

# YOU ARE WHAT YOU SAY TO YOURSELF

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ARCHITECTS \*  
FOR LEARNING®

Building Strong Learning Foundations

# How Self-talk Impacts Our Success



*Think back to a time when you struggled and you said to yourself: "I don't get it!" or "I can't do this!"*

*Where were you? How did you feel?  
Just for a moment, dare to feel it again.*

*Do you remember what you said to yourself during that moment of panic when failure seemed certain?*

*Do you sometimes still hear that same voice in your head?*



All day, every day, we talk to ourselves. We tell ourselves we're awesome. We tell ourselves we stink. Starting at a very young age, we spin stories about who we are, and these stories shape how we see ourselves. Once a story grooves itself into our brain, it has the power to shape how we view ourselves for life.

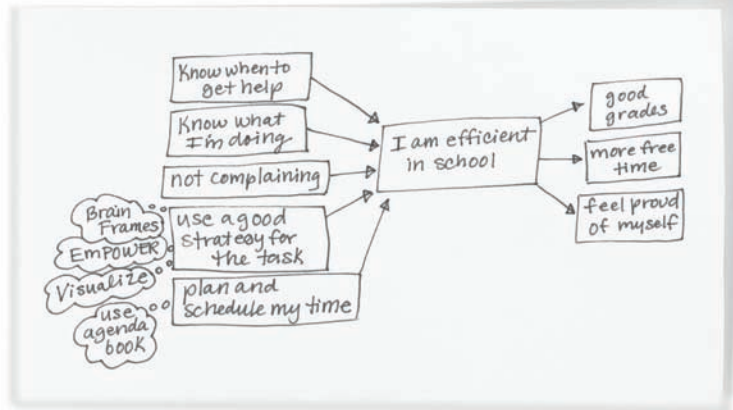
## **Inner dialogue is a powerful thing.**

Just try doing something – especially something hard like writing an essay or fixing a computer – without talking to yourself. Positive self-talk helps you work through challenges and persevere for success. Negative self-talk leads you to doubt yourself or even give up in the face of a challenge. What kids say to themselves impacts their performance -- in school, and ultimately in life.

Parents and other adults can take note of what kids say to themselves and shape that inner dialogue. By doing so, they can help kids develop an effective mindset to overcome challenges and maintain a positive self-concept through all stages of life.

# How We Help Kids Learn: Making the Invisible Visible

Self-talk is powerful, but it's basically invisible. Over the last 25 years, *Architects For Learning* has developed a number of unique teaching methods that have transformed students' ability to learn. We make what's invisible – thinking and language - visible and concrete. With EmPOWER™ and Brain Frames®, we take the mystery out of difficult tasks and give kids ways to literally see the patterns of their thoughts and ideas, see how language works, and see their success. Instead of letting their critical voice dominate and lead to failure, we teach kids what successful people say to themselves when the going gets tough.



In the face of a challenge, we teach kids to see how they're thinking about it and know what to say to themselves to move through the task successfully. They can transform negative self-talk into positive self-talk, allowing them to define a task, set goals, plan an approach, self-monitor progress, identify sources of confusion, and make mindful adjustments when things aren't working out quite right.

Based on our work with thousands of students, *Architects For Learning* operates from a set of core beliefs about what leads to effective learning and success. Whether we are working with students on writing, reading, math, how to make a friend, or how to manage test anxiety, these beliefs inform everything we do.

## **Self-talk is an important key to success in school and in life.**

It's hard to experience success if you fundamentally believe you're too stupid to learn. Kids need to know what to say to themselves in moments of uncertainty if they are to push through adversity and be successful. We can teach kids self-talk routines that help them meet the day-to-day challenges of school and life.

### **Language and thought are intertwined.**

If we want kids to get better at listening, speaking, reading, writing, or relating with others, we need to teach them to think.

### **Language and thinking are based on patterns, and those patterns can be made visible.**

Success in school and in life is driven by the ability to detect patterns and communicate ideas clearly. Good pattern-detectors intuitively “see” how information is organized and figure out efficient ways to tackle complex tasks. Poor pattern-detectors can get lost in the details, have trouble seeing the big picture, or waste precious time using ineffective strategies. We need to teach kids the language and thinking skills that school and eventually the workforce will require all day, every day.

Many kids who have challenges with some aspect of learning and school are self-critical when faced with challenges. Their negative self-talk makes it harder for them to overcome those challenges and succeed. It doesn't have to be this way.

### **We can teach positive self-talk.**

At *Architects For Learning*, we help families identify what kids need to learn more effectively, and we develop customized programs to help them succeed in school and in life. If you think your child could benefit from individualized guidance with learning, we encourage you to take the first step and meet with us.



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**Call us to schedule an initial consultation,  
and we will create a plan for your child.**

**781.235.8412**

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Meet Harry. He's one my favorite students. Writing for school is so anxiety-provoking that it paralyzes him. Harry is brilliant and one of the wisest adolescents I have ever met. But he's failing 9th grade because he can't get his papers written. I asked him to use our *Jot Your Thought™* technique to tell me what he says to himself when he gets an assignment.

The assignment was, "Why do you think Phedippides wanted to write this play?" Harry gave me an instant replay of his self-talk while simultaneously drawing. Some of the things he said to himself included: "This is stupid...This is irrelevant...I'm better off taking an F...What are my thoughts...I DON'T KNOW!" He had to write an 8 page paper, but all he could come up with after 15 minutes of talking to himself was, "I eat a sandwich." And he knew that was "garbage."

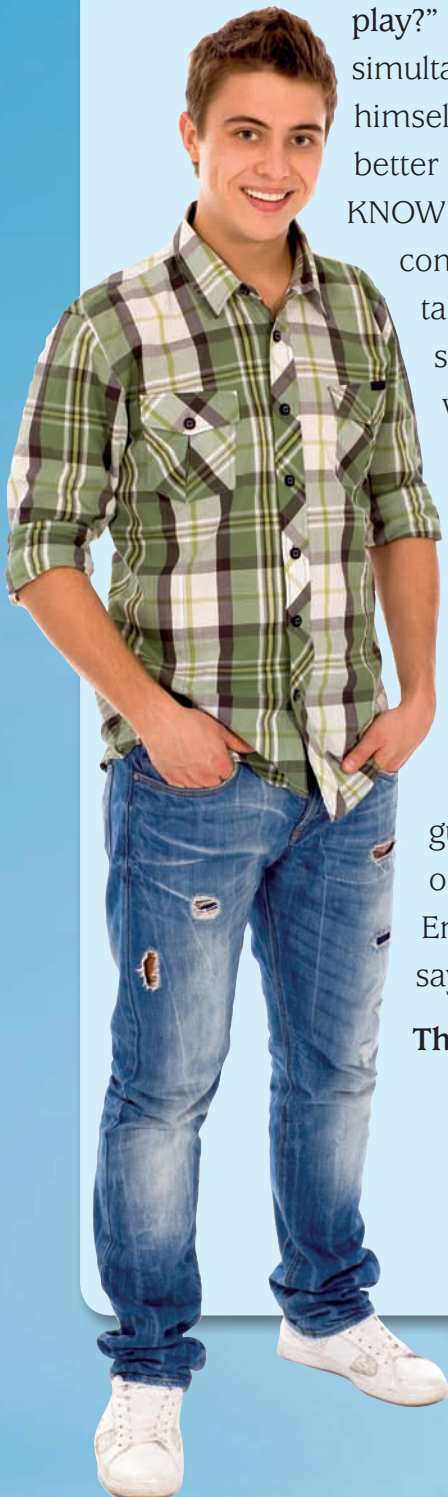
No **WONDER** he was failing.

You can't write a paper if that's what you're saying to yourself!

Harry and I worked hard on writing for all of 9th grade, using self-talk strategies to guide his writing process. By 10th grade, he made an off-handed comment one day, "I'm doing better in English this year. Know why? I finally learned what to say to myself when I get a writing assignment."

**The strategies have paid off:**

**Harry just finished his third year of college as an economics major!**



## ARCHITECTS FOR LEARNING

Offering individual and small group instruction for K-12 students designed to strengthen: listening, speaking, reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, memory, studying, emotional and behavioral regulation, handwriting, and learning.

- **Helping students navigate their lives.**

Developing strategies for executive functioning, organization, problem solving, social interaction, and emotional regulation.

- **Helping families and teachers maximize success.**

Supporting parents, teachers, and schools through professional consultation and comprehensive speech-language, reading, written expression, fine motor, and psychotherapy evaluations.

- **Helping students learn through the summer.**

In our theme-based academic clubs and classes, students may explore the world as film critics, detectives, wizards, zoologists, or even Knights of the Round Table.

Speech-language therapy, Psychotherapy, Occupational therapy, Tutoring, and Academic enrichment.

*Our vision is that all individuals see themselves as whole and capable.*



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