to do this”

“I should do what they say”

*What does it feel like when you take responsibility? What does it feel like **when you don't? What are some lack-of-choice** phrases you have said or heard other say?*

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# Conditions

When we place conditions on our state of being, we are playing an endless waiting game. We are making action, success, happiness, peace and fulfillment contingent on something else besides what we have in the present moment. Conditional "If/When/then" statements give us an excuse not to take action; they buy us time until things are "ideal" or "perfect."



Some examples:

"I'll be happy when..."

"Once this is over, then I'll be..."

"When the kids leave, then I can do what I want"

"If she'd just listen to me, everything would be OK"

"When I have more money/time, then I'll be able to..."

"If they don't change, I don't know how much longer I can do this"

*What conditions have you placed on your happiness or ability to move forward? What is available to you right now?*

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# What Does It Matter???

Letting the chatter dominate our thoughts leads to

## SMALL TALK Self-Talk

Choosing these words keeps you small and takes away your power!

### Small Talk ...

Limiting  
Safe  
Surface  
Fleeting  
From Fear



The Opposite of Small Talk is

## Intentional Talk

### Intentional Talk...



Explores  
Deepens  
Takes Risks  
Feels Alive  
At Choice  
From Love

## What is the *benefit* of the Chatter?

Keeps us *safe*

Keeps us in a *comfort zone*

Gives the *illusion of modesty*

Puts *responsibility/choice outside* of ourselves

Diminishes other's *expectations* of us

Keeps us from finding out *the truth*

Gives us an *excuse* for certain behaviors or beliefs



# Making the Shift

## Breathing

Breathing is one of the most basic and profound ways to quiet your mind. I find myself “forgetting” to breathe at times, usually when I’m stressed. Here are two breathing exercises that you can do anytime, anywhere, to help bring you back to center when your chatterbox is loud and the natural ebb and flow of your breath is interrupted.



*Four-Square breathing:* inhale deeply through your nose over four counts. Hold the breath for four counts. Exhale completely over four counts. Rest for four counts. Repeat.

*Conscious breathing:* Try staying with one full inbreath as it comes in, one full outbreath as it goes out, keeping your mind open and free for just this moment, just this breath. Abandon all ideas of getting somewhere or having anything happen. Just keep returning to the breath when the mind wanders, stringing moments of mindfulness together, breath by breath. [from page 19 of Jon Kabat-Zinn’s “Wherever You Go, There You Are.”]

More breathing exercises are available in “The Little Book of Yoga Breathing” by Scott Shaw. My favorite is the Nadi Sudi (the nerve-purifying breath).

## Meditation

Meditation is the act of being intentionally, completely awake and grounded in the present moment. It is a wonderful way to practicing noticing. Meditation is not about trying to completely empty your mind and not have any thoughts; it’s about allowing those thoughts to pass through you without placing labels or judgments on them. Over time, your mind tends to become quieter and more open. Focusing on your inhalations and exhalations or a mantra (such as “open” or “peace”) can help to bring you back to center. Practice stillness for 5, 10, 20 minutes or more; whatever feels most comfortable. Use it as a time to build your noticing muscle. Breathe into the calm that can come when you observe rather than obsess.

## Notes:

## Find Your Internal “Base Camp”



**Base Camp** (noun): *a main encampment providing supplies, shelter, and communications for persons engaged in wide-ranging activities, as exploring, reconnaissance, hunting, or mountain climbing.* (source: Dictionary.com)

The chatter that runs through our heads often trickles down into our bodies, causing physical tension in our neck, shoulders, hands and stomach. That’s a lot of energy that’s pushing through us and pulling at us.

It’s helpful to identify the core place in your body where peace, calm and love reside. I call this your internal “base camp,” because it has the supplies and shelter you need to recharge when the energy of climbing the chatter mountain becomes too much. For many people, base camp is in the area of their heart. For others, they breathe into the balance obtained through chi. They are aware of their physical center, or dan tien (located between your belly button and the top of your pubic bone, halfway between the skin of your tummy and the skin of your back). Sometimes, my base camp is my eyes; I consciously relax and soften my eyes, and I can literally feel the tension releasing in my mind, the chatter slowing way down.

When you close your eyes, breathe deeply and turn inward, where do you feel a sense of warmth and quiet?

What color is your base camp? What shape is it? What paths are available to you to access it?

What will help you to remember to pay regular visits to base camp and receive fuel for the journey?

Notes:

## “De-Chatter” Your Goals



When we set goals for ourselves, they can remain elusive depending on what we believe about ourselves and our capacity to achieve them. Run your goal through these questions when you feel stalled, overwhelmed or in need of clarity.

What’s my goal?

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What’s the Chatter that’s in the way?

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What’s true?

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What are my choices?

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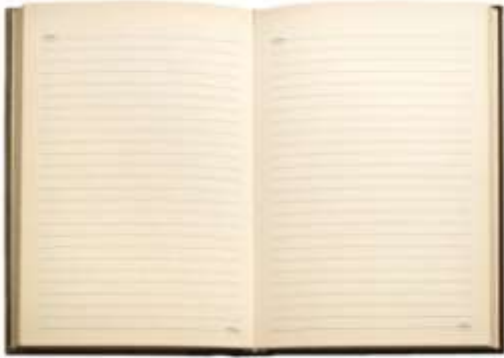
What’s my new belief or intention?

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What are my next steps?

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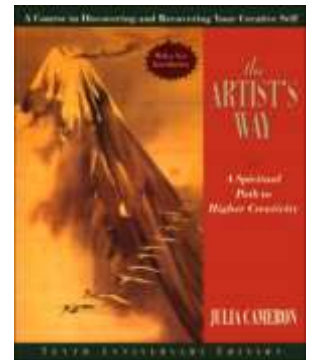
## Morning Pages or I A.M. Pages



Julia Cameron, in her wonderful and classic book “The Artist’s Way” advocates for doing an exercise called “morning pages” as a way to purge your mind of chatter and random thinking, making space for creativity and joy. It’s also another method to practice noticing the thoughts as they stream onto the page, rather than analyzing or obsessing.

The process is simple: every morning, before doing anything else, sit down and write out long-hand three pages of anything. It does not have to be profound or thoughtful; it doesn’t even have to make sense. The critical piece is to do it consistently, without expectation or judgment and without regard to being “in the mood” to write.

Cameron points out that your inner Censor (ie Chatter) will rear its head in your writing. She lays down this rule: “Always remember that your Censor’s negative opinions are not the truth.” With commitment, Cameron says, “It is impossible to write morning pages for an extended period of time without coming into contact with an unexpected inner power... They are a trail that we follow into our own interior, where we meet both our own creativity and our creator.”



I also use these pages as affirmation pages; I’ll get the chatter out for a page or two, then fill the rest of the pages with “I AM” affirmations.

Notes:

## Affirmations That Work!

Affirmations can be a powerful response to your chatterbox. You can use them proactively by incorporating them into your breathing or meditation on a regular basis. You can also have them at your disposal as a way to counter negative thoughts as they randomly bark at you. The most powerful affirmations are ones you create yourself.



An important caveat: what you resist, persists. Affirmations will work best when you acknowledge that the changes you are making are part of a larger process. Otherwise, your brain will not fully believe what you are saying. For instance, to say "I am healthy" when you are very sick is placing yourself in denial about your current reality. **Meet yourself where you're at!**

The first step is recognizing what is true in the moment; then change can occur. This is a basic principle of Gestalt psychotherapy, which offers the "Paradoxical Theory of Change." According to the theory, "change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not."

It's about acknowledging and embracing where and who we are now (which is often what we resist). When we can do that, we're taking the first step towards creating the change we wish to see.

A few guidelines for creating your own powerful affirmations:

1. Acknowledge your process – "I am becoming" "I am making progress" "I am ready for" "I welcome" "I am beginning"
2. Frame as a positive statement – "I embody peace" rather than "I feel no tension."
3. Express the affirmation as a statement of gratitude of what is, and what is to be – "I am grateful for my loving family and their continued health." "I feel gratitude for my journey and the abundance ahead." Speak about what you have, not what you want (which emphasizes what you don't have).
4. Make them active and present – "I am," "I have," "I believe"
5. Keep them short and memorable – "I am powerful." "I believe in myself." "I am open to happiness."

6. Repeat them to yourself – out loud – on a regular basis. Look in the mirror, or close your eyes and visualize what you are affirming. Notice the way you feel when you say the affirmation.
7. Your results will match your energy and vibration; offer the affirmation from a place of love, and first believe in your worthiness and “enoughness” to receive what you desire. Speak your truth from your heart.
8. Keep an open, aware attitude throughout the process. Make a commitment to take one action step every day in support of your affirmation. Notice “coincidence” and synchronicity; this is evidence of your affirmation in action.
9. Do what works for you! Affirmations are not a “should.” They can be silly or serious, bold or balancing. They are for YOU and no one else.

Here are a few to get you started:

*I trust my inner wisdom.  
I am growing stronger.  
I am ready for love.  
I am open to abundance.  
I know what's best for me.  
I have an infinite capacity for love.  
I have a choice, and I choose peace.  
I am calm and centered.  
I deserve good things.  
Everything is happening perfectly.  
I am blessed beyond measure.*



My Affirmations:



## “That’s Right!”

The world of improv is full of ideas and activities that stretch us outside our comfort zones. It is in-the-moment, real, uncensored. I picked up an energizing, barrier-busting activity from spiritual comedian Andy Dooley during a recent workshop. It’s an adaptation of the improv exercise called “That’s Right!” It’s generally done with two people, and you can do it alone if you don’t have a partner nearby when you need one.



Start with an affirmative statement of something you’re doing or thinking: “I’m working on a new product.” The other person (or your invisible friend) responds by saying “That’s right! You’re creating something that everyone will want!” To which you respond “That’s right! I’ll have waiting list even before it hits the store shelves!” “That’s right! And when it does go to market, it’s going to sell out within hours!” “That’s right, and it’ll be profiled in the local business news!” “That’s right! ...”

Get it? You build on the initial thought with an enthusiastic “That’s right!” and take it to the next level of possibility and imagination. Keep going with the thread, stretching it into your most fantastic dream of what’s possible. You may be surprised at what direction the exchange takes! Keep your mind open and the responses quick and fluid; share the first thing that comes to mind, and enjoy the opportunity to practice positive thinking and speaking. Have fun with it! When you say it out loud, and especially with someone else, it strengthens your energy field and sends signals to your brain that *YES! That’s right! I am capable of great things! Not only am I capable, it’s my responsibility to share my gifts with the world! That’s right!!*

Notes:

# In Review

Chatter = Disclaimers, Assumptions, Limiting Beliefs, Victim and Conditions

Small Talk can be Replaced with Intentional Talk

Our Goal = Replace Fear with Love as Often as Possible

The Quality and Substance of our Chatter is a Choice

*What's the most important thing you're taking away from this information?*

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*What are you committed to?*

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## *About Intentional Talk:*

Intentional Talk is about choosing our words - spoken and unspoken - with intention, mindfulness and authenticity. It's about saying what we mean, and meaning what we say.

Everyday is filled with opportunities to make positive and intentional word choices... what choices will you make?

~ Beth Buelow, Personal Coach, Speaker, Writer

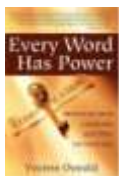
Visit [www.intentionaltalk.com](http://www.intentionaltalk.com) for inspiration, resources and information about coaching, workshops and presentations.

# EMPOWERING LANGUAGE

By paying special attention to how your thoughts, beliefs and ideas are expressing themselves, you will have at your disposal one of the most powerful tools for self-transformation: new word choice habits.

REPLACE...	WITH...
Should	Choose, desire, want
Need to, Have to	It's important to me to...
<b>Can't</b>	Am not willing to, choose not to
Always, never	Choose to, want to
Must	Choose, desire, want
But	And
Try	Will, Intend, Aim
Yea, uh-huh	yes
Nah, nope, unh-unh	No
<b>Just ("I'm just a receptionist")</b>	"Just" diminishes the statement of value/worth. Instead: "I am a receptionist."
Maybe, Possibly	The statement "maybe" or "possibly" implies uncertainty, lack of commitment
<b>I would like to, or I want to... [say or acknowledge]</b>	Simply make the statement or acknowledgment; a preface diminishes the statement
Kind of, sort of, you know	Unnecessary words that diminish your statement
I think [statement]	Make a clear statement of belief or fact. Prefacing it with "think" makes this an inappropriate "I" statement, casting unnecessary or false doubt on your knowledge.
<b>Like ("which one, like, speaks to you?")</b>	Do not use unless it is within a metaphor or expresses a feeling of caring for someone.
<b>"You make me..."</b>	"I feel angry/sad/afraid when..."
<b>"The system makes me..."</b>	"I am frustrated by a system that doesn't seem to allow for independent decisions."
<b>"I can't" implies you have no control over your life</b>	"I choose not to..." [puts you in control and at choice]
<b>"YOU" vs. "I" "When you..."</b>	"When I ..."

# Resources



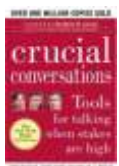
*Every Word Has Power: Switch on Your Language and Turn on Your Life* by Yvonne Oswald



*Taming Your Gremlin: A Surprisingly Simple Method for Getting Out of Your Own Way* by Rick Carson



*How to Win Friends & Influence People; How to Stop Worrying & Start Living* by Dale Carnegie



*Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* by Patterson et al.



*Excuses Begone! How to Change Lifelong, Self-Defeating Thinking Habits* by Wayne Dyer



*The Little Book of Yoga Breathing: Pranayama Made Easy...* by Scott Shaw



*Wherever You Go, There You Are* by Jon Kabat-Zinn



*The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* by Julia Cameron



*Feel the Fear... and Do It Anyway* by Susan Jeffers, PhD

# Inspiration for the Journey

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Courage is like a muscle; we strengthen it with use.  
~ Ruth Gordon

*True change and higher human adaptation are not made by resistance to the old habits.  
Change is not a matter of not doing something;  
It is a matter of doing something else.*  
~ Da Avabhasa (Da Free John)

The pathway is smooth.  
Why do you throw rocks before you?  
~ Ancient Sage Wisdom

It does not matter how slowly you go, so long as you do not stop.  
~ Confucius



*Fear grows in darkness; if you think there's a bogeyman around, turn on the light.*  
~ Dorothy Thompson

Start by doing what's necessary; next do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.  
~ St. Francis of Assisi

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.  
~ Eleanor Roosevelt

*If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.*  
~ Marcus Aurelius

If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right.  
~ Henry Ford

*[Luke:] I can't believe it. [Yoda:] That is why you fail.*

[Yoda:] Named must your fear be before banish it you can.

[Yoda:] Do or do not... there is no try.

Where are you? Here.  
What time is it? Now.  
What are you? This moment.  
~ Socrates/Dan Millman

