Enhancing Self-Esteem by Counteracting Negative Self-Talk

Without even realizing it, you may be saying negative things about or to yourself. If you have been in relationships that were not supportive (with parents, friends, or partners), it is quite possible that you have absorbed some of that negativity and directed it at yourself.

Negative thoughts often lead to negative feelings, such as anxiety and sadness. You have the power to counteract those feelings by changing what you say to yourself. The first step is becoming aware of your inner conversations; then you can replace negative statements with more positive and realistic ones. Let's practice!

Here are some typical negative self-statements, with positive, realistic alternatives:

Negative Statement: *I am losing my looks as I get older, and no one will find me attractive.*

Positive Alternative: *People who appreciate me will find me attractive because of my positive qualities, like my sense of humor and my caring heart.*

Negative Statement: *My life is passing by, and I don't have much to show for it. It is too late to change that.*

Positive Alternative: *My life is what I make it. I can't change the past, but I can find a sense of purpose and do something interesting and productive at any age.*

Now you try. Think of negative statements you have made about yourself, and generate positive, realistic alternatives. Practice "catching yourself" when you are making negative self-statements, and give yourself a positive statement instead. Think about what you would say to encourage a good friend, and say it to yourself!

Negative Statement:_____

Positive Alternative:_____

Negative Statement:_____

Positive Alternative:_____

Negative Statement:_____

Positive Alternative:_____

 Negative Statement:_____

Positive Alternative:_____

Negative Statement:_____

Positive Alternative:_____

Write down the negative statement that you say to yourself that you feel does you the most harm.

_____
_____

Where did this statement come from?

_____
_____

Write down five convincing arguments that prove that this negative statement is not true:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____