The Words I Use With Myself

A Sunshine on Tap Worksheet for Noticing Your Inner Voice and Choosing Kinder Words

Most of us talk to ourselves all day long.

Not out loud, usually. Just a running commentary in the background.

> *"Ugh, I'm so behind."*
> *"Why did I say that?"*
> *"I should have done this weeks ago."*
> *"Of course this happened to me."*

We say these things so often that we stop hearing them. But words have a way of shaping how a day feels. The same afternoon can feel like failing or like doing your best, depending on what you call it.

This worksheet is not about forcing yourself to be positive or pretending things are fine when they aren't. **Kinder words still have to be true.** The goal is simply to notice what you've been saying to yourself, and decide whether it's actually helping.

Let's start by listening.

> **A gentle note:** This worksheet is a space for reflection. It isn't therapy, and it doesn't diagnose or treat any condition. It's not a replacement for care from a doctor, counselor or other qualified professional. Take what's helpful, leave what isn't, and reach out for support whenever you need it.

1. Listen for a Day

For the next day or two, pay attention to what you say to yourself: in your head, under your breath, or out loud. Don't change anything yet. Just collect.

Phrases I caught myself saying:

The one I seem to say most often:

How I usually feel right after I say it:

2. Where Do These Words Show Up?

Inner commentary tends to get louder in certain moments. Check the ones that sound familiar.

- ☐ When I make a mistake
- ☐ When I'm running late
- ☐ When I look in the mirror
- ☐ When I'm resting
- ☐ When I compare myself to someone
- ☐ When I forget something
- ☐ When I try something new
- ☐ When someone gives me feedback
- ☐ When I'm tired
- ☐ When I look at my to-do list
- ☐ When plans fall apart
- ☐ When I'm learning a skill
- ☐ When someone else is doing well
- ☐ When I say no to something
- ☐ When I'm getting dressed
- ☐ Other: _____

The moments when my inner voice is hardest on me:

The moments when it's kinder than usual:

These are worth noticing too. What's different about them?

3. Borrowed Voices

Many of the phrases we use on ourselves didn't start with us. We picked them up along the way: from a teacher, a coach, a family member, a boss, a friend, a TV show, or just the world we grew up in.

This isn't about blaming anyone. It's simply useful to know that a voice you've heard for years isn't automatically the truth.

A phrase I say to myself that I think I picked up from somewhere else:

Where I think it came from:

Is it true about my life now?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partly

A phrase I heard growing up that I'd like to keep, because it still helps:

4. The Should, Have To, Always, Never Check

Some very small words carry a lot of weight.

Should turns a choice into a judgment. **Have to** makes it sound like there's no choice at all. **Always** and **never** turn one moment into a permanent fact about you.

Write down a few sentences you use with these words. Then look at them a little more closely.

What I say	Is it completely true?	A more accurate version
"I always mess things up."	*No. I messed up one thing today.*	*"I made a mistake with the schedule today. I can fix it."*
"I have to clean the whole house."	*Not really. I want it to feel calmer.*	*"I'd like the kitchen to feel calmer, so I'll start there."*

5. Kinder, But Still True

Here's the heart of this worksheet. A kinder phrase isn't a fake compliment. It's a more accurate, more useful way of describing what's really happening.

A few examples:

"I'm so behind."	→	"I'm finding my pace. What's the next thing?"
"I should have known better."	→	"I know more now than I did then."
"I'm so lazy."	→	"I'm tired, and I may need a real break."
"I can't do anything right."	→	"This part is hard for me. I'm still learning it."
"I have to go to this thing."	→	"I'm choosing to go, because it matters to someone I care about."
"What's wrong with me?"	→	"What do I need right now?"
"I wasted the whole day."	→	"I didn't get to my list. My time went somewhere else today."

A small test: if a new phrase makes you roll your eyes, it's probably too sugary. Try one that's a little plainer.

Now try your own.

What I usually say	What's kinder, and still true

6. What Would You Say to a Friend?

Imagine a good friend tells you about the exact situation you're dealing with right now: the mistake, the hard week, the goal that hasn't happened yet.

The situation I've been hard on myself about:

What I've been saying to myself about it:

What I would probably say to a friend in the same spot:

Why is it easier to say that to them?

If I said it to myself instead, what would it sound like?

7. Words for Hard Moments

When something goes wrong, our words can either pile on or help us steady ourselves. The words for hard moments don't need to fix anything. They just need to not make it worse.

Some you are welcome to borrow:

- *"This is hard, and I'm handling it one piece at a time."*
- *"I don't have to figure it all out tonight."*
- *"I'm allowed to try again."*
- *"That didn't go how I hoped. What's one next step?"*
- *"I can be disappointed without being harsh with myself."*

Phrases I want to remember for hard moments:

1.

2.

3.

4.

A moment coming up this week when one of these might help:

8. Words for Good Moments

Many of us are quick to criticize ourselves and slow to give ourselves credit. We brush off compliments, skip over small wins, and move straight on to the next thing.

When something goes well, I usually say…

- ☐ "It was nothing."
- ☐ "I got lucky."
- ☐ "Anyone could have done it."
- ☐ "Yes, but…"
- ☐ "Okay, what's next?"
- ☐ Other: _____

Something I did recently that deserves credit:

What I could say about it instead of brushing it off:

For example: "I worked hard on that." "I'm proud of how I handled that." "That was a good idea."

Three things I've done well this month, big or small:

1.

2.

3.

9. Your Pocket List

Choose five phrases from this worksheet, ones you came up with or ones you borrowed, that feel both kind and true to you. These are the words you want close at hand.

You might copy them onto a sticky note, the inside of a notebook, or the notes app on your phone.

1

2

3

4

5

Where I'll keep them:

10. A 7-Day Word Swap

Choose one phrase you'd like to use less, and one kinder phrase to try instead. For one week, notice when the old phrase shows up, and try the new one.

The old phrase:

The new phrase:

	When did the old phrase show up?	Did I try the new one? How did it feel?
Day 1		
Day 2		
Day 3		
Day 4		
Day 5		
Day 6		
Day 7		

At the End of the Week

What did I notice?

Did the new phrase start to feel more natural?

What surprised me?

One Last Question

If your inner voice became a good friend, honest but on your side, what would it say to you most often?

You don't have to become relentlessly positive. Just a little kinder, a little more honest, and a little more on your own side.

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