

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 09

How to Talk to Yourself

Full episode script · English

996 lines

Your English Toolbox

Welcome to the Slow Listening podcast series, the show where we train your ears step by step.

Today, we're diving into something that affects all of us; how the way we talk to ourselves shapes our confidence and learning.

Julia, listen to this question carefully.

Have you ever thought you made a really dumb mistake?

I have.

Sometimes that voice inside can be so quick to judge, and it's not always kind.

And that self-talk can either push us forward or hold us back.

So here's a challenge for everyone listening; pay close attention to your thoughts.

Are they helping you grow, or getting in your way?

If you've ever felt stuck or frustrated, this episode is for you.

Let's learn to change that voice together, starting

today.

And here's the surprising truth; you've been talking to yourself your whole life, whether you realize it or not.

We were inspired by the book How to Talk to Yourself by Roe Mitchell, and we'll use its ideas as the foundation for today's discussion.

And here's why you'll want to stay with us today; the book How to Talk to Yourself by Roe Mitchell is full of strategies to transform that inner voice.

Reading the whole book might take you six to eight hours, but in this episode, just 30 minutes, we'll bring you the best lessons.

Think about that.

Half an hour now saves you hours of reading later and gives you the tools to change a lifelong habit.

So let's dive in together.

Today, you're not just listening; you're rewriting the script of your own mind.

So let's start with a simple question.

Julia, how often do you actually pay attention to the voice in your head?

That's a great way to begin.

Honestly, I used to almost never notice My inner voice was like background

noise; it was there all the time, but I

didn't realize how much it influenced me

until I started paying attention.

here's the thing;

most of the time, it wasn't kind.

It was

critical,

impatient,

and sometimes

even cruel.

Let me ask you, Martin, when you catch

yourself thinking, are those thoughts

usually supportive or judgmental?

If I'm being real, for years

they were judgmental.

If I made a mistake, I would call myself

stupid or lazy or careless, and I thought

that being hard on myself would push me to

improve.

But what actually happened, I

just felt smaller, more anxious, less

motivated, and I think many of our

listeners can relate.

Quick question for

you, audience; if you had to describe your

self-talk right now in one word, what

would it be?

Encouraging, harsh, neutral?

Take a second to think about it.

Yes.

That's such an important reflection
because once you become aware of the
quality of your self-talk, you realize
it's like a constant companion.

Imagine
walking around all day with someone
whispering in your ear; if that person is
supportive, you feel stronger; if that
person is critical, life feels heavier.

And here's something fascinating; the
voice we develop usually starts early in
life.

Childhood experiences, school,
social comparisons, even social media; all
of these shape how we speak to
ourselves.

Exactly.

I remember a time in school when
I froze during a presentation.
classmates laughed, and from that day on,
my inner voice kept repeating, "You're
terrible at public speaking.

Don't even
try." And the crazy part?

That voice
stayed with me for years long after the
event itself.

Julia, do you have a moment
when your self-talk began to turn
negative?

Yes, definitely.

For me, it was around

body image.

I compared myself to other

girls in magazines and on TV, and I told

myself, "You're not good enough." That

became a loop in my head, and every time I

looked in the mirror, the voice repeated

It's heartbreaking how quickly those

words become beliefs, and this brings us

to a crucial point.

The brain actually

treats repeated thoughts like facts.

So if

you tell yourself every day that you're a

failure, your brain starts to believe it.

That's huge, and it also explains why

self-talk can affect not just our emotions

but even our physiology.

Think about it;

when you say, "I can't handle this,"

your body reacts with stress.

Your heart

races, your breathing gets shallow.

On the

other hand, if you say, "This is tough,

but I'll take it one step at a time," your

body relaxes a little.

Audience, have you

ever noticed how a single thought can

change how your body feels?

That's the

power of language.

And the language we use with ourselves

matters even more than what others say to

us

because we hear it constantly. And

unfortunately, many of us use words we

would never say to a friend.

We call

ourselves stupid, worthless, ugly,

lazy.

So here's a question for you,

Martin.

Why do you think it's easier to be

compassionate to others than to

ourselves?

I think it's because we're taught to value

kindness toward others, but not toward

ourselves.

Society often praises

self-criticism as discipline.

If you push yourself harder, people say

you're strong.

But actually, relentless

self-criticism just breaks you down, and

that's why the shift to compassionate

self-talk is revolutionary.

It's not

indulgence; it's survival.

It's

growth.

Yes, and that shift starts with awareness.

Here's a simple exercise.

For one day,

write down the sentences you hear in your

head.

Don't judge them; just collect them

like a scientist.

At the end of the day,

look at your list.

Are the sentences

supportive or destructive?

That awareness

alone can be shocking.

I love that.

And once you see the

patterns, the next step is to challenge

them.

Let me give an example.

Suppose you

write down, "I always fail." Now,

is that true?

Always?

Or have you had

successes too?

When you ask these questions, you weaken

the power of the negative statement.

Julia, do you have a favorite technique

for challenging negative self-talk?

Yes.

I like reframing.

For example, instead of

saying, "I'm terrible at this," I try to

say, "I'm learning.

I haven't mastered it

yet, but I'm improving." The word yet is

so powerful.

It opens the door to growth.

Audience, you can try this right

now.

Take a negative sentence you often

tell yourself and add the word yet.

Notice how it changes the feeling.

That's brilliant.

And there's another tool

I like, the friend test.

Ask yourself,

"Would I say this to a friend in the same

situation?" If the answer is no, then why

say it to yourself?

And here's a little

secret.

Your brain doesn't know the

difference between real and imagined

experiences.

So when you practice kinder

self-talk, your brain begins to believe it

just as it once believed the negative

loops.

Exactly.

And this is where repetition

comes in.

Just like negative thoughts become beliefs

through repetition, positive thoughts can

too.

But it takes practice.

You can't

say, "I'm worthy," once and expect your

brain to change overnight.

It's about

building a habit of kindness.

practical way is affirmations.

But, and I

want to emphasize this, not empty,

unrealistic affirmations.

Saying, "I'm the

most successful person in the world,"

when you don't believe it will feel fake.

Instead, use gentle, believable

affirmations like, "I'm learning to trust

myself."

That's key.

Start with something you can believe and

pair it with action.

For example, if you say, "I'm capable of

growth," then actually try something new,

even if it's small.

The action reinforces

the thought.

Julia, can you share a personal example of
how affirmations or reframing worked for
you?

Sure.

A few years ago, I was terrified of
speaking up in meetings.

My inner voice

said, "You'll sound stupid." So I started
using a new phrase, "I have ideas worth
sharing." At first, it felt
uncomfortable, but each time I spoke, even
a little, I reinforced that
belief.

Over time, the fear shrank.

And that's the magic.

Words plus

repetition plus action equal to
transformation.

Love that formula.

And I think we should

also talk about mindfulness

because sometimes self-talk spirals so
fast we don't even notice it.

Mindfulness, pausing, breathing, grounding

creates a space where we can catch the
thought before it controls us.

Audience, next time you feel anxious, try
this.

Stop, take three slow

breaths, and ask, "What did I just tell

myself?" You'll be surprised by what you

hear.

Yes.

And mindfulness also helps us develop

compassion

because when we slow down, we realize that

everyone struggles.

You're not the only

one with a critical inner voice.

That

shared humanity makes it easier to be kind

to yourself.

And kindness is not

weakness; it's strength.

takes courage to change the way you speak

to yourself after years of criticism.

Beautifully said.

And that courage brings

us to another idea,

setbacks.

Even when you start practicing

positive self-talk, you'll have days when

the old voice comes back.

That's normal.

The point isn't perfection; it's

persistence.

Julia, what do you say to

yourself when you catch the old critical

voice returning?

I say, "Ah, there you are." I treat it

like an old habit knocking on my door.

don't have to invite it in.

I just notice it and return to my new

habit, and that's important, noticing

without judgment.

If you judge yourself

for having negative thoughts, you just

create another layer of negativity.

That's so powerful.

Audience, th- think

about this.

Can you notice your critical

thoughts without fighting them?

Can you

let them pass like clouds in the sky?

That's a practice worth

trying.

And to close this part of our

conversation, I want to highlight one big

takeaway.

Your self-talk is not just

noise.

It's shaping your beliefs, your

emotions, even your body.

But the good

news is you can train it.

You can

transform it from an enemy into an

ally.

Martin, before we move forward, I

want to ask you something.

When you

started to change your self-talk, did it

feel natural, or was it

awkward, almost like pretending?

Oh, it felt so fake at first.

I remember standing in front of the mirror

saying things like, "You're doing your

best.

You're learning," and my brain was

like, "No, you're not.

You're lying." It

was uncomfortable, but here's what I

discovered.

At the beginning, it's not

about believing the words instantly.

It's

about planting seeds.

Over time, if you

keep watering them, they grow into real

beliefs.

Exactly.

I think that's one of the biggest

challenges.

People expect instant

results.

They say, "I tried positive

self-talk once, and it didn't work." But

the truth is you need repetition.

It's

just like learning a language.

You can't

study English for one day and expect

fluency.

You need daily practice.

Audience, think about how long you've been

practicing negative self-talk, probably

years, maybe decades.

So it makes sense

that changing it takes time.

That's such a good analogy.

And speaking

of practice, let's share some specific

strategies that really work.

One that I

love is journaling.

Every night, I write

down three things, a negative thought I

caught myself saying, how I can reframe

it, something I'm grateful for.

This way,

I don't just notice the negativity.

actively rewrite it.

That's brilliant, and I do something

similar.

In the morning, I write what I

call compassionate intentions.

example, today, I'll speak kindly to

myself when I make mistakes.

It's like

setting a gentle rule for the day.

Martin,

do you ever combine self-talk with

physical grounding, like breathing or

movement?

Yes.

In fact, one of my favorite practices

is pairing affirmations with deep

breathing.

I inhale and think, "I'm strong

enough to face this," and I exhale and

release tension.

When the body and the

words align, the message feels more real.

Audience, you can try this right

now with us.

Take a deep breath in and

silently say, "I'm safe."

Now breathe out and imagine letting go of

stress.

Doesn't that feel different?

I love that, and it's so accessible.

can do it at your desk, on the

bus, anywhere.

Another tool I want to

share is visualization.

When

I catch myself being harsh, I imagine a

supportive friend sitting next to me.

picture what they would say.

Usually, it's

much kinder than my own words.

Then I

borrow their voice.

That's powerful, and it connects to

something else, creating a supportive

inner coach.

Imagine the best teacher you've ever had,

the one who encouraged you, corrected you

gently, believed in you.

What if you let that voice live inside

your head permanently?

And here's a question for our listeners.

Who would you choose as your inner coach?

Maybe a teacher, a mentor, a parent, or

even a fictional character.

Picture their words guiding you.

That's such a fun exercise.

I once had a

student who chose Yoda from Star Wars as

her inner coach.

She said whenever she

felt nervous, she imagined Yoda

whispering, "Calm you must be." It worked

for her because it made her smile and

relax.

So don't be afraid to be

playful.

Self-talk doesn't have to be

heavy.

It can be creative.

I love that example.

And here's another angle, environment.

we spend time with influences our inner

dialogue.

If you're surrounded by people

who constantly criticize, your self-talk

will echo that.

But if you're with people

who lift you up, you absorb their

language.

Julia, have you ever noticed how

friendships shape your inner

voice?

Absolutely.

I used to have a group of

friends who were very sarcastic.

They

teased each other all the time.

At first,

I thought it was harmless. But I realized

their words echoed in my head as

self-criticism.

When I moved into a more

supportive circle, my self-talk softened

too.

So audience, take a look at your

relationships.

Are they feeding your

critical voice or your compassionate one?

That's so important, and I think we should

address a common fear here.

People worry that if they're kind to

themselves, they'll become lazy.

They

think, "If I stop criticizing myself, I'll

never improve." Julia, what do you

say to that?

I say the opposite is true.

Imagine a

coach who constantly screams at their

athletes, "You're useless.

You'll never

win." Do you think those athletes will

perform well?

Probably not.

They'll feel

crushed.

Now imagine a coach who says,

"You've got this.

Mistakes are part of

learning.

Keep going." That athlete is

much more likely to thrive.

Self-talk

works the same way.

Compassion fuels

growth.

Yes, and this is supported by psychology

too.

Studies show that

self-compassion leads to greater

resilience, persistence, and even better

performance.

Criticism might give you a

short burst of energy, but compassion

sustains you for the long run.

Audience, think about it.

When was the

last time harsh words actually made you

improve, and when was the last time

encouragement helped you try again?

That's a perfect reflection.

And speaking

of trying again, we should talk about

setbacks

because no matter how much you practice

positive self-talk, you'll have days when

the critical voice shouts louder.

What

matters is how you respond.

Instead of

saying, "I failed at being positive," you

can say, "This is part of the process.

It's about progress, not perfection."

I completely agree.

One technique I use is giving my inner

critic a nickname.

Mine is the Judge.

When it speaks up, I

say,

"Thanks, Judge, but I'm not interested

right now." It helps me separate the

thought from my identity.

Julia, do you

use something similar?

Yes,

I call mine the Parrot

because it just repeats old lines it

learned years ago.

When I hear it, I

imagine a little bird on my shoulder

squawking nonsense.

That image makes it

less threatening

and sometimes even funny.

Audience, maybe you can try naming your

inner critic too.

Give it a silly name and

see how much easier it becomes to ignore.

That's such a good idea, and humor is

underrated in self-growth.

Laughing at the

inner critic takes away its power.

Now, before we wrap up this part, I want

to highlight another strategy:

gratitude.

Writing down three things

you're grateful for each day shifts your

focus.

It trains your brain to look for
the positive instead of the negative.

Over
time, gratitude becomes the default voice
in your head.

Yes, gratitude is like rewiring your
brain, and it doesn't have to be big
things.

It can be as simple as, "I'm
grateful for my morning coffee," or, "I'm
grateful for the smile of a stranger."

Audience,
what's one small thing you feel grateful
for right now?

Say it out loud or write it down.

Notice
how it changes your mood
instantly.

Beautiful.

So to summarize this part of
our conversation, self-talk feels awkward
at first, but practice makes it natural.

Journaling, reframing, breathing,
visualization, and gratitude are powerful
tools.

Your environment shapes your inner
voice.

Compassion is not laziness;
it's the fuel for resilience.

Setbacks are normal, and humor can be your

secret weapon.

Julia, I think these are the building

blocks of a healthier relationship with

ourselves.

I agree.

And in the next part, let's go

even deeper.

Let's talk about how

compassionate self-talk influences

relationships, work, and long-term

identity

because the way we speak to ourselves

doesn't just stay inside; it changes how

we show up in the world.

Yes, I'm excited for that.

So stay with

us, listeners, because we're about to

explore how transforming your inner voice

can transform your entire life.

Julia, you

mentioned something at the end of our

last part that really struck me.

The way

we talk to ourselves doesn't stay inside;

it spills into how we interact with the

world.

Can we dig deeper into that?

Of course.

Think about this.

If your

self-talk is harsh, you probably approach

relationships with insecurity.

You might

over-apologize, avoid conflict, or doubt

your worth.

But if your self-talk is

compassionate, you show up with

confidence, patience, and openness.

Other words, the dialogue you have with

yourself becomes the tone of your dialogue

with everyone else.

Yes, I've noticed that too.

When I was

deeply self-critical, I was defensive with

others. If someone gave me feedback, I

heard it as an attack

because my own inner critic was already

attacking me.

Once I softened my

self-talk,

feedback became easier to accept.

Audience, have you ever noticed that how

you treat yourself sets the stage for how

you treat others?

And it's not just relationships; it's work

too.

Imagine going into a job

interview.

If your self-talk says, "You're

going to mess this up," your body will

tense, and your answers will sound

uncertain.

But if your self-talk says,

"You're prepared; you've got value to

share," you walk in taller, calmer, more

persuasive.

That's the invisible power of

inner language.

Exactly.

And this is where we can talk about

identity.

Because over time, self-talk

doesn't just describe us, it defines us.

If you keep saying, "I'm shy," or, "I'm

unlucky," those words become part of your

identity.

But if you change the script to, "I'm

learning to be more confident,"

or, "I'm creating opportunities," your

identity shifts too.

Julia, do

you remember a moment when changing your

inner language changed your identity?

Yes, I do.

For years, I told myself, "I'm bad with

technology." It was a fixed identity.

Then

I decided to reframe it.

"I'm learning

new tools step by step." That simple shift

opened doors.

I started experimenting,

asking for help, even teaching

others.

I went from bad with technology to

curious about technology.

So the words we choose don't just reflect

who we are, they sculpt who we become.

That's powerful, and it makes me wonder,

what hidden identities are our listeners

carrying right now because of their

self-talk?

Maybe someone keeps saying, "I'm always

anxious," or, "I'm not creative." What

if those aren't facts but just habits of

language?

Audience, here's a

challenge.

Pick one limiting phrase you

say about yourself and reframe it into a

growth phrase.

Write it down.

Repeat it

daily.

Watch how your sense of self

evolves.

That's a fantastic exercise, and I'd add

another.

Speak your reframed identity out

loud.

There's something about hearing your

own voice that makes it more real.

It's

like giving yourself permission to change.

Yes.

Because the inner voice and the outer

voice are connected.

The more you speak

kindly to yourself, the more authentic

your words to others become.

And I think we should address something

really human here, setbacks in

relationships with ourselves.

Sometimes we

make progress then fall back into old

patterns.

Julia, what's your advice when

that happens?

First, I remind myself that healing is not

linear.

Imagine a graph.

It's not a

straight line up; it's a zigzag.

Some days

are better, some worse, but the overall

direction matters.

Second, I practice

self-forgiveness.

Instead of saying, "I

ruined everything," I say, "Today was

tough, but tomorrow is another chance."

Forgiveness resets the cycle.

That's so important.

Because if we punish

ourselves for negative self-talk, we just

create more negativity.

Forgiveness is like a reset button.

Audience, have you ever forgiven yourself

out loud?

Try it.

Say, "I forgive myself

for being hard on me today." Notice how it

feels in your body.

Yes.

And forgiveness connects to

compassion.

Compassion means understanding

that you're human, imperfect, and still

worthy of kindness.

It's not about

excusing mistakes; it's about recognizing

that mistakes don't define your value.

Exactly.

And here's where things get

exciting.

When you consistently practice

compassionate self-talk, you start to

experience resilience.

Life will still

bring challenges, anxiety, stress,

failure, but your response changes.

Instead of collapsing, you bounce back.

That's the gift of training your inner

voice.

And it's not only about resilience, it's

also about joy.

Negative self-talk narrows

your focus to flaws and problems.

Positive self-talk opens your eyes to

beauty, gratitude, and possibility.

literally experience more joy because you

give yourself permission to see it.

That's beautiful, and it reminds me of

nature.

No matter what happens in our

personal lives, the sun still rises, the

waves still move, the world continues.

Self-talk is like tuning into that

rhythm, remembering that setbacks are

temporary but life keeps flowing.

Audience, next time you feel overwhelmed,

step outside and notice something

constant, the sky, the trees, the air.

it remind you that your inner storms

will pass.

I love that image.

And let's bring this

down to very practical advice for our

listeners.

Martin, if someone wants to

start transforming their self-talk today,

what's the first step you'd recommend?

Step one, awareness.

Spend one day noticing the sentences in

your head.

Write them down.

Awareness is

the foundation.

Without it, you can't

change anything.

Step two,

challenge.

Ask, "Is this thought true?"

Always, "Can

I see it differently?" Step three,

replace.

Reframe the negative into

something constructive and compassionate.

And step four, repeat.

Do it

again and again until it becomes a habit.

That's a perfect roadmap.

And I'd add step

five, celebrate.

Celebrate small wins.

you caught one negative thought and

replaced it today, that's progress.

Clap

for yourself, smile, acknowledge the

effort.

Audience, please don't

underestimate small victories.

They add up

to big transformations.

Absolutely.

And since this is your English

toolbox, let me connect it to language

learning for a second.

Many learners say

to themselves, "I'll never be fluent," or,

"My accent is terrible." That's negative

self-talk, and it blocks progress.

But if

they change the script to, "I'm improving

every day," or, "My accent shows I'm

bilingual, and that's powerful," they

learn faster.

The inner voice shapes the learning

journey.

Yes.

I've seen students blossom when they

stop attacking themselves for mistakes.

Mistakes are not proof of failure; they're

proof of growth.

So listeners, if you're

learning English or any skill, remember,

the words you use inside will determine

how far you go outside.

Exactly.

And before we wrap up, I wanna

leave our audience with one final thought.

Your self-talk is a lifelong companion.

You can't escape it, but you can choose

whether it's a critic or a coach, an enemy

or a friend.

And my final message is this, be patient.

Transforming self-talk is like building a

new friendship with yourself.

It takes

time, but it's worth it.

Imagine living

every day with a supportive best friend in

your mind.

That's what's possible.

So to recap everything we've covered

across this conversation,

self-talk shapes emotions, body, identity,

and relationships.

Negative voices often come from early

experiences, but can be transformed.

Tools

like journaling, reframing, affirmations,

breathing, visualization, gratitude,

humor, and self-forgiveness really work.

Compassion isn't

indulgence; it's resilience.

And your inner words don't just stay

inside.

They change how you live, love,

and grow.

So, before we close, let's talk about

something really important.

Changing your

self-talk isn't just about you.

It's about

us, this community we're building

together.

Because when you share the words

you're choosing,

someone else reads them, and suddenly they

feel less alone.

Think about the

micro-tasks we practiced today.

We asked

you to add the word yet to a negative

thought.

Which one did you choose?

We suggested you

give your inner critic a nickname.

you call it the judge, the parrot,

something funnier?

We encouraged you to write down one gentle

affirmation you actually believe.

What's

yours?

These aren't just private exercises.

you share them in the comments, you're

planting ideas for other learners.

become part of their journey.

And here's why this matters.

Our channel

is not about passive listening.

It's about

slow listening, plus active living.

you only listen, the lesson stays in your

ears.

If you comment, the lesson travels

into your hands, your voice, your

identity.

So I want to challenge you.

Be brave

today.

Comment one of three

things.

The negative sentence you transformed with

yet.

The nickname you gave your inner critic.

Or the affirmation you'll start repeating

to yourself this week.

Choose one.

Post it below, because your

comment isn't just for us.

It's for every

person who reads it and thinks, "Yes, me

too.

I can try that."

Imagine what happens when dozens of people

start sharing.

Suddenly, you don't feel

like a single listener.

You feel like part

of a circle, a movement, a team

practicing together.

So let's make this the moment where our

comment section becomes alive.

Let's make

it a safe place to share inner voices,

struggles, and victories.

Remember, listen slowly, learn deeply, and

speak confidently.

you in the next episode.