

How to Stop Being Too Hard on Yourself

Transformation of Your Inner Voices



Nicki McClusky

PCC, LCSW, BCC, CTPC, LPC
Self-Talk and Voice Coach
Consultant
Psychotherapist

Preface

We are on the planet, ostensibly, to mature into beings that contribute constructively to our own lives and to the benefit of the world. Purpose and meaning are discovered throughout our lifetimes, problems to solve and transformations to be made. We are gifted with our own lives and the relationships we forge with others over the years, sometimes experiencing great joy and, at other times, alas, great suffering. Of course, it is the 'great joy' we are after and prefer. And how might we best manifest ongoing joy? One way is to live our greatest potential---a true blessing from a Benevolent Creator.

However, many people do not feel like life is a blessing. They see life as a trial to be endured until it ends. Their quotient of suffering is way too high while the experience of joy or bliss is way too low. What makes this so, we might ask? Why do some people live fulfilled, happy lives as they discover and manifest their greatest potential while others suffer and struggle through each day? If we get down to the root cause of both joy and suffering, we find that the one, most important thing--- the dominant force in our lives that shapes our feelings, moods, beliefs and actions---is how we speak to ourselves. Our self-talk or the 60,000- 65,000 thoughts or so we have each day is going to determine everything else. If we are kind, compassionate and loving to ourselves, we will exude those energies. If we are way too hard on ourselves, we will emit the energies of defeat, anger, and hopelessness. For there is no force on earth quite like that which shapes us consciously and unconsciously: that force is *the way we think about ourselves (and others)*. The first Hermetic Principle, The Law of Mentalism, tells us that everything is first a thought. (I think the exception to this is the feeling, sensing world of fetuses and infants that dominate during those pre-verbal states.)

Those 65,000 or so thoughts we have each day, although highly varied, will be basically coated with a blanket of ill-will and harsh criticism if/when we are too hard on ourselves, or we'll enjoy the warming shawl of benevolence, encouragement, and kindness when we are on our own side. The majority of our thoughts will likely be either in support of us or against us. These thoughts we have---these pinnacles of inner attitude---equip us to stand tall with ourselves throughout the day or stand against ourselves as lowly beings each hour.

From this inner stance we will shape our feelings about ourselves, others, the world, our perspectives, and about what is possible or not. Our inner attitudes will dictate our "take" on everything---our vision, our understanding of someone or a situation, as well as how we interpret what we see, hear, smell, taste. Our momentary mindsets will be

determined by not only what we say to ourselves, but largely by how these thoughts shape our feelings about ourselves that result in magnificent action or dreary inaction.

If we are to live the gift, the blessing, the benevolent challenge, the discovery of our purpose on the earth and its glorious manifestation(s), it is essential and vital for us to speak to ourselves in supportive, compassionate ways, and to stop being too hard on ourselves, *once and for all*. Our 60,000-65,000 thoughts each day need to be based in loving wisdom that uplifts us---not in thoughts that condemn or put us down. We need to climb out of the dungeon of harsh self-judgment and catapult ourselves into the light of self-acceptance and self-love. And how do we do that? We change our voices from the inside out. We transform how we speak to ourselves, changing our self-talk each hour so that it serves us well, day in and day out.

We must learn how to discipline our minds and change our brains; in so doing, we are better able to discern wise courses of action as we use our minds in more beneficial ways. Our abilities to decipher fact from fiction, truth from lies, higher vibrations vs. lower vibrations, helpful energy instead of destructive energy, etc. grow stronger as we decontaminate our minds and create new neural pathways in our brains. As we learn to cool the fires set off by amygdala-generated reactivity, we gradually get to enjoy hours of inner peacefulness. As we transform our thinking, we soften our very own hearts, enabling us to listen to and live from our souls, our spirits, and our beautifully creative and true selves. And in order to function well in life---in both the being and doing realms---we need to develop a powerful voice deep inside of us that speaks from the energy of wisdom, nurturance and love.

Voices of Constriction and Expansion

Just listen for a moment. Who's speaking? What do you hear? What are you saying to yourself right now as you read these words? What thoughts and tone would you most like to hear throughout the thousands and thousands of messages you will be affected by today? Will you keep speaking to yourself from voices of constriction that bind you, or will you strive to shift into a whole new reality field that is spacious enough for you to imagine and realize your potential? Would you like to speak to yourself and others most of the time from voices inside you that enable you to live from your highest self---voices of expansion---or will you acquiesce and allow harsh criticism and small-minded thinking to cripple you? Will it be butterfly wings for you or balls and chains?

Did you notice the phrase "most of the time?" There are times when you'll need to draw healthy limits and establish firm boundaries that protect or define you as you go about

living from or being in your highest self. You will need to develop an over-arching part of yourself whose basic job is to nurture and boundary you---your thinking, your feelings, and your behavior. It needs to be connected to the greatest energy in the universe---Source Energy (or Divine Energy, if you prefer) --- in order for your highest good to always be considered.

The thought of constructive limits might seem incredulous to you if constriction or harshness has been your usual way of limiting yourself. If you've been too hard on yourself, you've no doubt clubbed and beaten yourself raw with harsh, constricting thoughts and severe, punishing "boundaries." You may have done this to pay for real or imagined crimes perpetrated by you, or simply to keep yourself in line. You may have functioned as a harsh judge and punitive jury without any possibility of reviewing the facts. However, there is another important and healthy way to manage and guide your thinking and your self-talk.

Sometimes we limit ourselves for our highest good. It can serve us well to say, "stop for now"; it behooves our best striving to occasionally say, "no." Our butterfly wings could become exhausted from endless flapping. We need to rest when tired. We need to hydrate and fuel our bodies in appropriate, life-giving ways, without stuffing or drowning ourselves in toxic substances. We, sometimes, need to hold our tongue, containing our amygdala-triggered fear or fury so compassion and reason have a chance to emerge. Over and over, you and I need to constructively limit ourselves so that we can, paradoxically, soar to our greatest heights in safe yet magnificent ways. In its pure form, constriction as a healthy boundary can protect us.

Protective Means (Thick Boundaries) in Need of Transformation

If you've built stone walls around you that have no doors or windows, blocking yourself from breathing fresh air or sticking your toe into any pool of potential, your boundaries are likely too thick. You may have originally had the best of protective intentions, and yet now you feel cut off from any expansive or productive form of living or connecting with others in loving, joyful ways. If you speak to yourself from inhibiting thought-forms, keeping yourself under-loved, under-valued, and not cherished at all, you may have spoken this way originally as a defense. However, shrinking up and remaining small eventually works against you; it is inadequate protection and weighty defensiveness. Dragging around these kinds of balls and chains creates massive, unproductive suffering. And, in the meantime, you miss out on all that you might become in this all-too-brief life. Missing out on manifesting your greatest potential would, indeed, be tragic.

You likely need inner permission to expand. You certainly need to speak to yourself in ways that inspire and make safe any attempt at flapping your butterfly wings. Along with wisdom that protects, you need to learn the language of self-nurturance and encouragement. In short, you need to develop an inner voice that you would have loved to have heard throughout your whole life---one that will sound very different as it wisely governs and lovingly mentors you and those 65,000 or so thoughts you have each day.

This book is written in service of you reaching your highest potential. It is written to help you compassionately understand what has been in your way, what keeps you stuck or suffering, and what you'll need to do to completely, once and for all (meaning, for you and for all [everyone]) to get on your own side.

This book invites you into an energy shift---an empowering, awakening kind of energy---based in solid self-love that shows up in new, wonderful self-talk. As you move forward through the material, please stay open to “what wants to happen” in you. The *invitation* in this work guides you toward *total transformation*; you're given the framework, mindset, tools and skills to make incredible changes within yourself. With effort, you can shift from constantly being too hard on yourself to becoming your own most wonderful advocate. And when you do, nothing, fortunately, will ever be the same.

Introduction

Women and men all over the world are suffering as a result of being way too hard on themselves. It has gone on far too long, even though many have made valiant attempts to change. You've searched for permanent techniques to help you shift your thoughts from negative to positive and have looked everywhere for a way to stop being too hard on yourself. You want to create and experience a qualitative and improved difference in your thought-forms and your self-talk. You, essentially, want to love yourself instead of harshly judging and criticizing yourself every hour of your life.

Your search has likely been an exhausting and unsatisfying one. Perhaps you've read book after book, gone to training after training, walking away with either some doubt or an unfulfilled wish for a changed present and future. You may have an underlying gnawing feeling: "It's such a huge task to change and monitor my thoughts and my self-talk." "I've been yammering at myself this way for years, and I seriously wonder if I can learn to manage how I think and change how I speak to myself."

A very long time ago, I had the same kind of unfulfilled wish and suspicious doubt. Even though I worked hard on myself year after year, changing my perceptions, understanding many complexities, gaining new skill in healing others and myself, using my skills and talents in new ways, I still longed to put a final piece in place: I wanted, once and for all, to be governed by self-talk that made me feel peaceful, content, happy, inspired and creative. I had changed tremendously, grown a lot, and yet I still wasn't where I wanted to be if and when self-castigation arose. I was still way too hard on myself in those moments, which felt terrible and took up emotional time I didn't want to spend in that way. And instead of celebrating the fact that I had traveled light-years in the realm of self-actualization and growth, I found an inner voice berating me for not being able to stop being too hard on myself in those less frequent moments of self-castigation. Go figure! What a mental trap that was.

I was determined to solve the mystery, once and for all. I knew I would not stop searching, listening, and figuring out what would create a complete and permanent shift in me and the many others with whom I worked; self-talk that eradicated inner peace or joy came under great scrutiny.

The Energy of Potential

Little did I realize, then, that I would be playing around with some principles or aspects of quantum physics and the potential-based approach to life. When your (or my) self-talk has taken on the *energetic form* of imprisoning self-repressive thought, then the

possibility of change occurring is very small. You (and I) are stuck in a three-dimensional world (classical physics) much like a three-legged mental stool standing in the corner: one leg is your destructive self-talk, the second leg is you as its victim, and the third is you feeling quite terrible about yourself. This inner reality feels as fixed and solid as the couch or chair you're sitting on right now. Observing yourself in this way, without the benefit of a different mental/emotional framework or without knowing how to create a completely different energy field for yourself, you keep reinforcing the old one.

What is needed, instead, is the realization that all of us have the energy of untapped potential inside of us, all of the time: pure, vibrating energy in *wave state* is the energy of pure potential (Quantum Physics). "How we choose to engage the wave and give shape to the potential by *collapsing wave to particle*, determines the form that will be created." (Alan Seale, Create A World That Works)

Coming to think about your mind, the way you think, and your *self-talk as a field of potential* can be quite *liberating*. Coming to know that there are very clear ways you can transform your self-talk, particularly by thinking about it as *energy in motion* capable of evolving into many forms, will empower you greatly. As your thoughts (*particles*) manifest into beliefs (*concrete form*) they have the capacity to energize you or deplete you. Realizing that you have far more choice over the kind of energy your self-talk produces, in and of itself, will bring you the joy of realistic hope. (Just standing here in that realization without knowing what will happen may give you a hint of what wave energy is.)

Living in the quantum field of pure potential can not only transform your self-talk---it can entirely shift the way you approach your life and the way in which you contribute to the world: knowing this, you can influence the pure potential in you by imagining and then choosing a reality field in which you'd rather live---not the one in which you're stuck.

The Spiral, not a Straight Line

Growth and learning do not seem to have a straight-line trajectory. New ideas, new awareness, skill development and insight seem to co-mingle and inform one another as we read new material, stretch our minds, and learn from/with one another. During the last eight years, my learning has skyrocketed, spiraled, been shaped into a ball or a shaft of light---only to be filled with more energy and wonder as I add to it. Sometimes I see things interweaving into new fabric, or new colors bursting skyward. Or I'll see ripples in the water moving outward. There is no clear-cut way or predictable pattern to growth. However, along the way, I've found new understandings that respond to deep questions that long for profound responses. I've found and received a few of the answers myself during quiet, inner-dwelling time where the potential of pure energy

has had a chance to shift everything.

Here are a few things I've come to ponder:

- We, each, have tremendous potential in us that is just waiting to emerge in beneficial forms that may astound us.
- Self-talk and thought forms are powerful chunks of energy that can be transformed into different kinds of energy fields, new mindsets, and amazing manifestations.
- Learning about *how the mind affects the brain* is remarkably helpful in this transformative process.
- Learning to implement the powerful practice of *Mindfulness* can revolutionize our lives.
- Learning how to decipher “who’s speaking” ---a voice of tight constriction or a voice of generous expansion---is essential and empowering.
- Putting history’s imprint in perspective, rather than having it govern us now, is ultimately freeing.
- Living in the energy of benevolence, forgiveness, and compassion is and feels miraculous

And, what also has been discovered:

- We each need to expand or grow a new, magnificent voice in us---what I call the *Nurturing Wise Big Self*---a voice that speaks from the wisdom of the ages and the sacredness of Source or Divine Energy.
- Discoveries like this are a result of the potential-based approach to finding out what “wants to be said, what wants to happen.”
- When we change and transform how we speak to ourselves, we reshape our potential contribution to our families, communities, workplaces, and the world at large.

Emergence and Transformation Within the Book

Even though I began writing this book in the late spring of 2011, it was not until I let what “wanted to be said” from *potential* that the missing piece emerged. For about six months, I simply let ideas, feelings, thoughts, burbles of wondering, light-beams and shooting stars ramble around within my being. I trusted that the energy of potential---wave energy--- would eventually collapse into *particles*---new thoughts and new concepts. It did. What emerged and took *form*, coming from inspiration and my spiritual core, came the idea of an over-arching voice---a *Nurturing Wise Big Self*---whose basic role is to boundary and/or nurture.

This voice was the missing piece. As I partnered with this new emergence, the whole (the message and energy of the book) started to inform the parts---the chapters---differently. What could've felt like Sisyphus rolling a boulder up a steep hill shifted into the energy of clouds coming gently down to earth. Everything felt lighter and much more doable---even writing the chapters that describe complex issues. The book shifted from writing what I thought I wanted to say, to writing what the *potential* of this work wanted to say. Chapters flowed out of my fingers and onto the page. It felt like an energy beyond my own was informing the book.

The Invitation

I invite you to ponder the ideas presented here, as well as ideas from other authors discussed in this work. If you truly want to change from being way too hard on yourself to getting completely on your own side, then you will need to learn how to work with or partner with your energy differently than you have previously.

You'll need to think about energy as potential that can be shaped into different forms in your life---including the energy of speaking. You'll need to be willing to try out, practice, and use, over and over, many of the new concepts and skills presented in this work that really work for you as you discover what is most efficient and best for you.

Alongside your growing ability to notice your inner world, how you speak to yourself, what you're feeling, and how these all coalesce to create your beliefs and inform your actions, you'll discover how to use the great potential of your mind and certain mindfulness practices to change many things. Your thoughts, your feelings, how you are *present* to yourself and your self-talk that then emerges, will likely be at the top of the list. You'll be using your mind to change your brain: your self-regard and behavior will shift, and your life will *improve* so that you can live with yourself and others in a way that heretofore you've only imagined in your dreams. Your newly improved self-talk will create a very different impact in the lives of those individuals or groups you touch. In short, you will be co-creating different energy fields by speaking from the language of your heart, your soul, and your positively focused mind.

Transformation needn't take a lifetime nor do you need to hurry; we'll simply encourage you to notice when you're ready to step out of an old energetic paradigm and into a new one. Knowing you don't like the present reality field you're in---one that produces misery from self-debasing talk---you get to imagine and create a new reality field that is fueled by the pure potential of love, support, curiosity, kindness, and magnificence. Newly emerging self-talk will demonstrate how you have changed and are changing your voices from the inside out. Who knows---perhaps you'll even be able to take a quantum leap out from under the *blanket of self-condemnation*, landing boldly into the

light shining on you as a beloved child of the Most High Source. And in that moment, you will speak to yourself in such a dramatically different way. The power of your inner voices will shift into self-talk that liberates you from the old, infusing you with the glorious new.

Noticing and Naming Which Voice is Speaking

Clients that transform themselves enormously have done so as a result of coming to learn about the various voices they speak from within themselves. I (and Source Energy) have created a *new paradigm* that empowers you all to *notice and name* the voice from which you speak; then you can explore what's going on in you more deeply and more compassionately. *Noticing* helps you prepare to shift your energy by speaking to yourself from a voice that serves your highest good. Over time you'll be able to discern if you're speaking from the voice of your Judge, your Teen Self, or your small e, ego. You'll also find yourself wanting to speak more from the voice of your true self, your soul, and your Mature Ego. You'll discover that you'll need to expand or grow a most magnificent voice in you that I hope will become the over-arching mentor and guide for your whole self and personality: the voice of your Nurturing Wise Big Self that boundaries and nurtures. As you do this, you will finally have inside you, by you, from you, and for you, a wonderful place to turn in times of difficulty and in times of celebration. The loving arms you've yearned to be held by or the big welcoming lap you've longed to jump into will be available to you, nonstop, 24/7. S/he resides in you, for you, filled with love, fueled by the bountiful energy of the Divine/Universe.

The Organization of this Book

Often, authors spend the first half of a book convincing you as to why you should read their work, how the problem you're facing is dire, what the research shows about the dire problem you face, and that the author truly understands your predicament. Then, the last half launches into solving your problem or shifting the predicament into something far better. My book is organized differently.

I've chosen to let you know that I truly understand how horrific negative self-talk can be--throughout the entire work. I also decided to introduce the new paradigm for transformation and change in some of the earliest chapters; I want you to be *encouraged and have realistic hope*, sooner, not later, as you read. As a coach, my heart wants to secure a spot for you early on in the potential-based approach to change and transformation rather than having you become discouraged while reading about some of the research regarding how destructive voices express the hating process. You already know how horrible it feels to have self-hate or derisive self-talk running the show. We are working to produce better-feeling thought, speech and voicing---sooner

Instead of later---rather than that which is horrible or depressive.

Of course, my work stands on the shoulders of many people I've learned from over the last 40+ years of professional study, clinical psychotherapy and professional coaching. Some of the authors I think noteworthy in this field of shared concern are presented for your consideration and learning. My intent is for you to have a solid or burgeoning confidence that says, "I can do this!" "No wonder it's been so tough to change!" It will serve you well to stand in self-compassionate energy *before* you read about such things as the "voice of conditioning," the "alien voice," how unconscious agendas may be manifesting in self-criticism, how some people come to love hate, etc. As fascinating as this material is, I want you to have your *Nurturing Wise Big Self* in place as you consider what else might be going on in you. I also think being able to *notice and name* which voice in you is speaking as you read on will be invaluable. You'll then be practicing some of the skills I give you early in the book as you digest the second half. That's what we do in coaching: we focus on *building strengths right now* as we transform anything that isn't quite working for us. In doing so, we explore a potential-based future that serves our highest self and that of others, right now in the present moment.

Our Collective Futures

We've all heard the wise advice about changing ourselves first if we want to change the world. I'm sure it is true. If we truly want to manifest our life's purpose as we each make our own unique contribution to the world, then the first and most important place to start is to examine *how and what we think*; this shows up immediately in how we speak as we express ourselves. Which voice in us has the most power? Are we helping to create a shift in the energy of the mass consciousness for the good of all---including the health of the planet---or do we speak from a voice that ensures everyone's destruction? How do you know? *Simply pay attention to how you speak to yourself: are you growing and thriving, or are you not?* When you speak from inside voices that help you grow and thrive, then you are in a position to help others do the same. When you speak to yourself from the language of possibility and love, this is the energy you contribute to the world. When you say things like, "I want to do my part to ensure a wonderful world for my children and grandchildren," then you will likely take action to manifest that intention. If, on the other hand, you speak from a voice that says, "We're beyond all hope---just look at the cataclysmic climate change---then you inadvertently contribute to the problem, not the potential transformation of how we might engage with one another to heal the earth.

We are all one. We are all connected. For example, when I watch the impact of a hurricane on my brothers and sisters, my heart aches. When you hurt, it hurts me. Yes---we all have mirror neurons in our brains; I think we have them in our hearts and souls as well. When you find solutions and create realistic hope for yourself, my energy is uplifted. When you speak from your voice of potential, it inspires me to join your efforts. When you nurture and boundary yourself in truly healthy ways, I imagine you acting in a nurturing, 'boundaried' way toward our planet, and it makes me smile.

All of our energies affect one another and our earth, as you likely already know. How you speak to yourself (your self-talk) will echo throughout the universe; the energy of your voice radiates throughout the earth. Let's make sure it's a magnificent voice from which you speak.

Part I Core Concepts and Principles

What it Means to Change your Voices from the Inside Out

Pathways for Changing Your Voices

Understanding Unique Voices in Yourself

The Voices of Constriction and Expansion and the Nurturing Wise Big Self

Transformation Voice Coaching Tool Regarding You

Transformation Voice Coaching Tool Regarding Others

