

get Gritty



Living with Genuine Grit
Part 9: Promote Positive
Self-Talk

Gritty Riders Are Positive

Your self-talk is so important to your confidence.

See, your brains is always listening to your self-talk. When you repeat messages over and over, they filter down to your subconscious mind. Your subconscious mind notices everything that you experience, collecting and storing your memories, what happened, your thoughts and feelings. It filters through all of this data, storing what is important, and saving it for later, so that the next time you encounter a similar situation, you are more prepared.

The subconscious mind also works to help you achieve your goals, by looking for possibilities. If what you tell your subconscious mind doesn't match your reality, it works to make it so.

So when you have negative self-talk, you are actually programming yourself to fail. If you tell yourself, "I'll never get any better as a rider, I am too nervous and afraid of falling off!" your subconscious takes note of these messages and works to make it happen-you will never get any better, you will stay nervous, and you might even fall off! This is the Law of Attraction, or the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy at work!

The good news is that you can re-program your subconscious to work for what you do want! And a simple way to start re-programming your subconscious is by creating a powerful, personalized, positive affirmation.

Are you ready to start thinking more positively? Let's get started!

Chevy

Programming the Subconscious Mind

Now that you understand how your subconscious mind responds to make what you tell it a reality, you can now start to program your subconscious through positive self-talk and positive affirmations. Here are a few things to note when programming your subconscious mind:

1) Your subconscious mind doesn't understand "Don't."

You need to make sure that your self-talk is about what you want, not what you don't want. The subconscious mind works in pictures, and there is no picture for "not". So when you say to yourself, "I don't want to fall off my horse today!" your subconscious mind hears "I want to fall off my horse today!"

2) Your subconscious mind doesn't know the difference between what is fact and what is fiction.

All it does is compare your self-talk to what you are currently experiencing. So if your self-talk is "I am a secure and balanced rider," and you are not a secure and balanced rider yet, then your subconscious will go to work to make it happen.

3) Act "as if" and word your self-talk in the present tense.

To make your self-talk more powerful word it in the present tense, act as if you already have the qualities or skills you desire. For example, "I am calm and focused in the show ring," instead of "I will be calm and focused when I show my horse next weekend."

4) It will take time to "delete" prior programming.

If your subconscious mind has been previously programmed with negative thoughts, then it will take time to replace those negative instructions with positive ones.

Creating a Powerful, Personalized Positive Affirmation

Positive affirmations are a common form of positive self-talk and are an effective way to give instructions to your subconscious. By keeping your self-talk positive, you keep your thoughts on the positive. When your thoughts are positive, your emotions are more likely to be positive too. And when your mind is positive, your body is positive, which means your horse will also be positive. And it all starts with positive affirmations!

The first step in creating a powerful, personalized positive affirmation that will be most effective for you is to recognize your most common negative thoughts, and write them down.

After you have listed your top negative thoughts, think about how you can re-frame them into something positive. What is the silver lining? What is the hidden blessing? Is this negative thought really true? Counter the negative thought with a positive one.

Then make a positive affirmation statement out of your new positive thoughts. Positive affirmations are an "I am" statement that you can repeat when notice that you are starting to have negative thoughts. This helps to replace the negative thought with a positive one.

On the next pages is a template to help you work through this exercise, and an example of a common negative thought that I have, and how I have re-framed it to be more positive, and the positive affirmation statement that I use when I notice I am having that negative thought.

Powerful, Personalized Positive Affirmation Template

Step 1: Identify Common Negative Thoughts

Step 2: Re-frame the Negative into Positive. Is the thought true? What is the silver lining?

Step 3: Create a Positive Affirmation Statement (Hint-start it with "I Am.....")

Chevy's Example:

Negative Thought:

I'm not as balanced in the saddle as I used to be, I worry about loping and going fast over uneven terrain, like out in the pasture gathering cattle. I worry that because I am not balanced my horse might be unbalanced, and he could trip and even fall and we might get hurt.

Positive Re-Frame:

Because I am very self-aware of when I start to feel unbalanced, I can work to get better. I can practice posting the trot to strengthen my muscles and improve my rhythm with my horse. I can hold onto the horn if I need to re-balance myself, or slow down to a walk until I feel secure in the saddle again.

Positive Affirmation Statement:

I am balanced and secure in the saddle.

An Important Note About Negative Thoughts:

Here is the thing about Negative Thoughts. You cannot get rid of them.

Your brain is hard-wired to notice the negative. That is how your cave person ancestors survived. They noticed the scary saber-toothed tiger, they experienced emotions of fear, they certainly had negative thoughts about the situation, and if they were lucky their fight-flight-freeze response kicked in and they were able to run, fight off the saber-tooth tiger, or freeze and hide until it went away.

Now, today there generally are very few situations where our lives are truly in danger. However, these negative thoughts still occur. See, you still have this inner cave person who notices all of the negative things, and they are really good at bringing them to your attention, so that you can do something about it and survive another day.

So, when you try to get rid of negative thoughts, your inner cave person thinks that you are ignoring them. When you ignore your inner cave person, they get more scared, and the more scared they get, the louder they get, and the more those negative thoughts keep on appearing.

You need to address the negative thoughts by either showing your inner cave person that there isn't any actual danger, or you need to replace the negative thoughts with positive thoughts.

