

The 3 C's

“The most important conversations in your life are the ones you have inside your head.”

Your inner dialogue can be the difference between hope and despair, courage and fear, success and failure. Be aware of your thoughts. Thoughts become words. Words become deeds. Deeds turn into habits. Habits become character. Your character becomes your destiny.

“We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make our world.”ⁱ Gautama Siddhartha

To be successful in life watch the 3 C's:

- 1) The first is your inner **CRITIC**. If he or she dominates your thoughts, you're in trouble. Negative self-talk drains your sense of efficacy, self-worth and performance.ⁱⁱ It also increases anxiety and avoidance.ⁱⁱⁱ Accept yourself exactly as you are, flawed but lovable. Self-acceptance blooms into self-appreciation and flourishes into self-worth.

“If you were able to believe in Santa Claus for 6 years, you can believe in yourself for 5 minutes. You've got this!”

- 2) Give your inner **CHEERLEADER** a voice on the speaking platform. Positive self-talk decreases stress, increases well-being, improves academic performance and makes people more open to behavior change.^{iv}

“It is the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once belief becomes conviction, things begin to happen.” Muhammed Ali

- 3) Find and follow your inner **COMPASS**. Find activities that align with your values and give your life meaning. Pursue purpose at work, not just passion. Chasing passion without purpose makes you less successful when work becomes challenging. Having a strong sense of purpose provides grit when the going gets tough. The combination of passion and perseverance predicts success.^v

To orient and activate your inner compass write down your core values, the intrinsic principles that motivate and inspire you. Your core values provide direction when there is a fork in the road like headlights on a car that

illuminate the street signs at an intersection. Core values that transcend the self, such as compassion vs. social status, make people more resilient and broaden their perspective on the big picture when threatened.^{vi} Follow your inner compass to create a rich and meaningful life. No one else can do it for you.

“Live your life by a compass not a clock.” Stephen Covey

ⁱ Thomas Byrom, rendering from the Dhammapada originally written in Pali. “Dhammapada: The sayings of the Buddha,” Shambhala pocket publishing (1993)

ⁱⁱ J. Cummings et al., “Examining the direction of imagery and self-talk on dart-throwing performance and self-efficacy.” (2006) *The Sport Psychologist*, Issue 20, pgs. 257-274.

ⁱⁱⁱ D. Dunkley, “Specific perfectionism components versus self-criticism in predicting maladjustment.” (2006) *Personality and Individual Differences*. Vol. 40 Issue 4, March, pgs. 665-676.

^{iv} G. Cohen et al., “The psychology of change: self-affirmation and social psychological intervention.” (2014) Issue 65, pgs. 333-371.

^v J. Jachimowicz et al., “Why grit requires perseverance and passion to positively predict performance.” (2018) *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*. Sept. 17, 115 (40) pgs. 9980-9985.

^{vi} Wakslack, C.J. et al., “Cognitive consequences of affirming the self: the relationship between self-affirmation and object construal.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. (2009) Vol. 45, pgs. 927-932.