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Activity 11 Developing Realistic Self-Talk

Self-talk is the ongoing internal dialogue we have with ourselves throughout much of the day. Our thoughts can be accurate, positive, and supportive, or they can be exaggerated and negative. Self-talk is closely related to self-esteem and self-concept. Realistic self-talk can help maintain positive self-esteem, the belief that one is a good and competent person, worthy of friendship and love. A negative internal dialogue can reinforce negative self-esteem and can make behavior change very difficult. Substituting realistic self-talk for negative self-talk can help you build and maintain self-esteem and cope better with the challenges in your life.

First, take a closer look at your current pattern of self-talk. Use your health journal to track self-talk, especially as it relates to your target behavior. Does any of your self-talk fall into the common patterns of distorted negative self-talk shown in Chapter 10 *Fit and Well* (Chapter 3 in *Core Concepts in Health*)? If so, use the examples of realistic self-talk from Chapter 10 in *Fit and Well* or Chapter 3 in *Core Concepts in Health* to develop more accurate and rational responses. Write your current negative thought in the left-hand column, and then record more realistic responses in the right-hand column.

Current Self-Talk About Target Behavior	More Realistic Self-Talk
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____