

Episode 27 – RTT Series – The Aspect Compass & Self-Talk

This podcast episode is intended to increase your awareness of Self-Talk and how you can coach your clients to use more effective and healthier Self-Talk. It uses the Aspect Compass (part of the Meta-Compass Model) to present different qualities of Self-Talk that appeal to the four cardinal aspects of your psyche called The Artist, The Scout, The Warrior, and The Chief.

Using the Aspect Compass begins with the Artist (in the East), representing the domain of emotions. As children explore the world, the Scout (in the South) emerges, making associations and developing thoughts. The Warrior (in the West) handles challenging behaviors, responding to emotional cues from the Artist and thoughts from the Scout. Finally the Chief (in the North) emerges to coordinate and regulate the four aspects of your psyche.

The Chief uses executive skills, like Reaction Inhibition and Stress Tolerance, to regulate the Artist. The Chief uses other executive skills, like planning, prioritizing, time management, and sustained attention to regulate the Scout. The Chief also regulates the Warrior with skills like goal-directed persistence, self-awareness, and meta-cognition.

The Chief using Self-Talk, begins with caregiver messages early in life. The Chief internalizes this caregiver talk which turns into Self-Talk. For the Artist, with its limited vocabulary, tone of voice and simple words work best. On the other hand, The Scout responds best to coaching Self-Talk, which can be delivered in several different styles. The Warrior parts of the brain and psyche also don't have a lot of vocabulary. The Warrior responds best to Self-Talk that is simple, direct, and directive.

Residential staff using the Labeling technique support the development of the clients' Chief aspect, which has to learn to monitor the other aspects, in other words to be self-aware of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

Clients also benefit from increased awareness of negative Self-Talk. The Scout parts of the brain are designed to come up with observations, theories, and beliefs that explain the world. Asking yourself negative questions, like "Why am I so stupid?" will cause The Scout to look for explanations, evidence, and an answer. That answer is not based on any kind of objective truth and is likely to be demoralizing, disempowering, and self-destructive.

The skilled residential counselor models empowering self-talk and uses it for personal stress management. The Chief's Self-Talk encouraging you to perceive others as whole beings, to act with integrity, and to encourage kindness teaches clients to develop their own Self-Talk to manage their own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.