

OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF BEING FABULOUS

Welcome to Module 11 Overcoming Negative Head-Talk

Overview

Negative head-talk, or negative self-talk is one of the greatest blocks to moving forward and becoming the truly fabulous person that you really are.

And so in this module you'll hear many stories of how negative head-talk can adversely affect us all and we'll guide you through some of the ways to get rid of it so you can live the life of your dreams.

Transcript

Judith:

We're covering a topic that in many ways proves to be devastating to the hopes and dreams of many, many people. We call it negative head-talk.

Jim:

In fact, negative head-talk is so pervasive, so widespread, so universal that it acts like an almost invisible background for what goes on in our lives. We take it for granted as though that's just the way things are.

Judith:

Overcoming negative head-talk is a fundamental and absolutely necessary step if you're going to live a life of more self-control, more confidence to say nothing of achieving your desires and being free to be fabulous.

Jim:

Overcoming negative head-talk is one of the most liberating processes that help you overcome the fear of being fabulous, which is the overarching theme of this suite of monthly teleseminars that we're doing. We, Judith and I, specialize in going deep into the heart of what holds people back from truly being successful in all areas of their lives, in their careers, in their relationships, in fact in just being alive.

Okay. Our teleseminars tonight on overcoming negative head-talk was inspired, in part, by a woman in Florida who attended last month's teleseminar and wrote asking us to please, please help her with the mind chatter that goes on almost all of the time.

But we say in part because we'd already planned to deal with this topic because of the power of negative head-talk to keep a person stuck in place, ourselves included. And you'll hear as we go through this evening because we're going to share our personal stories with you regarding this issue and this problem that we two suffered and struggled with negative head-talk. But we're getting into that more later.

Judith:

Right? Just want you to understand that over the years working with people we have witnessed over and over the devastating results of people being obsessed or possessed by negative head-talk. And some people call it self-talk, the bewilderment, the rage, the sadness, confusion, the sense of being lost and hopeless. And there's a lack of achievement. It's so painful. There is such a cost in human joy and success.

Now there are many people who will tell you that you can do anything you want and be anything you want. And while that's true, if you don't look into what's holding you back, not on the outside, not in the outside world, but inside of your own mind and your own body, then you will never be able to find the freedom that will let you have that fabulous life.

Jim:

We'd like to paraphrase Albert Einstein who said you can't solve a problem with the same consciousness that created it. And that once you hear it makes such simple common sense.

If you are within a kind of consciousness that is yielding a particular problem, you can't stay within that consciousness to solve the problem because that consciousness is a product or is a helpmate of the problem.

So Einstein says in a paraphrase, you can't solve a problem with the same consciousness that created the problem.

Judith:

And I know when I first heard that phrase, I knew it was true, but it just worked my mind to try to conceive of how I was going to change my consciousness. And tonight we're going to tell you and show you a process about how to do that.

Jim:

And a vernacular way of saying change your consciousness is you step outside the box or see from outside the box.

And that too, a lot of people say that and it is effective. I mean if you can step outside the box, you can in fact see a new vision and a new version.

However, the task of stepping outside the box is the trick. And that's part of what we're going to be dealing with tonight in looking at negative head-talk.

Judith:

And to make this very practical for you, whether you're focus tonight is professional in your work life or personal relationships, health, it doesn't matter, we want you to focus on overcoming your negative head-talk by taking full stock of what you believe about you and what you believe about the world while you go through this process with us and we're going to make it more and more practical according to what your issues are.

I just want to start by sharing with you one of the numerous examples from my life where negative head-talk just took over my life really. I had been modeling and acting as some of you know, since I was in my early teens, starting about we actually age 12 and after college I went to New York, and worked very successfully.

I came back to Los Angeles and a former sorority sister connected me with one of the top agents at one of the top talent agencies in Beverly Hills, at that time. It was a the Creative Artists Agency and I met with Marty Baum who was a very, very big deal. People in the industry still know his name.

And he wanted me to do a scene when I came in. Now I was disconnected from people in LA, so I put together a monologue from *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and I practiced and I practice.

And I went in and I'm giving my monologue and he takes about three phone calls during my monologue. So I'm having to start and stop and start and stop and I'm thinking, this is not going anywhere. This is not working well and I'm embarrassed and I'm nervous. And when I'm all finished, he said, you know, I'm going to sign you.

Well, I could hardly believe it. I mean, I, you know, I thought it was pretty awful but he was going to sign me. Wow.

He said, now you know you're not a major talent, so I'm going to have you with one of the junior agents. I said, great. He said, and now one of the things I want to suggest to you is that we provide a free acting class on Monday nights and I would suggest that you attend. We provide this for all of our junior talent and it'll be really terrific for you. And I smiled and nodded and acted like I was in agreement.

And do you think I went? Do you think I went and said to the instructor, Hey, Marty Baum told me to come. And I'm really scared and I'm really nervous and I feel like I'm not very adequate and never had any formal training. And would you please help me?

Do you think I did that? No. I never went. I never went. Because I didn't want to be exposed for how inadequate my negative head-talk was telling me I was.

Jim:

And one of the things Judith and I had in common and still do of course when we met, was that I too was an actor, except she was in Hollywood and I was doing stage work around the country.

I was at the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theater in St Louis and I'd been there for a number of years and established myself and at one point I was asked if I would be the artistic director of the theater.

The artistic director is the one who plans the seasons and hires the actors and does all of that, not the business side, but the artist side. And they offered it to me and they said, do you want it? And I said to myself, I'm not ready. The fact was I was ready, but I said to myself, I'm not ready and then I developed a magnificent story.

You would have all been proud of the story that I developed justifying and explaining just how not ready I was. And not only was I not ready. I was willing to admit it. So I was a person of responsibility. I had a respect for the theater so I wouldn't trash it. And when I was finally ready, I would then make the announcement that I was ready, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

The fact is I couldn't allow myself to have that kind of authority because the negative head-talk was essentially saying, who do you think you are? That was strong enough for me to justify very intelligently because I'm a smart guy. I knew how to say watch this story. And I created a story and the fact is I never was the artistic director.

So before we go further, we want you to participate now and make this an active sort of conversation between us and to do that, bring to mind a time when your negative head-talk got in your way.

Now that could be in the past and oftentimes people prefer to looking at in the past cause it it's at arms-length and you can see it more clearly. Or it could be something that you're going through right now.

You can use this as an example in your life or this example from your life as a reference point to make personal and concrete what we will be going through with you tonight. So bring to mind something where you know that the negative head-talk got in your way.

Use it as a way of digging into, burrowing into, who you are, vis-à-vis what goes on in your head in that context.

Judith:

We hope to have the worksheet for tonight and if you don't, that's all right because we will articulate every one of the points on the worksheet, but we did send a worksheet that had seven points.

And the first question on your worksheet is: What is negative head-talk or negative self-talk?

And we want you to, as you listen, consider what form does your negative head-talk take. Because there are several different kinds of negative head-talk. And it is that voice, if you hear yourself yammering at yourself.

It's that voice that argues, Don't go forward. It puts up walls, it sets up limitations. It puts you down. It'll say things to you like, Hey, who do you think you are? You can't do that. You can't handle that. That's beyond what you are. You don't dare do that. You'll be exposed. You'll be embarrassed. You don't want to embarrass yourself. What will other people think?

It prohibits new behavior. It condemns you for not being good enough in some way. It keeps yammering at you, holding you back.

Jim:

It prohibits you and it says in some way, don't you dare. And it condemns you and says in some way, I told you it wasn't possible for you. I told you that wasn't you. I told you you couldn't.

Now when we say this, we understand those phrases, those sentences are not what we hear in our head. When I decided not to be the artistic director of the theater, I didn't hear voices saying who you think you are and how do you think you dare.

I didn't hear any of that, but the effective result was the same when I said I'm not ready and justified it with wonderful arguments. Essentially I was saying to myself, don't dare. This is beyond you. This you cannot do yet.

Except having to face myself in the mirror in the morning I made up a story that made me look really good while I was backing away.

Now another thing about negative head-talk, negative self-talk, he keeps you in your place. Whatever it is you have decided in the past tense, whatever you have decided your place is and what are the limits of your possibilities. Negative head-talk's job is to keep you in your place and this is really tricky and I'll tell you why.

You may feel like you're actually in a struggle against your mind chatter. That's in some cases where you're actually carrying on an argument inside.

But the negative mind chatter is in alignment with something within you that's deeper and it is what you really want and that whatever it is is buried so deeply that you're not aware of it.

In the case of the theater with me, I could not assume the mantle of that kind of responsibility for all kinds of reasons. That was the truth, and so I really wanted not to have that responsibility and so I said I wasn't ready. But I never got to, during that period, actually saying to myself, you can't do that. But that was the bottom line. Or you shouldn't do that, which would have been more appropriate to that moment.

And negative head-talk, and this is also really, really critical. Negative head-talk is not just words. We know the word talk implies words, but it's not just words. It can take the form of depression, meaning I can't move forward; rage, which is really a sign of being impotent because rage is an expression of not being able to do anything. Fear. That's an obvious one. Anxiety, another obvious one. How about this one? Hyper criticality, hypercritical of yourself, hypercritical of the world, hypercritical of the exchanges that take place between you and someone else.

Every detail is criticized in some way or another, which basically does end up breaking down whatever's going on in a way that you can't go forward. Contempt is a good one. That's where I come from.

My family had a PhD in contempt. And basically what contempt meant was

I can't think of a word that isn't kind of crude.

Judith:

Give the example of your dad teaching you to drive a stick-shift

Jim:

Well Yes. We went out, and it wasn't a stick shift, it was just an automobile. But we went out to drive and because he was so contemptuous, I stopped at a four way stop and there was a car coming that today I would've just gone through the stop, but I wanted to show him, my motive was, I wanted to show him that I was safe and a reasonable and attentive driver. My brother was in the back seat during this and as I was waiting to cross, my father looked at my brother and said, you got a deck of cards we're going to be here for a while.

Instead of saying, why are you waiting? And I would've said, because I want to make sure the car passes and then my father saying, good choice on your first day driving good choice. That's not what happened. That's how contempt works.

Or you can be an insomniac. Or overweight is a wonderful way to be able to not go forward on. A lot of people are either overweight or very skinny on the other hand, males and females both use that particular technique unconsciously to keep the other gender at an arms-length.

Apathy is an obvious one; lethargy, heartache, loneliness, anything that keeps you from moving forward.

Judith:

Now your head-talk can even be silent. As Jim said, talk sounds like we're only talking about words, but that's not true. It's also in all of the habituated ways that it appears to be just part of who you are, your personality, where you came from. It's just the way things are. You don't get to be a big deal. You don't get to have anything that's exceptional because that would break you out of this mode that you consider to be just the way everything is.

Jim:

I come from a family, and I have good relationships with all of them now, but I come from a family that was very frightened and covered the fear with bravado. And I was a

very perceptive child and so it was very bewildering for me. Because when I say perceptive, what I meant was I was able to look around the family and see things but not necessarily insightful so that I could see through their masks and their facades and I was bewildered, literally bewildered.

I was lost from the time I was 3 until the time I was 25.

And I mean, I had that as an actual experience. I was just lost. I didn't know what was going on, how I fit in or whatever. But, but like most children, I thought there was something wrong with me. It can't be them, it's gotta be me.

And that expressed itself, by a lack of connection, a lack of desire to be in the world. So that in high school, in my senior year, my mother went to a teacher parent conference, which was the first one she had attended in four years. And she said, how is he? And the priest said, well, he's never here. And she said, what do you mean, he goes to school every day. And he said, Oh no, no, he's in class. He's just never here. Because I withdrew as a way of protecting myself from that wilderness and I gazed out into the yard and through the window and out into out into the world, outside the classroom.

How that is an expression of negative head-talk is, I made decisions as a child and those decisions remained in place and those decisions became cumulative. And as a result, by the time I got to high school, I was just gone. I was off somewhere else because I couldn't be where I was because they didn't know how to handle it.

Judith:

Well, speaking of high school, I'm thinking back as I listened to you that I grew up in a family where my dad sold used cars and I'm most, everybody's dad was an accountant or a dentist or some such. And so I'm a little bit embarrassed about that and I set about looking like I came from Beverly Hills as best I could. And by the time I was 12 however I was in glasses, my vision deteriorated and so I was in glasses.

But I was so vain I didn't want to walk around with glasses on. I tried to wear my glasses as little as possible. And in high school I was considered conceited. Why? Because I would walk down the hall in the school and I couldn't identify people. My vision was really horrible and so I wouldn't look the right or the left, cause I would be embarrassed not being able to recognize people. So I didn't say hello to people. I didn't make eye contact. I was all self-protective to keep my image up in my own mind. And notice I'm yammering at myself all the time about my image and how I look and how I'm coming across. And it's working exactly opposite the way I think it should be. And people think I'm conceited and they're not really friendly with me.

Jim:

That's a perfect example of how you don't have the chatter in your own mind. But the mind chatter doesn't have to happen. In this case, it was her physical presentation, but that's also what we're calling negative head-talk that which keeps you in your place.

Judith:

So what is the form that your negative head-talk takes and maybe all of them, words that you actually hear?

I sometimes can still hear words in my head that say it's hopeless and I hear the words coming out of my head.

Emotionally I can fall into a pit of despair because I come from a family where despair was not hard to get in touch with and physically the example we just said, I didn't want to wear my glasses because I was afraid of losing an image that I thought was valuable. So what forms do you use in your expression of your negative head-talk?

Judith:

Now the number two question on your worksheet is where does negative head-talk come from?

And another way to look at that is what are the origins of your negative head-talk? So really be examining as you listen to it. Where did yours come from? Because one, and there are several different ways and we're not going to be able to cover them all tonight. We have limited time.

But one of them is that how you behave when you were younger was intolerable to those around you. I read a lot. I loved to read. And you'd think that my parents who were pretty bright people, they weren't educated but they were pretty bright, would have encouraged it.

Instead, what did I hear from both my mother and my father was, get your nose out of the book. Go out and play. Get your nose out of that book. You're gonna ruin your eyes. You're going to ruin your eyesight. Go out, get outdoors. But who I was, was somebody who loved to read. And so I was given a voice of negativity about who I was.

Jim:

It's that you're not welcomed. In Judith's case, she was not welcomed or even wanted. And again, we have to be really careful here. We are not here to blame parents or blame

anybody and we focus on these issues simply because, as I said before, negative head-talk is cumulative and we're interested in getting to the root of it.

Who she was, was not welcomed.

I have been emotionally available, emotionally expressive fluid and expressive my entire life. And my family was emotionally dead basically. Also part of my bewilderment initially was trying to just get some connection which I never was able to achieve and so I was always accused by them saying, why must you be so dramatic?

Well, I wasn't dramatic. It was dramatic to those for whom emotions of any kind were dramatic. I was just being expressive. Who I was was not welcomed. Not wanted, and again, I'm sitting here saying, wait a minute, this isn't dramatic and you're telling me it is, and since I am just a child, I don't have the wherewithal to turn around and say to you, wait a minute, you, you've got it wrong. I've got it right. I believe them that I thought I was so dramatic.

Judith:

And we want to make it clear that we're giving you examples from our lives so that you can hear: (1) that everybody goes through some of these kinds of experiences. And (2) we hope that they may jostle some memories for you. They may trigger some internal emotional experience as you listen to these examples that we're giving you from our life.

Because, one of the reasons that we are focused on overcoming the fear of being fabulous is because we have had to, in our lives separately and together.

So another way that you can pick up this negative head-talk, is when someone that you respected somebody that was an adult, or at least older than you were, could have been older sibling, could have been a cousin. But generally speaking, parents, coaches, ministers, neighbors, grandparents, you name it, when they lied to you outright about who you were. And again, as Jim said, we're not blaming them. They grew up being put down.

We have a history of people being put down as they've grown up and so they don't know better and they just pass it on.

But were you told you weren't smart enough, where you told you weren't pretty enough? Were you told you weren't strong enough? Tall enough? Clever enough? Creative enough?

What might you have been told that was an out and out lie.

Jim:

And you believed it because you didn't have any way not to believe it. And that was a foundational moment and there were many of them. But that's a foundational moment in the beginning of negative head-talk.

Now there's another way, that we call atmospheric, emotionally, intellectually, or physically atmospheric.

What that means is, just imagine this for a moment, imagine that you're going off to a party or a gathering. You walk through the door and before any word is spoken to you or by you you get this rush of feeling and the feeling is expressed as far as, I'm going to have a good time here cause I can just feel it. We all have had that kind of experience to some degree.

Also the other side of it, as you walk in before anybody says anything, you very, Oh boy. You say, Oh boy, Oh boy. Some thing's going on here. I don't know that I'm going to enjoy this. And it happens purely on a feeling basis. You don't need anybody to speak or say anything. You can feel it in the air and you can live at a household where like for instance my case where there was emotionally vacant, there was a deadness in the feeling and I picked it up.

I picked it up because we humans do that no matter how old or how young we are. We function from some people call it intuition, that feeling state whereby we can just feel what's going on. And now of course I'm able to discriminate between what I'm feeling and what's going on and attributed to out there or in here. But early on that's not possible.

Judith:

Well, right. I grew up in a home where both of my parents were very frightened, terrified people. And it wasn't so much that they talked about it, which we did on a occurred, but mostly it was the atmosphere of the home I grew up in, which was filled with fear.

So no surprise, I have battled with fear my whole life. It just seems normal to me to be frightened. And you can imagine how much that limited my ability to be fabulous in the world and to break out of the box and take risks because I was afraid. A lot.

Jim:

Here's another way and that is, you may have heard of the word imprinting and it was generally brought to the public's attention with the experiments with the geese. And goslings when the little gosling is born, it patterns itself, the behaviors and the presence

of the female and male goose and gander is imprinted on the being of the little gosling. And that's one of the ways you learned to be a goose or a gander

Judith:

If you put a little gosling with a duck mama, it will pattern itself like a duck.

Jim:

And it'll also follow humans if there are no ducks around or no geese around. So the point is imprinting, you assume you belong there and you're like everybody else is totally nonverbal. And as a consequence later on, it wasn't necessarily the place that was good for you or best for you. But later on you find out there are habits that you've created, ways of seeing the world, perceptive habits, conceptual habits that correspond to that initial environment that you imprinted to.

Judith:

Now, one more category and then we're gonna move on.

And this applies to more people than they're aware of where their parents have a limited life because of what we're talking about, because of their own negative head-talk. And they give their children the message that they are to stay nearby. So anytime they're a teenager or young adult, children start talking about moving away, going away to college, going away to so-and-so to get a job or some kind of training or a traveling out of the country or traveling somewhere.

The messages, no, no, no, no, please stay by. I'll get you a home nearby. Stay here with me. I'll take care of you. You belong here. What do you think you're doing? And so forth. So that the message that gets ingrained is I cannot take care of myself. I have to take care of my mother's life or my father's life or my parents' life. And so the choices are narrowed and very limited. And often the person sacrifices their life to make their mother or father or both happy.

Jim:

So which of the points that we've made, first of all, the first one was somebody for whom your behavior was intolerable. And so they asked you to stop being who you are, someone who lied to you outright – the atmospheric condition of where you came from and where you live.

The imprinting or the implied message, which one of these most applies to the origins of your head-talk?

If you think about it and really open yourself to this, you can burrow down into your own psyche to get to a place where you can control what's happening so that you are not run by the head-talk as much as you are running your own life.

That doesn't mean that they had taught goes away, but it does. It is so minimized that it is no longer effective and then it just becomes a memory sort of a map as to who you used to be.

So point number three on the worksheet. Why do we take negative head-talk for granted?

Judith:

Now, given what we've just been looking at, hopefully you can see that negative head-talk is conscious because you're aware of some limitation, some blockage, some fear or some resistance. But more powerfully it's unconscious stuff that you're not even in touch with. And then negative head-talk becomes habituated cause you're not even aware that it's going on.

Jim:

It's like when you wake up in the morning, do you brush your teeth? You don't even think about it. You just go and brush your teeth. It's not like, Oh, I must brush my teeth this morning. You just do it. Same thing with the negative side. It becomes so habituated it just seems to be the way things are.

So as a consequence, there is no impulse to question that behavior. When you get up in the morning and go brush your teeth, you have a thing, where am I brushing my teeth? What's the point? What's the purpose? Yeah, there's no question. You just do it because again, it seems like just part of life.

It appears almost as the nature of what reality is. So there's no impulse to question it, to be critical of it, to take a look at it and as a result we start to take it for granted as something that warrants being taken for granted.

Judith:

Also, you can feel justified in thinking whatever way that you are thinking and it goes back to this idea that it's just the way things are.

When I was in practice, I was in practice for before 22 years in LA, there were a number of women who came in over the years and were very upset that they were not married and they were not in a fulfilling relationship with a man.

And they were very busy blaming men for their state. And it was very difficult for them to take a look at my urging at their attitudes toward men because I could hear it in the way that they talked about men. They were very busy criticizing and judging men, talking about, you know how all men are.

And they were even more reluctant to take a look at where had they learned those attitudes that allowed them to be justified in thinking negatively toward men.

But when the women will willing to look back, and I remember one woman popped into my mind right now and she said, Oh my God, I never thought about it that way. My mother and my grandmother and my aunt all sat around the kitchen table and talked about, talk down about their husbands. All of the men in the family were put down, were considered irresponsible on and on. She said, Oh my God, I didn't realize I had taken it on and just assume that's how men were. So she felt justified.

Once she saw it, she realized she was going to have to take a very hard look at her own attitudes and change those before she was going to become available for the kind of relationship she really wanted.

Jim:

You would probably have known someone or maybe a number of people who feel unlucky in the world. They could, their relationships don't work, their careers don't work, whatever, and they say things like, those people get all the breaks. They were born with a silver spoon, they had money, they had connections, they had whatever. Well, all of that may be true and this is where it gets tricky.

All of that may be true, but the person is using that as evidence for their own lack of luck, when in fact what it is is they live within an attitude or a point of view that is actually creating the circumstances that they are in. And then they're using the results like the people who are born with silver spoons as evidence to justify their complaints. But the problem is that evidence keeps their complaints in place and they can never move on to get beyond where they are.

So because it's your earliest environment and you feel a love and a loyalty toward that environment, and that's true for all children, it compounds the assumption that's how you are, is how you should be.

After all, it's all based on a feeling of love towards what was going on. And that's one of the most difficult things when we work with people is you reach a point where they have to make a choice and the sense of love rises up and says this can't be good. This

feels like I love and the truth is you do, but it's indiscriminant love. It's love that did not have the capacity to pick and choose what was best for it or you. And as a result, the feeling is there and the feeling may be strong by the object that is being projected on and in connection with is not necessarily best for you. And so that's a way that negative head-talk gets to keep itself in place.

Judith:

And we're going to talk a bit more about that as we move along here.

But number four on your worksheet is "Defining Allegiance and Forbiddance". And these are critical elements of getting yourself out of this negative blockade against your larger future--understanding what you are in allegiance to and what has been forbidden to you.

Jim:

Okay, well imagine having a close friend who does something hurtful to someone else. And you come forward to your friend's defense regardless of their behavior. You were loyal and you were being praised for being loyal and may even considered yourself a really true friend. However, and even considered yourself and called yourself a good person. That was your idea of being a good person. So your allegiance was to your friend, your loyalty was to your friend.

You have the same loyalty to the habituated negative head-talk as contradictory and paradoxical as that sounds, once we habituate something and we assume it as part of our character and identity, we have a loyalty to it so that when, and if that's one of the reasons why it's so difficult to lose weight, the weight is there for a purpose.

None of that happens accidentally. And then when somebody comes along and says, well you need to lose that weight. Yes, you need to lose it for your physical health and you can lose it to a physical doing something physically that can actually lose it. But you also have to confront and face into the loyalty in the allegiance you had to putting on the weight in the first place. And that's what we mean by an allegiance.

It is a closeness and a connection and a feeling of loyalty to an idea. Like for example, I was loyal to the fact that that I didn't believe I could do it. And that belief goes right back to where I came from. But I didn't believe I could do the artistic directorship of the Loretto Hilton theater. And as a result, my rationale and all of my brilliant arguments really were nothing more than advocating to remain loyal to my belief that it wasn't possible for me.

Judith:

I'm thinking back, Jim, to a time when I was in graduate school and I was three years or so away from getting my PhD and I had a very critical decision to make it that associated with my training. But it was more about a change in my perception of me in that whole process. And I remember I was lying in bed thinking about it and I suddenly got this wave of realization that yes, I was going to make a particular decision and it was going to cut me off from my entire history and start a new part of my life. And I literally was shaking with the disruption of my attachment to that history. And it was very dramatic and shocking to me. So if you find yourself having kind of shocking experiences as you work with this material, don't be surprised because we are trying to help you dislodge yourself from those kinds of allegiances.

Jim:

I want to repeat here, that negative head-talk is cumulative. That means that it layers on itself. It layers on itself, and as a result, you may not see the fact that it goes back a distance or may not want to see that it goes back a distance. But what makes it so powerful is that layering. It's like anything else. When you're in the Northeast when it gets cold, we are told layer, put more clothes on. That's the way you protect yourself.

Well negative head-talk is much the same. And the more it goes on, the more the habit is in place, the harder the thicker the layer becomes. And it's important to know that it is cumulative and it started somewhere and that's what you're looking for. It started perhaps in a lot of different places, the psychological and emotional places. But it started somewhere.

Judith:

I'm convinced that it starts in the womb. In my case where my mother was depressed and anxious, while she was carrying me, I'm sure I picked some of that up while being on her biology.

Now also, we talked about forbidden. What is forbidden for you to examine, look at, change. For instance, as I mentioned it during the private practice time in my life, one of the toughest things to do was to get my clients who were complaining in some ways about how they'd been treated in their childhood, how their parents were treating them now, that kind of thing. And they were also letting me know some ways that they were behaving that were not great for them and overdrinking, uh, cheating on their wives. Do you know, various behaviors that they knew when I good for them. And they would even indicate to me that they had been mistreated by their parents in their youth; currently mistreated in many ways.

And yet when I would point out how that mistreatment from dad, mom, grandma, grandpa, whoever it might be had undermined their self-confidence, had undermined their stability in the world, had not given them the feeling of being accepted and loved for who they really were. Nine times out of ten my clients fought me tooth and nail to tell me how loving their parents were, how wonderful their parents were. How could I suggest anything other than that? The parents had put a roof over their head on and on and on and when I would point out yes, but you told me about the beatings. You told me about being slammed to the floor in your room when your dad got mad at you. They were forbidden to break that allegiance to their family background and take a hard look at it from the outside.

Jim:

Another way of saying allegiance is you have permission to do whatever it is you're doing, usually remaining in place. And a forbiddance is you cannot go to do something else. For example, I was not internally was not permitted to be the authority that I knew I could be, and was eventually, in the Loretto Hilton theater.

So as a result **it was an allegiance to my belief that I wasn't enough of an authority**. I said I created the arguments that justify that.

But what I was forbidden to do is not so much take the job that's the physicalization of it. Not so much take the job, **but I was forbidden to raise myself above what I considered my personal station or my personal place to be at the time**. So I could do one. The allegiance permitted it, but I could not do the other. And that is something that is forbidden. And if you look at your behavior, all of us have that combination of allegiances and forbidden and they come out of and are the foundation of negative self-talk.

Judith:

Right. And getting, getting held back in life. I mean, one more little story that I want to, to just suggest how subtle this stuff can be.

My very first serious boyfriend said to me, what's wrong with your mother's eye? I said, there's nothing wrong with my mother's eye. And he said, Oh yeah, she has a wandering eye. I said that's ridiculous, no, she doesn't.

And sure enough, he said when we're with them next time you look. And there it was, her eye was wondering.

So I had lunch with her later and I asked her about that.

She said, Oh, you know all about that. I was born with it and I didn't get any surgery until your father came along. And they couldn't fix it totally. You know all about it. I said, no, I don't, and I checked with my brother. He didn't notice it either.

The forbiddance in our family was so severe, we only see what was good. We only see what was attractive and appealing the way it should be. That's how deep the forbiddance can be that you can't even see what's right in front of you.

Jim:

Question number four is which of your allegiances are you aware of? What can you pencil down, literally, as something that is an allegiance where you are giving yourself to an idea, a concept, an atmosphere and as a result you cannot move beyond where you are even though you know you want to.

All right, let's move on to number five which is negative-negative and negative-positive. Positive-positive and positive-negative. That's not a trick or a puzzle. It is a description of the various kinds of head-talk that goes on in us. The negative, is when in fact you have negative head-talk and it criticizes you and you hear or feel or say something like, what do you think you are? You can't do that. You're not smart enough, you're not whatever. So that the actual feeling and or the, the dialogue and the internal dialogue is negative.

Then you have negative positive. Like I expressed in St Louis when I said I'm not ready. All of that conversation was very positive and very laudatory and I am a very responsible young man and I was respectful to the theater, blah, blah, blah.

But all of that positive was essentially negative because it was all being constructed to keep me in place. So negative-negative and negative-positive, both are there to keep you in place and those are ways to watch for them because people think it's only negative. Well that's not true.

And of course we have self-talk that is positive, where we are supportive of ourselves. Where we can't actually say for example, Judith and I gave a teleseminar last night. We are teaching a seminar on copywriting for soft topic authors and marketers.

And the soft topic has to do with people who are writing and or marketing in the human area, not necessarily in money or marketing or finance or automobiles, but the interaction between people.

We gave a seminar last night. I am very proud of it. So is Judith. But I'm speaking for myself. I'm very proud of it. I did something, I learned something that's all positive-positive head-talk.

Judith:

And may I say anybody who is in that genre and is interested in learning more about soft topic copywriting, drop us an email because we're going to be offering another copywriting clinic very shortly.

Jim:

Then there's positive-negative self-talk and that is when you are legitimately critical of your own behavior and that that criticism is meant not to keep you in place. But the criticism meant to make a change so you don't do it again.

And so it sounds negative but it is actually positive. We had an automobile accident two years ago and it has really impacted the way I drive and by comparison to the way I used to in this country up here where we have a lot of ice in the winter. So as a result, that critical self-assessment ended up in a positive change. So that's what those represent. Positive-positive or positive-negative creates change, negative-negative and negative-positive, do not create change. They keep you in the same place.

And if you don't know this then you're only going to be looking for one kind of negative head-talk and you are going to be fooled by the other kinds of negative positive.

Judith:

Now number six, what is the emotional cost of negative head-talk and negative self-talk and what has that negative head-talk cost you in your life?

You may even want to make a list of that to make before you go to bed or tomorrow over the weekend you may want to jot down what all that ratta-ratta in your head, in your body, and your mind, and your thinking is holding you back from.

Jim:

And when Judy said, jot it down, the examples in our case she gave one of Marty Baum who wanted to sign her as an actress and she didn't. So what did that cost her? In my case, when I would gaze out of the window at the University of Detroit high school, what did that cost me in terms of my education? Well, one thing I can tell you for sure would cost a lot of time for me to catch up. It's very practical and very real and very concrete in the world – what the costs are.

Judith:

And it may be financial, it may even be as specific as financial debt, but also emotionally disappointment, rage, depression, things we've covered before in terms of physical illness, because certainly the stress of being held back can create different kinds of physical illness or confusion about the faith and religion. If you feel like God is tampering with your life in a negative kind of way, loneliness, confusion, and the lack of joy and love in your life. Huge, huge costs.

Jim:

So what has negative head-talk cost you in your life? And there's something very important now here that we must say. And that is when you jot these things down, you cannot hurt yourself with more negative head-talk by saying, Oh God, I shouldn't have done that. Oh my God, how could I have done that. No, was I stupid to do that. Can't do that because the truth of the matter is all of us, each one of us, including the worst of us, does something they've done for their own benefit. And so you're doing something, you've always done something that you thought was positive in your mind. Although it may not turn out to be, and that's the way we, we refer to the unconscious aspect of our being alive.

But also that what you did, if you look back and you can see the structures that you were involved in, the emotional and psychological structures, to a very real degree, there was little choice.

It was a product of the habituated circumstance and condition that you were living in, not just in your parents' home, but in your own mind. That's where it's far more important.

Because as we all know, you can take two people, put them in the same circumstance in terms of a home life, and they both have different responses. So you are responsible for your response because you're the only one who made it. That's what you need to take a look at. But the good news about that is that since you're responsible, because you made it, you can change it. If you are not responsible, then somebody else would have to change it and it would be lost.

Judith:

What we hope you will feel after you made your list and we really encourage you to do it is that we hope you will be so, pumped, you will be angry, not at yourself, not putting yourself down. More like, I'm not going to allow this to happen any-more. I am going to get going right now. I don't care what the pain of change is, it's certainly less than the pain of being held back any-more. It's not going to happen.

And what else can you do about it?

Number seven, what can you do about it?

Acknowledge: Number one, I want you to write these down.

(1) Acknowledge that you are in a fight, if not a war. That negative head-talk is like silent terrorism and you have to fight back. You have to win. You have to be determined to win.

(2) So that's the second thing that we want to encourage you to do is see yourself empowered to win the right to conduct your life in the most magnificent way that you want to.

Jim:

And you know, for example, when you set yourself out to do something that takes effort, like lose weight, for example. That is a struggle. You have to have an intention, you have to apply will. You have to be determined.

The dramatic way to saying it is you're in a fight. Well, in some instances you really can be and even a war. But what happens with negative self-talk is it gives the impression that it's on your side. And that's where it becomes really tricky because it appears like it's an ally, but it really is not. And you have to pay attention.

Here's another thing you can do and that is you have to become vigilant. Now if you have a specific objective or goal you're trying to reach, then you have to become vigilant within that desire. Not generally, not globally vigilant because that's too much.

You become vigilant within the desire, within the limits and bounds of that desire because you have to spot the negative self-talk and sometimes that's really tricky and sometimes you can't until you really practice this.

If you can't spot it, you can't do anything about it and here's the way to do it. You focus on a repetitive pattern that you have in your life because repetitive patterns are really a symbol of negative self-talk.

They can also be positive but we're not focused on that this evening.

Focus on a repetitive pattern in your life, in your career—you can't let yourself get ahead, for example—in your marriage or your relationship, you can't ask for what you want. Something where you have a repetitive pattern and then what you do is write out and we're really serious about writing it out because when you physicalize it through your hand and the pencil and pen on the paper, it makes it objective, you can stand back and take a look at it.

You write out your feelings and your beliefs and whatever story you tell yourself in order to justify your behavior. Like the story I told myself when I said I was not ready to become the artistic director. Whatever story you tell yourself because that story has all of the elements that can lead you down to the core of that negative self-talk.

Like for example, when I said I was not ready, that in and of itself was a clue. That was actually the major clue and if I'd asked myself, why am I not ready? Why don't they think I'm ready? I could've burrowed down to find out that I didn't think I have the authority to be able to go forward. I didn't. I then, as I have said twice or three times I grant, I made it grandiose.

I was a perfect specimen who loved the theater and did not want to disrespect it. That's all crap. That's all clap-trap. That's all blah blah.

The key was I was not ready and why wasn't I ready? What story do you tell yourself to keep that repetitive behavior in place and by the way, you're not doing it to keep the negative behavior in place or the negative a negative head-talk in place. It's just that story that you use to tell yourself why you could not move forward in whatever circumstance you have decided to look at.

Judith:

All right. Now finally, what we want to encourage you to do is choose one behavior in your life right now that you know reflects some form of negative head-talk. Some examples just to get your mind churning is you might be avoiding training seminars in the company that you work for. You may think they're stupid and worthless and you're not going to waste your time. And yet really, they're bringing people that are worthless.

Maybe if you're single, you refuse to date online. You think that's beneath you. You think that's crazy. You don't want to do that.

You avoid conflict in your marriage so you never speak up about things that concern you or make you mad or irritate you. We could go on and on with examples, but pick something you see that you refuse some kind of behavior that somebody else might think would be really helpful to you. Commit to change that behavior.

No matter how nervous it makes you and no matter how anxious it makes you commit to change that. You can even be mad at us that we suggested you do it while you're doing it. That's okay. You can even, you know, pound a pillow and pretend it's one of us while you get nervous and anxious and you'd do it anyway.

Because breaking through that barrier, physically doing something outside the box is very important to get rid of that negative head-talk because you assert your rights to do it differently and essentially that's how you're going to fight this war by saying, no, I'm not going to listen to you anymore. I'm going to go after what I want. I'm going to free

myself up to live a bigger, better, fuller life and I'm going to experiment. Some things will work, some things won't, but I'm going to get out there.

Jim:

To paraphrase Albert Einstein again: You can't solve a problem with the same consciousness that created it. But you can burrow into your consciousness first of all at the, at the superficial topical level in terms of what's happening right now, right in front of you, whatever you're feeling and thinking right in this moment and then follow that more deeply down to the root of what we are all calling negative self-talk or negative head-talk.

We've told you what negative head-talk is and where it comes from, why you take it for granted, the trap of allegiances and forbiddances, the negative-negative and the negative-positive and the cumulative nature of negative head-talk.

And we asked you to look at it and what it costs you in your life. That is the beginning of a new level of consciousness.

And now if you watch yourself and be vigilant in spotting the repetitive elements of your self-story you will open the hidden allegiances and the forbiddances at the root of your negative head-talk. And that is the way out. That is the future for you. That is a major step in permitting you to be as fabulous as you can and we support you in that 100%.



Summary of Key Points

Negative head-talk or negative self-talk is that voice in your head that argues, Don't go forward. It puts up walls, it sets up limitations. It puts you down. It'll say things to you like, Hey, who do you think you are? You can't do that. You can't handle that. That's beyond what you are. You don't dare do that. You'll be exposed. You'll be embarrassed. You don't want to embarrass yourself. What will other people think? It prohibits new behavior. It condemns you for not being good enough in some way. It keeps yammering at you, holding you back.

7 POINTS FOR OVERCOMING NEGATIVE HEAD-TALK

1. Write down the form that your negative head-talk takes – you hear actual words, you have a knowingness, a feeling, or what?
2. What are the origins of your negative head-talk?
 - a. One example was that how you behaved when you were younger was intolerable to those around you. This set up some negative limiting beliefs that have led to negative head-talk.
 - b. Another example is via emotional, intellectual, or physical atmospherics – a feeling you get.
 - c. Perhaps your parents have a limited life because of their own negative head-talk and they've passed their negativity on to you.
3. Be aware that one reason why we take negative head-talk for granted is because of its unconscious nature and so we're not even in touch with it. This causes the negative head-talk to become habituated, causing us to not even be aware that it's going on.
4. What are your Allegiances and Forbiddances – what you are in allegiance to and what has been forbidden to you? Write these down so you can work on overcoming them.
5. Understand the differences between what is negative-negative and negative-positive. And positive-positive and positive-negative.
6. Make a list of all the things that negative head-talk has prevented you from doing in your life.
7. What can you do about negative head-talk?
 - Acknowledge that you are in a fight, if not a war. That negative head-talk is like silent terrorism and you have to fight back. You have to win. You have to be determined to win.
 - So we encourage you to see yourself empowered to win the right to conduct your life in the most magnificent way that you desire.

SOME OTHER POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Negative self-talk often gives the impression that it's on your side. But it really is not. And you have to pay attention to that.
- Become vigilant. If you have a specific objective or goal you're trying to reach become vigilant in spotting any negative head-talk holding you back from that goal. If you can't spot it, you can't do anything about it.
- Focus on any repetitive patterns that you have in your life because repetitive patterns are really a symbol of negative self-talk. Write down what those repetitive patterns are.
- Write down your feelings and beliefs and whatever stories you tell yourself in order to justify your behavior when you're not moving forward.
- Choose one behavior in your life right now that you know reflects some form of negative head-talk. Then commit today to change that behavior.

