

GUIDE 04

The *Narrator*

Chapter 4 of the book: *Belief and Self-Talk*

CARLA

"I'm bad with money. Always have been."

WALT

"Who told you that first?"

BEFORE YOU WATCH

Read Chapter 4 before Tuesday, including the nine questions in the first exercise; you don't have to answer them yet, but read them, because the week will start answering them for you. Have the book open at "Your internal dialogue" while you watch. Bring your chief aim from Chapter 2 and the statement you recorded in Chapter 3. One of this week's practices ends with the aim.

THE SCENE

Carla owns a two-chair salon on Main Street, twenty years behind the chair and eleven as the owner, and keeps her receipts in a shoebox. Tuesday morning the accountant's email arrives: a filing went in late, there's a penalty, he needs the shoebox by Friday. A client suggests an app. Carla says she's bad with money, always has been, and laughs, because she's said it so often it's a joke. At the table that night she says it again, Hal says he's a hands guy, not a numbers guy, and Dev reports a compliment from his biggest client and adds that they're just being polite. Walt asks Carla who told her that first. She says nobody. He asks how old she was the first time she said it, and her hands stop moving. Late that night, closing up alone, she says it a third time, to the mirror, and the voice that answers is her first boss, twenty years ago: you're an artist, Carla, leave the numbers to people who can count.



THE IDEA

The *idea*

Tell yourself something enough times and you will believe it. This is true whether the thing is true or not. It is how advertising works, and how most people build the opinion they hold of themselves.

The voice in your head has been talking since you were about two. By now it has said some things tens of thousands of times. "I'm bad with money." "I'm not a numbers person." None of those were conclusions you reached from evidence. They were sentences you repeated until they felt like facts. The good news is that the machinery runs in both directions.

Belief is the ingredient that turns a thought into an action. You can have a clear aim and a sound plan, and if some part of you does not believe the aim is reachable, you will find reasons not to execute the plan. Belief is something you build, the same way you built the beliefs that are holding you back: by what you tell yourself, and how often.

The stream of thought running in the background all day is programming. When you make a mistake and the voice says "typical," that is an instruction. When someone compliments you and the voice says "they're just being polite," that is an instruction. Those instructions pile up, and your behavior follows them. The job is to listen to that stream, find out what it is saying, and start saying something different on purpose.

Belief is built mostly out of evidence, so the fastest way to believe you can do a hard thing is to do a smaller version of it and notice that you did. Repetition breeds belief, but an affirmation has to be something you can act on and gather evidence for; "I make ten calls before I open email, every day" invites no argument, and after two weeks it is simply true. Talking to yourself by name creates just enough distance to think clearly; it sounds odd, and it works. And the three-step move: catch the thought, check it against the evidence, change it to something more accurate. Not more positive. More accurate. Most of the destructive sentences in your head would not survive a fair hearing.

THE MEMO

MEMO

THE PATTERN, NAMED

SUBJECT

The Narrator

CC

One salon owner. One shoebox. One sentence, twenty years old.

MOVES

Hear it once from someone who sounded sure, repeat it, say it out loud as a joke, hand the numbers to anyone who'll take them, let every late filing prove it.

OUTCOME

She's been running the books on a stranger's opinion since she was twenty-one.

The Narrator is tempting because the line is useful. "I'm bad with money" gets Carla out of the shoebox every Friday and back to the chair, where she is brilliant and where she would rather be. It is a kindness she does herself, in a voice she borrowed from a man who liked her and thought he was paying her a compliment. Nobody in that story is a villain. The cost is that every penalty becomes more evidence for a sentence that never had any, and her chief aim, two apprentices a year who can pay their rent when they leave, is partly a numbers aim. The narrator has already told her she can't do that part.

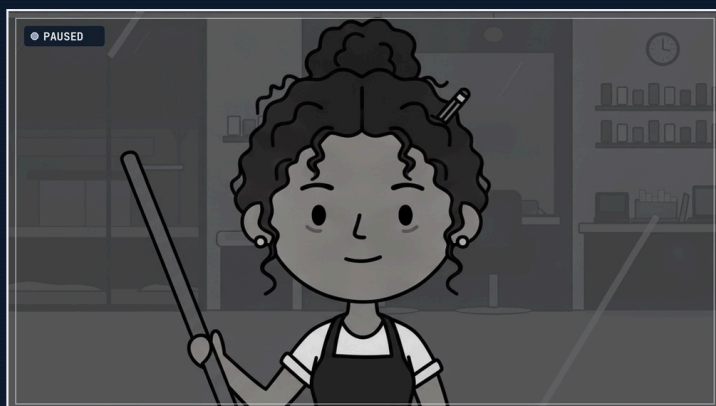
THE REWIND



Same Tuesday, same question, and this time Carla answers it: her first boss, when she was twenty-one, and he meant it kindly. Walt asks if it's true. She checks it against the evidence out loud: she has been running a business for eleven years with a shoebox; imagine what she'd do with a spreadsheet. She changes the line to something more accurate, "I've never kept the books. I've kept a business," and writes it under the old one. Walt turns to Dev and asks what the client actually said; Dev repeats it, word for word, and is told to write it down. That night, at the mirror, Carla talks to herself by name, formally, like reading a card, and laughs at how it sounds. Then she writes her evidence list, five hard things she already did, and the first one is the salon. Then she emails the accountant: receipts by Friday, and will he show her the spreadsheet after close.

What it cost: a sentence she has used as a joke for twenty years, and an evening with the shoebox she'd rather have spent anywhere else.

THE PAGE, IN THE EPISODE



Belief and Self-Talk

A wish is a feeling.

A goal has edges.

a mistake *leave the numbers*someone else's mistake *to people who can count.*

criticism

a slight

a compliment *they're just being polite.*being wrong *typical.*

a room of strangers

something that irritates you

waking up

PEOPLE HAVE TAUGHT THIS MOVE FOR FIFTY YEARS

THE PAGE

The *Page*

Your internal dialogue. Our reactions show us what the voice has been saying. Answer as plainly as you can. If you don't know yet, leave it blank, watch for it, and come back. Three of the nine are here; the rest are in the chapter.

When you make a mistake, what does the voice say?

When someone compliments you?

When you wake up in the morning?

Whose voice is it? A parent's, a teacher's, an old boss, a tone of ridicule. Write where you think the loudest lines came from.

The reset. Write a short statement you can say the moment you catch the voice being destructive. The shape the book uses: "Even though I'm rattled right now, I'm not going to dwell on it and I'm not going to run anyone down, including myself. I know that when I do, I'm running down my own aim. Instead I'm going to think about what I actually want and the person I'm becoming, which is..." Finish it with your chief aim from Chapter 2.

Catch, check, change. One line the voice said this week, word for word. The evidence for and against it. A more accurate line, in your own hand.

THE LINE:

THE EVIDENCE:

THE MORE ACCURATE LINE:

Evidence. Five hard things you have already done. Not achievements for a resume. Things that were hard for you, that you did anyway.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The full set is in Chapter 4. Do those too.

THIS WEEK

This Week

- 1 One. Catch the voice in three of the nine situations and write what it said. Word for word, then whose voice it sounds like. If you don't know yet, leave it blank and watch for it.
- 2 Two. Your reset line, with your aim at the end of it. Use the book's shape and finish it with your chief aim from Chapter 2. Memorize it. You'll use it a lot in the first two weeks and less after that.
- 3 Three. Five hard things you already did. Hard for you, and you did them anyway. Keep the list where you can find it, and add to it; that is what the ten minutes a day in the chapter's third commitment is for.

DAY	DID IT	ONE LINE ABOUT IT
1	☐	
2	☐	
3	☐	
4	☐	
5	☐	
6	☐	
7	☐	

GO CHECK

The chapter's "What we know now" section names the people behind each finding so you can go read them. The episode doesn't name them; this box does.

Self-efficacy, and its four sources in order of strength: Albert Bandura.

Illusory truth (statements you have heard before feel more true than statements you have not): Lynn Hasher and colleagues, demonstrated in the 1970s and replicated many times since.

The limit of affirmations ("I am a lovable person" made people with low self-esteem feel worse): Joanne Wood and colleagues.

Distanced self-talk (talking to yourself by name, in the second or third person): Ethan Kross.

Catch, check, change (catch the thought, check it against the evidence, change it to something more accurate): the three-step move cognitive behavioral therapists have taught for fifty years.

NEXT TUESDAY

DEZ

I bought the course. Four hundred dollars. Twelve hours of video.

HAL

Who's teaching you to cut a joint?

Chapter 5 is about the difference between knowing what a thing is and knowing how it works, and Dez has just spent four hundred dollars on the first kind.