

YOUR BRAIN BELIEVES WHAT IT HEARS: WHAT ARE YOU TELLING IT?

If anyone asked you if you talked to yourself, you would likely say “no” and you may even judge them for asking.

But the reality is, we are talking to ourselves all the time. Constantly. In fact, that is what our brain is built to do. We are often not aware of what is happening in our head, and yet it can sometimes negatively impact our performance.

In earlier weeks, we have learned to slow down with [SEAS](#) breathing, we have learned about our [ABCs](#), and we have mastered the [superpower of mindfulness](#). We are now ready to start to pay a bit more attention to the thoughts that are running through our head.

Your brain believes what you tell it. Did you know that thinking unhelpful things does not need to negatively impact our performance? If we are aware of what we are telling ourselves, we can learn to shift the message in our heads when our thoughts do not support our performance. With practice, we can learn to shift our focus and get our heads back on track.



Here's How:

At some point in a day, maybe it is when you are working out or maybe it is when you are doing your homework, set a timer for 10 or 15 minutes. When the timer goes off, shift your focus inwards and notice what is going on in your head. If you have time, grab a piece of paper and write down what you are thinking, then reflect on which thoughts are helpful or task relevant, and which ones are simply random thoughts, or maybe even negative and unhelpful.

Do this a few times each day. You will start to become more aware of what is running through your head. As you become more aware, when you find your mind is off-track, take a deep [SEAS](#) breath and gently bring your focus back and adjust your thoughts so they are helpful. No judgement. Simply notice, gently bring your focus back and reframe your thoughts to support what you are doing.

Next, think of when you are playing your sport. Draw a picture of the field of play (for example, a football field). Write all the things that are helpful to think about when you perform on the field. Write the things that are not helpful outside of the field. You now have clarity around what is and is not helpful to think about while you play, then use your [SEAS](#) breathing and [ABCs](#) to stay on track while you are training and competing.

Finally, think of your sport and think about when you need to be focused and when you do not. Focus takes energy. When you do not need to be focused, think of other things that keep you energized and refreshed. Just like you have a routine to keep your body ready when it goes onto the field, have a focusing plan to keep your mind fresh too. Try this out now throughout your day and then you will be ready to bring this to the field when things start up again.



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