



Lesson 2: Word Choices, Self-Talk, Self-Compassion, & Your Inner Self-Coach

Hi, everybody. This is day two of our masterclass and today's topic is going to be more about mindset and the word choices we use, our self-talk, self-compassion and our self-coach. Our brain functions in a way to help us to survive and keep us safe, that's its primary task. 95% of our thoughts are unconscious, we're not even creating them. They're repeats, they're things that we already create, they're actions that we already do. Only 5% are new and created. We have to work on switching that balance a little bit and activating some new, more positive ones. What happens is, our brain focuses on what it already knows. This is what we have repeated to ourselves thousands and thousands of time through our own thoughts and through our experiences. Our brain doesn't really know the difference between what is real and what is not real. So, for example, you know that people who have experienced a traumatic situation, when they have a trigger of that, maybe a similar sound or a smell, something that triggers that, the brain thinks it is in that moment again and will respond as such.

It will go into the fight or flight mode or freeze mode. We want to get our brain learning new information, to help it respond better in future situations. One thing that we need to do is to give our brain different messages, we need to create these new messages and practice them often. We need to make those our more natural beliefs. What happens over time is that, we create truths out of what we say, what we learn, what we hear from other people and then we repeat them over and over again. And some of these become limiting beliefs, ways that we make sense of ourselves, the world or our interactions with people. You may see, on social media, something that says, racism is taught and learned, it's not something that you're born with. This is true. We are not born with our beliefs, they develop by what messages we take in and how much we reinforce these messages.

This is a really powerful piece of information because you can change how your mind does things. If I keep giving it the same problematic message over and over, I'm going to keep doing the same pattern, I'm going to keep feeling the same way. I made this graphic to help us understand this concept. And it is that, our beliefs and thoughts are already in our mind, we've created them, we've taken them in. And from these, we have our feelings, these response. So, let's say, for example, I think that or I believe that fasting is difficult. What happens is, I have feelings. I'm feeling frustrated, I'm feeling scared, I'm feeling maybe inept or inadequate to do this fasting. But my goal is to complete a 36 to a 42 hour fast. So, I have these feelings, they influence what action I take because when I feel defeated or scared or frustrated, it influences what action I take.

So, I take my action and because I'm feeling these things, I decide I should probably eat rather than continue my fast. Then I get these results, I'm eating the food, maybe I'm eating more problematic food. I then get hungrier, I now see fasting as impossible and this feeds into my beliefs and thoughts and I keep going around this pattern again and again and again. So, this is what I'm trying to encourage all of us to practice interrupting. If we can pay attention to what beliefs and thoughts we are giving space and energy to, we will then influence how we interpret them, how we feel based on them, which will influence what actions we decide to take, which will give us different results. And these results will feed back into our beliefs and thoughts in a more positive way.

So, the first few examples I wanted to talk about are word choices that I hear in our community and things that end up holding people back. One example is using the word try or I'm making an attempt. Now, overall, I totally understand why we use this. It's a great thing, we teach kids to try to do something, to try a new food, makes a lot of sense. We're saying, hey, you don't have to commit to it completely but just try it. When we talk about fasting or changing our eating style, when we say I'm going to try to do this, we're not committing to it. We're saying, it's okay, make an attempt on this but you're going to have other options and we'll keep exploring those other options. So, I want you instead to start thinking of the word decide, I decided to do a 42 hour fast. I've decided to do three fasts this week. The word decide, if you break it into its root parts, actually means to cut off from or means to make a resolution, resolve something after looking at the options.

So, it's much more powerful to say, I have decided to do this, rather than, I'm going to try to do this. Another word choice that I hear a lot of people struggle with and are used to using a lot is saying that they can't do something. Oh, I can't go without sugar, I can't possibly go to bed without snacking. All of these beliefs make it really hard to fast and make it hard to eat in a healthy way. Change these phrases to something like, I'm learning how to not snack while I'm watching TV. I'm developing the skill of going to bed without having something to eat. I'm working on this, I'm getting better at, all of these ways of saying it. We don't have to be perfect on this skill yet but we're moving forward, we're developing it and we're learning it. When we tell ourselves that something is hard, our brain, kind of, shrinks away from that a little bit and thinks, oh no, we probably won't be able to do this then.

If we tell ourselves that something is possible and that we have the ability to do it, this goes back to that growth mindset, our brain is much more likely to make the attempt to stretch, to face the fear. Birthing a baby is hard, fighting cancer is hard, losing someone you love is hard, but not eating pancakes in the morning, it's not really hard. But we have it so built up in our head that, that habit is too difficult for us to change. So, I want you to start listening for this word and these phrases and to see if you're using them and can you start switching them to something that's more positive and moving in a forward direction, rather than of cutting you off from that opportunity.

The last word choice that I want to talk about today is when we say things like, I can't have that. Many people who come to us or start doing fasting or change the way they're eating, they make some new, kind of, food rules for themselves or they take certain things out of their dietary approach. And in doing that, they say things like, oh, I can't have that. I can't eat that, I can't eat today. All of these are very cut off, definitive and feel a little bit threatening to us. Instead, I encourage you to say things like, I choose not to eat that. I'm not eating that right now. I've chosen not to eat today. So, just changing it that little bit brings up less tension in the body, it gives the brain less resistance. Instead to feel empowered, I'm choosing not to eat this, rather than, I can't eat it. For many, many, many of us, when we say, I can't eat that, not allowed. Our rebellious side speaks up and says, oh yes, we can, let me show you.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about how we talk to ourselves. And the first thing I want to talk about is self-compassion and many of us are afraid that, if we're more gentle with ourselves, we won't follow through. So, we take an approach where we act a little bit like a drill sergeant.

But really, self-compassion is being warm and understanding toward yourself when you're struggling, when you're suffering, when you've failed or when you feel inadequate, because those are all totally normal human experiences. Instead of ignoring them and acting like they're not happening, stuffing them down or criticizing ourselves for experiencing those things, if we can be warm and understanding toward ourselves. So, think about how you would talk with someone you love, a partner, a spouse, a child, a grandchild, a best friend, a sister, if they were struggling with something. If your sister told you, I'm working on fasting and my goal today was to fast for 48 hours and I stopped at hour 36 and I'm so frustrated with myself. My guess is, you wouldn't say, yeah, that was pretty stupid to stop, you know better. You should have kept going, what's wrong with you? That would be a horrible way to respond but that's often the way we respond inside our own head.

So, self-compassion is about using kindness rather than self-judgment. Saying, I understand, 48 hours felt too long today and you are struggling. Common humanity versus isolation. So, rather than saying, you can't do this, you failed, you're the only one who's not doing well. Look at all those people in the Facebook group who are doing this. Instead it says, everyone struggles. We all have difficult times doing things and we have to learn new skills and we're going to fumble while we're learning new skills. Using mindfulness rather than over identifying with our feelings is the third step for self-passion. Being open and nonjudgmental, being receptive to the observation of what's happening. If I couldn't do this one, I'm never going to be able to do a successful fast. How do all these people do these? So, you can hear, we'll go back into a fixed mindset with those thoughts, rather than a growth mindset of what can I learn here.

The next concept then is to use that for developing an inner coach who's positive and supportive. A lot of us have learned to use, kind of, a drill sergeant voice. And you have seen

some examples of coaches in history that use foul language, threats, screaming, flailing arms. It doesn't really work, it's not very motivating for people. People fear it and want to avoid it but they don't really feel empowered and motivated from it. Instead, what we need is a positive, nurturing self-coach that can say to us, hey, I see that you're really struggling with this, that's okay. And it acknowledges what we're experiencing and offers us some resources. What if we reframe it and look at what happened and decide what the next step will be. Let's work on eating these particular foods, rather than getting really down on ourselves and chastising ourselves and then going off and eating something that's really problematic because we're so frustrated.

So, what I encourage you to do is pay attention to the thoughts that you keep grabbing onto. Some of these you might not be aware of, you think them so often that they're so automatic. Start listening, paying attention. How am I talking to myself? Am I calling myself names? Am I swearing at myself? Am I telling myself that I can't do things and finding faults in myself? Try to reframe these to help you, kind of, create a new belief, a new way of experiencing them and then practicing them. It might even be helpful to make a list of your problematic thoughts, problematic self-talk. How could you reframe those? How could you restate those, in a way that helps you move forward rather than holding you back? Rather than using fasting, because for many of us, it has a strong emotional connotation.

Just to say, I'm healing during this time, today's a healing day. We got this from Mark Tom, one of our community members. And then on eating days, rather than saying, eating, I get to eat and all the excitement that comes with that, to say, today, I'm rebuilding. Or now that I've fasted for 24 hours, now that I've done 24 hours of healing, I'm going to do a meal for rebuilding. It just keeps the emotion out of it and reframes it in a positive way. A positive inner self-coach, a coach that is nurturing, is not enabling and is not permissive. So, it does not say Terri, this has been a really rough day. I know the computer problems you were having and then when the kids were yelling... You deserve a treat. Why don't you just go get some snacks? Why don't you go get those cookies? That is not a good self-coach.

That's an old way that we learn to try to feel better, to soothe ourselves but it obviously backfires. Those are the behaviors that have gotten many of us into some really difficult places, related to our health and our weight. And you might even want to picture this inner coach. Maybe it's a person, maybe it's an animal or for me, I used to love teddy bears, so maybe my self-coach is a teddy bear. Something that I have a positive association with. I hope that some of you internalize my voice or someone else in the community, intern their voice. I joke but I really do mean this. I wanted to create bracelets that say WWTS, what would Terri say? So, when you're struggling, you can say, wait, I know, there's a way I can reframe this. There's a way I can be compassionate and kind to myself. So, start to develop that voice, picture it, give it a voice, practice it. Like you would say supportive things to someone else, practice saying them to yourselves and practice receiving them.

So, that's the end of the lesson for today. You have some things to be working on. If you have questions you would like addressed in the Q&A sessions, email them to masterclass@thefastingmethod.com. Those will come to me and then I will address the questions in the Q&A sessions. I also want to encourage you, if you're new to the community, to take a little bit of time today and maybe over the next couple of days, to go back and start watching some of the video courses that we've created. There's one, if you look under fasting category, there's a great one under nutrition category and I did one under the behavior category. So, I hope you're doing well. Take some time to do some journaling tonight. Listen to yourself, listen to what you say to other people about you, that will tell you a lot about your internal thoughts. And we will keep going from here tomorrow. Take good care everybody. Bye-bye.