Be Bad First

Try-It Exercises

Chapter 3

TRY IT

My Current State as a Master of Mastery

Score yourself 1–5 in each of the four areas, with 1 being "I do this rarely or not well" and 5 being "I do this consistently and very well."

	1	2	3	4	5

Aspiration: How good am I at getting myself to want to do things?

_____

Neutral self-awareness: How accurate am I in assessing my strengths
and weaknesses and how I feel about them?

_____

Endless curiosity: How much do I access my own inborn curiosity?

_____

Willingness to be bad first: How willing am I to be in the beginner state?

What's one thing that you're excited about learning—something you want to learn?
(Ideally, this would be something you've already started learning, since that's your best indication that you really do want to learn it!)

What's one thing that you know you need to learn, but that you don't want to learn?
(This can be something that you already know you don't want to learn. It can also be something that you think or say you want to learn… but that you haven't yet been able to make consistent effort to learn.)

Chapter 4

TRY IT

Now you'll have a chance to flex your own "aspiration muscles." Look back at the topic you noted in the last chapter that you do want to learn—one that, ideally, you have already started learning. Focus on what benefits you hope to achieve (or have already begun to achieve) from learning it. This will probably be relatively easy for you to do; since you actually do want to learn this thing, you've already recognized the benefits to you on some level, although you may not have thought about it consciously.

Benefits I hope to gain (or am I gaining) from learning in this area where I do want to learn:

With your example in mind, think about the thing you don't yet want to learn. How could learning that thing offer you some of the same benefits? (This is the last time I'll say that—I'm sure you've got the drill by now!)

How could the thing I don't want to learn offer me some of the benefits I identified in the previous exercise (or other benefits that are equally important to me)?

Now I encourage you to try this in the area where you don't want to learn, drawing on the potential benefits you described above to envision a realistic possible world.

Envisioning a "hoped-for future" where I'm reaping the benefits of my learning…

Pick a time frame (when I will be much more skilled or knowledgeable in this area):	**Imagine yourself in that future, and describe what success looks and feels like** (how I feel and what I'm doing, having gained the benefits from this learning):	**Select the key elements** (how I'm experiencing my hoped-for benefits in this future world of successful learning):

Chapter 5

TRY IT

Before we go on to the second step in building neutral self-awareness, I'd like you to do a real practice of shifting your own self-talk from less supportive to more supportive.

Focus on the topic you chose in chapter 3 that you don't want to learn. Write down some of what you're saying to yourself about it.

Circle one piece of the self-talk you've written above that seems particularly unhelpful to you.
(For instance, *It will be so frustrating trying to learn this, it's not even worth it.*)

Now rethink that self-talk to be more accurate and believable; write your new, more supportive self-talk.
(For instance, *I don't know if it will be frustrating—I haven't really tried it yet.*)

Focus on the topic or skill you chose in chapter 3 that you don't want to learn. Note your self-talk about your current strengths and weaknesses, relative to this area of learning.

Review what you've written and ask, Is it accurate? Circle anything you suspect may not be accurate.
(For example, I don't have a problem admitting when I'm wrong.)

Now, ask yourself, What facts do I have in this area?
(For example, *I can actually think of a number of situations where I was wrong and didn't admit it, or made excuses.*)

Based on your thinking, rethink your self-talk to reflect your more neutral self-awareness.
(For example, *It's often difficult for me to admit when I'm wrong.*)

Focus once again on the topic or skill that you don't want to learn. Think of two people who see you clearly in this area (that is, have a balanced and accurate view of your strengths and weaknesses), and who want the best for you.

1.   2.

Take a few minutes to decide how you'll ask one of your sources for his or her insights about your strengths and weaknesses in the area where you don't yet want to learn (though I hope that's starting to change as you've worked through these last two chapters).

Note the learning topic:

How will you provide context?

How will you invite and reassure?

What self-talk can you use to help assure that you listen fully to what your source says?

Chapter 6

(TRY IT)

What's a topic about which you're curious?
(If you're demonstrating some of the behaviors I noted above around a topic, you're curious about it.)

Reflect on the time you spend exploring this topic: What does that feel like?
(For example: exciting, fun, invigorating, challenging, or satisfying.)

What's some of your self-talk about this topic?
(For example: *How does that work*? or *I wonder if I could do that?*)

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Finally, what do you find yourself doing in response to your self-talk?
(For example: reading more, asking more questions, trying some new things, finding a teacher, joining an affinity group.)

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Pick something about which you're not curious, but that you need to learn.
(It could be the topic from chapter 3 that you didn't want to learn.)

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What's some of your anti-curious (disinterested or dismissive) self-talk about this topic?

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Review your own curious self-talk from the previous activity. Use it as a starting point to rethink your self-talk above. Note two believable, curious self-talk questions you could start asking yourself in this area.

1.

2.

Review your new-made curious self-talk from the last activity. Note one or two simple (for you) actions you'll take to answer the questions you've raised.

1.

2.

If anti-curious self-talk arises that could keep you from taking those actions, how will you repeat your curious self-talk to allow yourself to keep learning?

Think of some topic about which you're very curious. Note some of your positive self-talk about learning this topic.
(For example, *I love finding out about this, It's satisfying to know more in this area,* or *I have fun learning about this.*)

Choose one of your statements and revise it to apply more broadly.
(For example, *I love finding out about things, It's satisfying to know more,* or *I have fun learning.*)

Chapter 7

TRY IT

Pick a new area of learning where you are worried about being or looking incompetent.
(It could be either of your topics from chapter 3, or another area in which you notice your resistance to "being bad.")

What's some of your "anti-being bad" self-talk about this topic?
Review the self-talk above through your fair witness lens. Incorporating what you now know about the inevitability of novice-ness in a new area, create new, accurate self-talk that allows you to accept being bad first.

Review the "accepting not-good" self-talk you created in the previous activity.

Now create an accurate, simple self-talk statement that reflects your belief in your ability to get good in this area over time.
(Acknowledge your history of learning similar skills or your strengths as a learner to make your self-talk even more personal and powerful.)

As you think about the learning topic for which you now have supportive, accurate self-talk that balances accepting not-good with self-belief, ask yourself:
I wonder what skills or knowledge I already have that are related to this new topic?

Select the skill or expertise you believe is most relevant, and ask yourself:
How is this similar to and different from what will be required in the new situation?

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Chapter 9

(TRY IT)

Pick a skill or capability—from this list or not—that's important to you, one that you personally believe you must have in order to create the life you want.

The skill or capability you'll focus on learning in this chapter:

The personal benefits I find most motivating as I consider learning this skill or capability:

Envisioning a "hoped-for future" where I'm reaping the benefits of my learning…

Pick a time frame (when you will be much more skilled or knowledgeable in this area).	**Imagine yourself in that future, and then describe what success looks and feels like** (how you feel and what I'm doing, having gained the benefits from this learning).	**Select the key elements** (two or three sentences that best capture the benefits you're experiencing in this future world of successful learning).

Put on your fair witness robes and be as accurate as possible about where you're starting from in your learning about the topic you've chosen. Make two lists.

Current Strengths/Assets in This Area	Current Weaknesses/Gaps in This Area

- Review what you've written and ask: *Is my self-talk accurate?*
- If you're not sure about some things, note them and ask:
  What facts do I have to support my point of view?
- Use your answers to revise your lists, to make them as "fair witness" as possible.
- Note any self-talk you recognize that reflects strong feelings you have about either your strengths or your weaknesses—it's important to be accurate about those, too.
- Finally, if you find yourself making negative self-talk predications based on your current weaknesses, revise them, using the "self-talk of self-belief."

Take a pass at crafting some good curiosity questions to insert into your self-talk as you approach learning the area you've chosen—and determining some actions you can take to pursue the answers to your questions.

Choose a source who sees you clearly in this area of learning, wants the best for you, and is willing to be honest:	Create two or three "How," "Why," or "I wonder" questions about this new area of learning, questions to which you actually want to find the answers.	Now, decide an easy-for-you action that you could take to pursue the answer to each question above.

Come up with "being bad first" self-talk that's custom-tailored to overcome your specific unhelpful self-talk and to support you in your particular situation.

My "accepting not-good" self-talk for learning my chosen skill.

My self-belief self-talk for learning this skill.

So cast your net of reflection wide, and think of a possible bridging topic.

Now ask yourself: *How is this skill or capability similar to and different from what might be required in the new situation?*