Chapter 16
The Benefits of Self–Talk and Imagination for Your Mental Health and Happiness Adolescence in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary, fast-paced world, adolescents are confronted with unparalleled challenges and pressures to excel. The core objective of this chapter is to furnish readers, particularly mental health professionals and adults, with pragmatic methodologies to aid adolescents in navigating the challenges that beset their lives. In conclusion, this chapter serves as a valuable reservoir of knowledge for those who are concerned about the well-being of adolescents in today's fiercely competitive and demanding milieu. It furnishes a comprehensive comprehension of self-talk and its various manifestations, elucidating their profound influence on an individual's thoughts, emotions, and actions. Ultimately, the chapter advocates for a proactive approach to adolescent well-being, underscoring the primacy of prevention over remediation.

INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you have a younger brother or sister, as I am guessing many of you might have. What kind of company would you want for your sibling? The answer will be obviously good company. A very well

known proverb comes to mind 'A man is known by the company that he keeps'. But why? Lets start this chapter with an example, imagine that your younger sibling has just started college. There are a lot of difficult situations that your sibling will face like all the others who join college, for example: managing the college work with assignments, studies, exams, taking care of one self, managing time, fulfilling expectation and even clashes with peers, breaking of romantic relationships, etc. Now imagine the individual is going through these different situations with a company of friends who are constantly saying things 'there is no need to study', 'nothing comes out of hard work, we just need to be smart to copy', 'studying wont give a future, lets just start to do some random work, earning easy money is important', etc. What can be the possible effects of listening to these statements continuously for the major part of the day? The effect will differ from person to person. However, we cannot deny that such an exposure has a high possibility of effecting an individual in an unhealthy manner. Some may be effected more then others but that is a topic for another discussion. Some might accept these statements as true and get influenced i.e. they may start behaving in ways that are aligned with these statements from that particular company of friends. These kinds of peer influences have been commonly seen in colleges. Decent kids getting into so called negative or bad company and their grades start falling, they may start getting into trouble. The good news is that this doesn't happen with every one. Many students may end up being part of this bad or negative company but they end up realizing that 'this is not what I want for myself' and make the choice of parting ways with those peers, but for that to happen the student will have to tell themselves what they really want for themselves and their lives.

Now let's imagine some positive company for this person in the above example i.e. the group of friends that the person has is constantly talking about their goals and aims in life, how there are so many opportunities available now a days with education, doing good with studies will lead to a good job and a better life style, always aiming to be more involved in projects, discussing things that are taught in class and also helping to learn it better. In this scenario how will the person in question be effected? The chances are that the person might feel more motivated to work towards ones own future.

Both scenarios seem very obvious and natural – that when we are constantly listening to negative or unhealthy content or when we are constantly in a negative company it will have some negative effect on us until we choose to leave. While if we are constantly listening to some thing positive or we are with positive company, a positive impact can be seen. When some one talks to us negatively about ourselves or the world, how does that feel? We know that some parts of it may be true but it still doesn't feel very great. You must have come across certain people who are crying and complaining all the time, who talk in a very discouraging manner sometimes even insulting, taunting or criticizing. Does it feel nice to be around these people? When we don't like what the other person is saying or when we realize that the company we are in, is not good we may choose to walk away from them, spend less time with them or we may even start to avoid them.

Now pause for a couple of minutes and ask yourself self, 'how do I talk to myself?' Some individuals may even say I don't talk to myself at all. But upon closer examination it can be observed that there is some thing going on in our mind almost all the time. When we start observing we realize that there is constant conversation going on in our minds. For example - When you are standing in front of your wardrop choosing cloths for the day there is a dialogue or a conversation in your mind about what you want to wear and why, why you don't like certain cloths but you may like the others or that you don't have anything nice to wear you need to buy something new. For some one who is looking at you while you stand in front of your wardrop it might feel like you are doing nothing just standing. However, there is great deal of deliberation going on in your mind. Some thing like – 'who are the people I may

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