Positive Self Talk

Template

Scenario

Your manager has asked you to deliver a presentation to the senior leadership team, updating them on progress of the new software that is being designed by your team. You are actively involved in this software development and are enjoying your work. You don’t feel that delivering a presentation is the best use of your skill set and you don’t enjoy giving presentations. You are a technical expert with very practical skills. You think someone else in the team would be better suited to this task. You’ve only been part of this team for three months and you are keen to make a good impression. You would prefer not to do the presentation as it may impact the impression you give to the senior leadership team.

Task

Step 1:

Even if this is not personally how you would feel about this task, record all the negative self-talk you consider this person (or yourself) would engage in, in relation to this scenario. Write these in the first column.

Step 2:

Then go back through each negative self-talk statement and re-frame it to be a positive self-talk statement and write that in the second column.

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| NEGATIVE self-talk statement | POSITIVE self-talk statement |
| Example: I’m not experienced enough to give a presentation to the senior leadership team. | Example: This is an opportunity to impress the senior leadership team and make an impact with people I don’t usually get an audience with. |
| Example: I will just talk too fast like I normally do when I’m nervous. | Example: I will practice the presentation and get feedback from others to help me slow my pace. |
| I don’t know how to deliver a good presentation. | I can research the skills required to deliver an effective presentation that meets the audience’s needs. |
| I won’t be able to do this. | I will be able to do this once I seek help and guidance from more experienced colleagues. |
| My strengths are my technical skills not delivering presentations. | I need to develop my presentation skills if I want to progress in my career so I might as well start now |
| Why me? I didn’t ask to do this! | It is a privilege and an opportunity to have been chosen to complete an important task. They must have confidence in me if they are willing to put me in front of the senior leadership team. |
| Am I being tested? They are trying to make me do something I can’t do. | I’ve had good feedback so far about my work, which must be why I’m being trusted with this piece of work |
| I’m not good at speaking in front of people | This is an opportunity to improve my public speaking |
| I don’t want to do this | This is a new skill I can develop and will be necessary for the future |
| This doesn’t interest me | This is a great challenge to increase my skill set |
| I’ve never done this before and I will be bad at it | I will ensure I seek guidance from experienced colleagues and use this as an opportunity to learn from others and grow |
| I’m being set up to fail | This is a great chance to get in front of the senior leaders and show them what I can do |
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All these are natural negative thoughts that we may hear ourselves saying when faced with an unfamiliar opportunity. If you reflect back on a time when you’ve been asked to do something new and outside your skill set, it is likely that you may have heard yourself saying some of these things. But these negative inner thoughts will hinder you from progress. We need to make sure we ‘cancel out’ these thoughts and replace them with more helpful positive inner talk instead. If you look at the positive statements, they are reframed to project a more positive attitude, which is a Learning Mindset. This means that we are more likely to achieve this new task as we’ve set ourselves up for success. It creates a more positive message to our brain and ‘tricks’ us to change how we feel about the task. The more we get used to thinking in this way, the more natural it becomes, and the less we have to ‘trick’ our brain as it becomes the ‘normal’ way of thinking or having inner narrative.