

Neville Goddard Lecture



MENTAL DIETS

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Talking to oneself is a habit everyone indulges in. We could no more stop talking to ourselves than we could stop eating and drinking. All that we can do is control the nature and the direction of our inner conversations. Most of us are totally unaware of the fact that our inner conversations are the causes of the circumstance of our life.

We are told that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." But do we know that man's thinking follows the tracks laid down in his own inner conversations? To turn the tracks to which he is tied in the direction in which he wants to go, he must put off his former conversation, which is called in the Bible the Old Man, and be renewed in the spirit of his mind. Speech is the image of mind; therefore, to change his mind, he must first change his speech. By 'speech' is meant those mental conversations we carry on with ourselves.

The world is a magic circle of infinite possible mental transformations. For there are an infinite number of possible mental conversations. When man discovers the creative power of inner talking, he will realize his function and his mission in life. Then he can act to a purpose. Without such knowledge, he acts unconsciously. Everything is a manifestation of the mental conversations which go on in us without our being aware of them. But as civilized beings, we must become aware of them and act with a purpose.

A man's mental conversations attracts his life. As long as there is no change in his inner talking, the personal history of the man remains the same. To attempt to change the world before we change our inner talking is to struggle against the very nature of things. Man can go round and round in the same circle of disappointments and misfortunes, not seeing them as caused by his own negative inner talking, but as caused by others.

This may seem far-fetched, but it is a matter which lends itself to research and experiment. The formula the chemist illustrates is not more certainly provable than the formula of this science by which words are clothed in objective reality.

One day a girl told me of her difficulties in working with her employer. She was convinced that he unjustly criticized and rejected her very best efforts. Upon hearing her story, I explained that if she thought him unfair, it was a sure sign that she herself was in need of a new conversation piece. There was no doubt but that she was mentally arguing with her employer, for others only echo that which we whisper to them in secret.

She confessed that she argued mentally with him all day long. When she realized what she had been doing, she agreed to change her inner conversations with her employer. She imagined that he had congratulated her on her fine work, and that she in turn had thanked him for his praise and kindness. To her great delight, she soon discovered that her own attitude was the cause of all that befell her. The behavior of her employer reversed itself. It echoed, as it had always done, her mental conversations with him.

I rarely see a person alone without wondering, "to what conversation piece is he tied? On what mysterious track is he walking?" We must begin to take life consciously. For the solution of all problems lies just in this: the Second Man, the Lord from heaven in all of us, is trying to become self-conscious in the body, that he may be about his father's business. What are his labors? To imitate his father, to become master of the Word,

master of his inner talking, that he may mold this world of ours into a likeness with the Kingdom of Love.

The prophet said, "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." How would I imitate God? Well, we are told that God calls things that are not seen as though they were seen, and the unseen becomes seen. This is the way the girl called forth praise and kindness from her employer. She carried on an imaginary conversation with her employer from the premise that he had praised her work, and he did.

Our inner conversations represent in various ways the world we live in. Our individual worlds are self-revelations of our own inner speech. We are told that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof. For by their words they shall be justified, and by their words they shall be condemned.

We abandon ourselves to negative inner talking, yet expect to retain command of life. Our present mental conversations do not recede into the past as man believes. They advance into the future to confront us as wasted or invested words. "My Word," said the prophet, "shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in all the things whereto I sent it."

How would I send my Word to help a friend? I would imagine that I am hearing his voice, that he is physically present, that my hand is on him. I would then congratulate him on his good fortune, tell him that I have never seen him look better. I would listen as though I heard him; I would imagine that he is telling me he has never felt better, he has never been happier. And I would know that in this loving, knowing communion with another, a communion populous with loving thoughts and feelings, that my word was sent, and it shall not return unto me void, but it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." It is only what is done now that counts, even though its effects may not be visible until tomorrow. We call, not out loud, but by an inner effort of intense attention; to listen attentively, as though you heard, is to create. The events and relationships of life are your Word made visible. Most of us rob others of their willingness and their ability to be kind and generous by our fixed attitudes towards them.

Our attitudes unfold within us in the form of mental conversations. Inner talking from premises of fulfilled desire is the way to consciously create circumstances.

Our inner conversations are perpetually out-pictured all around us in happenings. Therefore, what we desire to see and hear without we must see and hear within, for the whole manifested world goes to show us what use we have made of the Word.

If you practice this art of controlled inner speaking, you too will know what a thrill it is to be able to say, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe." You will be able to consciously use your imagination to transform and channel the immense creative energies of your inner speech from the mental, emotional level to the physical level. And I do not know what limits, if any, there are to such a process.

What is your aim? Does your inner talking match it? It must, you know, if you would realize your aim. For as the prophet asked, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" And of course the answer is, "No, they cannot." The two who must agree are your inner conversation and the state desired. That is, what you desire to see and hear without, you must see and hear within.

Every stage of man's progress is made by the conscious exercise of his imagination matching his inner speech to his fulfilled desire. As we control our inner talking, matching it to our fulfilled desires, we can lay aside all other processes. Then we simply

act by clear imagination and intention: we imagine the wish fulfilled and carry on mental conversations from that premise. The right inner speech is the speech that would be yours were you to realize your ideal. In other words, it is the speech of fulfilled desire.

Now you will understand how wise the ancient was when he told us in the Hermetica, "There are two gifts which God has bestowed upon man alone and on no other mortal creature. These two are Mind and Speech, and the gift of Mind and Speech is equivalent to that of immortality. If a man uses these two gifts rightly, he will differ in nothing from the Immortals. And when he quits his body, Mind and Speech will be his guides, and by them he will be brought into the troop of the gods and the souls that have attained to bliss."

With the gift of Mind and Speech you create the conditions and circumstances of life. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word, said Hermes, is Son, and Mind is Father of the Word. They are not separate one from the other, for life is the union of Word and Mind. You and your inner talking, or Word, are one. If your mind is one with your inner conversations, then to be transformed in mind is to be transformed in conversation.

It was a flash of the deepest insight that taught Paul to write:

"Put off the former conversation, the Old Man which is corrupt, and be renewed

in the spirit of your mind. Put on the New Man." "Put on the New Man," and "be

renewed in the spirit of your mind," is to change your inner conversation, for

speech and mind are one - a change of speech is a change of mind.

The prophet Samuel said, "The Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my tongue." If the Lord's Word was in the prophet's tongue, then the Lord's mouth that uttered the Word must be the prophet's mind, for inner conversations originate in the mind and produce little tiny speech movements in the tongue. The prophet is telling us that the mouth of God is the mind of man, that our inner conversations are the Word of God creating life about us as we create it within ourselves.

In the Bible you are told that the Word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

"See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil, blessings and cursings. Choose life."

The conditions and circumstances of life are not created by some power external to yourself; they are the conditions which result from the exercise of your freedom of choice, your freedom to choose the ideas to which you will respond.

Now is the accepted time. This is the day of salvation. Whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things. For your future will be formed by the Word of God which is your present inner talking. You create your future by your inner conversations. The worlds were framed by the Word of God, that is, your inner talking.

See yonder fields? The sesamum was sesamum, the corn was corn. The silence and the darkness knew! So is a man's fate born. (The Light of Asia)

For ends run true to origins. If you would reap success, you must plant success. The idea in your mind which starts the whole process going is the idea which you accept as truth. This is a very important point to grasp, for truth depends upon the intensity of imagination, not upon "facts." When the girl imagined that her employer was unfair, his behavior confirmed her imagination. When she changed her assumption of him, his behavior reflected the change, proving that an assumption, though false, if persisted in will harden into fact.

The mind always behaves according to the assumption with which it starts. Therefore, to experience success, we must assume that we are successful. We must live wholly on the level of the imagination itself, and it must be consciously and deliberately undertaken. It does not matter if at the present moment external facts deny the truth of your assumption, if you persist in your assumption it will become a fact.

Signs follow, they do not precede.

To assume a new concept of yourself is to that extent to change your inner talking or Word of God and is, therefore, putting on the New Man. Our inner talking, though unheard by others, is more productive of future conditions than all the audible promises and threats of men. Your ideal is waiting to be incarnated, but unless you yourself offer it human parentage it is incapable of birth. You must define the person you wish to be and then assume the feeling of your wish fulfilled in faith that that assumption will find expression through you.

The true test of religion is in its use, but men have made it a thing to defend. It is to you that the words are spoken, "Blessed is she that believed, for there shall be an accomplishment of those things which were spoken unto her from the Lord."

Test it. Try it. Conceive yourself to be one that you want to be and remain faithful to that conception, for life here is only a training ground for image making. Try it and see if life will not shape itself on the model of your imagination.

Everything in the world bears witness of the use or misuse of man's inner talking. Negative inner talking, particularly evil and envious inner talking, are the breeding ground of the future battlefields and penitentiaries of the world. Through habit man has developed the secret affection for these negative inner conversations. Through them he justifies failure, criticizes his neighbors, gloats over the distress of others, and in general pours out his venom on all. Such misuse of the Word perpetuates the violence of the world.

The transformation of self requires that we meditate on a given phrase, a phrase which implies that our ideal is realized, and inwardly affirm it over and over and over again until we are inwardly affected by its implication, until we are possessed by it. Hold fast to your noble inner convictions or "conversations."

Nothing can take them from you but yourself. Nothing can stop them from becoming objective facts. All things are generated out of your imagination by the Word of God, which is your own inner conversation. And every imagination reaps its own Words which it has inwardly spoken.

The great secret of success is a controlled inner conversation from premises of fulfilled desire. The only price you pay for success is the giving up of your former conversation which belongs to the Old Man, the unsuccessful man. The time is ripe for many of us to take conscious charge in creating heaven on earth. To consciously and voluntarily use our imagination, to inwardly hear and only say that which is in harmony with our ideal, is actively bringing heaven to earth.

Every time we exercise our imagination lovingly on behalf of another, we are literally mediating God to that one. Always use your imagination masterfully, as a participant, not an onlooker. In using your imagination to transform energy from the mental, emotional level to physical level, extend your senses - look and imagine that you are seeing what you want to see, that you are hearing what you want to hear, and touching what you want to touch. Become intensely aware of doing so. Give your imaginary state all the tones and feeling of reality. Keep on doing so until you arouse within yourself the mood of accomplishment and the feeling of relief.

This is the active, voluntary use of the imagination as distinguished from the passive, involuntary acceptance of appearances. It is by this active, voluntary use of the imagination that the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, is awakened in man.

Men call imagination a plaything, the "dream faculty." But actually it is the very gateway of reality.

Imagination is the way to the state desired, it is the truth of the state desired, and the life of that state desired. Could you realize this fully, then would you know that what you do in your imagination is the only important thing. Within the circle of our imagination the whole drama of life is being enacted over and over again. Through the bold and active use of the imagination we can stretch out our hand and touch a friend ten thousand miles away and bring health and wealth to the parched lips of his being. It is the way to everything in the world. How else could we function beyond our fleshly limitations? But imagination demands of us a fuller living of our dreams in the present.

Through the portals of the present the whole of time must pass. Imagine elsewhere as here, and then as now. Try it and see. You can always tell if you have succeeded in making the future dream a present fact by observing your inner talking. If you are inwardly saying what you would audibly say were you physically present and physically moving about in that place, then you have succeeded. And you could prophesy it from

these inner conversations, and from the moods which they awaken within you, what your future will be.

For one power alone makes a prophet - 'imagination', the divine vision. All that we meet is our Word made visible. And what we do not now comprehend is related by affinity to the unrecognized forces of our own inner conversations and the moods which they arouse within us.

If we do not like what is happening to us, it is a sure sign that we are in need of a change of mental diet. For man, we are told, lives not by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And having discovered the mouth of God to be the mind of man, a mind which lives on Words or inner talking, we should feed into our minds only loving, noble thoughts. For with Words or inner talking we build our world.

Let love's lordly hand raise your hunger and thirst to all that is noble and of good report, and let your mind starve e'er you raise your hand to a cup love did not fill or a bowl love did not bless. That you may never again have to say,

"What have I said? What have I done, O All Powerful Human Words?"