

This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Neil

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Beth

And I'm Beth.

Neil

You may have one, or know someone who does... and at one time you've been one yourself. I'm talking about **toddlers**.

Beth

A **toddler** is a young child usually between two and four years old who is learning to walk, or 'toddling'. It's an important stage in a child's development as they learn to move and understand the world around them.

Neil

It's also known as the 'terrible twos'. When toddlers can't do the things they want to they experience frustration which often leads to **tantrums**, a sudden and noisy outburst of anger. We've probably all seen the tears and screams when a young child can't have what they want!

Beth

Yes, the famous temper tantrums! But being a toddler is also an exciting time as a child's personality starts to develop. So what can we adults learn from toddlers? That's what we'll be finding out in this programme, along with some useful new vocabulary.

Neil

But first I have a question for you, Beth. Being a toddler is certainly an important stage in a child's growth, but which of the following statements is true?

- a) toddlers are attracted to shapes that resemble the human body
- b) toddlers are more active than at any other time in their lives, or,
- c) toddlers can grow up to three centimetres during sleep time

Beth

Hmm, I think toddlers can grow up to three centimetres while they sleep.

Neil

OK, Beth, we'll find out if that's the correct answer later in the programme. At two or three years old, there's not much toddlers can do for themselves. They depend on mum or dad to feed, clothe and care for them, so it's strange to think there's anything adults could learn.

Beth

But not according to Dr Hasan Merali, author of a new book 'Sleep Well, Take Risks, Squish the Peas' and father to his own toddler, who spoke with BBC Radio 4 programme, Woman's Hour:

Dr Hasan Merali

When I see the toddlers by themselves they're doing a lot of things **out loud**. Little Julie's putting on her mitts and saying, "Julie can do it". And Coltan's over in the side, and he's looking down at his boots, and they're on the wrong way, and so he says "Oh, Coltan did this wrong!" And this idea of **self-talk** is really a way to decrease stress in anxiety provoking situations.

Neil

Dr Merali observed toddlers talking to themselves **out loud**. When you talk **out loud** you speak so that other people can hear you.

Beth

But it's *what* the toddlers were saying that's really interesting. When a little girl called Julie learned how to put on her gloves, she told herself, 'Julie can do it!' This is a special kind of talking out loud known as **self-talk**. **Self-talk** means the

messages that you tell yourself, and the way in which you tell them. It's your inner voice, and in toddlers it's usually positive and encouraging.

Neil

Unfortunately, as we grow up our **self-talk** often becomes less encouraging and more critical. Instead of a positive, loving inner voice, as adults we tend to tell ourselves: 'You can't do it!' or 'you're no good!' Here's Dr Merali again, explaining more to BBC Radio 4 programme, Woman's Hour:

Dr Hasan Merali

We often get into the **cycle** of negative **self-talk**, and I think one of the best strategies that we can do is give ourselves more positive self-talk, so an easy way to do it is when you're **down on** yourself, and angry with yourself, think about talking to yourself as a good friend instead of actually you, and you'll notice that difference in how you talk to yourself.

Beth

As an adult, you might be **down on yourself**. If you're **down on yourself**, you feel disappointed and self-critical about yourself. When this happens your self-talk gets very negative, for example telling yourself you're no good, and this can lead to a **negative cycle**, a pattern of repeating the same negative thoughts over and over again.

Neil

This can be a problem, but not for toddlers who are naturally good at talking kindly to themselves and celebrating the little things, like learning to get dressed. The solution for over-critical grown-ups? According to Dr Merali, pretend you're talking to a good friend instead of to yourself, just like toddlers do!

Beth

It seems us adults can learn something from young children, after all – being kind to ourselves. When they're not having tantrums, toddlers really are wonderful little creatures, which reminds me of your question, Neil.

Neil

Right, I asked you which statement about toddlers was true.

Beth

And I said it was that toddlers can grow up to three centimetres while they sleep. Was I right?

Neil

Well, that was... the wrong answer, I'm afraid, Beth. It's true that toddlers do grow when sleeping, but not as much as three centimetres. In fact, the correct answer was that being a toddler is the most active period of your whole life – which isn't hard to believe if you live with one! OK, let's recap the vocabulary we've learned in this programme about **toddlers**, young children who are 'toddling' or learning to walk.

Beth

A **tantrum** is a noisy, uncontrolled outburst of anger, usually from a young child.

Neil

If you say something **out loud**, you say it in a way that other people can hear.

Beth

Self-talk refers to the messages that you tell yourself, and the way in which you tell them. It's your inner voice.

Neil

The phrase to **be down on yourself** means to feel disappointed and self-critical about yourself.

Beth

And finally, a **negative cycle** is a pattern of repeating the same negative thoughts over and over again, something a toddler would never do! Once again our six minutes are up, but remember to join us again next time for more trending topics and useful vocabulary, here at 6 Minute English. Goodbye for now!

Neil

Bye!

VOCABULARY

toddler

young child, aged between 2 and 4 years old, who is learning to walk

tantrum

noisy, uncontrolled outburst of anger

out loud

in a way that other people can hear

self-talk

the messages that you tell yourself, and the way in which you tell them; your inner voice

(be) down on yourself

feel disappointed and self-critical about yourself

negative cycle

a pattern of repeating the same negative thoughts over and over again