

On Your Way to Motherhood: Self-Talk Love for Fertility

Introduction

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Struggling to get pregnant, or remain pregnant, is the ultimate heroine's journey. It is a quest filled with love, longing, heartbreak, meaning, challenges, hope, and disappointments.

The heroine's fertility journey is not for the faint of heart. It is for those with big, brave hearts filled to the rim with love for that little being still to come.

In a very real way, you leave the ordinary world behind. Once you are on this journey, your life becomes different from the billions of other women around the world who have children with ease. As you leave the world you know behind, you begin an adventure into an unknown place. You have to find your way through a maze of procedures, advice, medical assistance, and financial considerations—and that doesn't even bring into play the emotional and physical strain, the hopes and the losses, and the complications of being in contact with other women who have children.

The journey is challenging, however long it ends up being. It will put everything you know into question. It will shake up all of your relationships, including the one with yourself. There is an incredible transformation that takes place in the spirit, mind, and body of everyone who undertakes the journey. You will never be the same person again. I never was—and I say that in a good way.

You need tons of support, guidance, protection, compassion, and kindness during this time in your life, and you can be the one providing a big chunk of it to yourself with your self-talk.

Your inner conversation can become a safe harbour during this time; a place where you can take refuge, where you can be understood, where you will be loved, where you will be spoken to like a good mother speaks to her child. For make no mistake: You are more important than this journey. You are more important than your desire to become a

mother. You are more important than your setbacks. You, my sweet, are so extremely precious.

It is during difficult times—whether a hard day or a total crisis—that we are most in need of help, support and love from our own selves.

Your inner speech can work for you or against you during your journey. It can support you, make you more courageous and peaceful. In this way, it is life-affirming. But your self-talk can instead be life-denying. It can stress you out, make you want to quit, and push you even deeper into the negative feelings that many of us encounter on the way.

Ask yourself if your self-talk helps you cope with the lows of the fertility journey, or if it further distresses you. Does your inner speech provide you with support, compassion, and guidance during the inevitable dark days, or does it blame and attack you?

You are the one who listens to the voices inside you, and you can choose which you will favour with your attention. Will you listen to the voice that says that something is wrong with you? Or will you listen to the voice that is kind and compassionate, and says that it is not your fault?

I have written this book because I was on this journey myself for about five years.

At times it was so hard that it brought me to my knees. It broke me, but not like you think. As the author Elizabeth Lesser describes, it broke me open, like a flower that blooms, like a lotus sprouting from the mud. It was so hard that for the first time in my life it made me look inside and transform the relationship I have with myself. It put me on this path where I now have far more compassion, kindness, and love for myself.

You see, my fertility journey forced me to learn a new way to communicate with myself, to be with myself. I became so miserable during my own journey that I could not continue on like that. I became scared that I would stay that way no matter what the outcome. This misery became a huge motivator to change. For the first time in my life, I wanted to change, and I was ready to do what it took.

In his book about stress, *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*, Dr. Robert Sapolsky writes that really wanting to change starts a momentum.

“... once you sincerely want to change, the mere act of making an effort can do wonders.”

I sincerely wanted to change. I was ready to start a new practice where I didn't bully myself and constantly put myself down. I couldn't take it anymore. There had to be another way of being. So I got help, and I learned a new way to speak to myself, a new way to treat myself.

When you change your self-talk, you change your brain. You change your whole way of being. You even change your cells. Everything you say inside is heard by your cells

through sound waves and sensory transmissions. They react according to what they hear. Imagine the effect that loving self-talk has on them!

Speaking to yourself with love has loads of benefits that can be helpful during this time in your life. Research shows that those who speak to themselves in a positive and kind way get to experience the following benefits:

- They feel less stress.
- They are more calm.
- They have stronger immune systems.
- They are, overall, more healthy.
- They sleep better.
- They are more resilient.
- They are better at finding creative solutions to problems.

This book is written in the hope that it will support mothers-to-be in their own heroine's journey. The intention is to help develop a loving, supportive, and kind way to speak to yourself while you are on this challenging path. Speaking to yourself with love may become a lifelong practice.

In this book, I tell stories about my own journey to motherhood and how I spoke to myself and what I discovered. Each chapter contains a reflection section for you to take the time and space to transform your self-talk if you choose. I have also included some passages from stories of other women who have had a child after struggling.

I hope that these stories bring you comfort, provide you with a new way to look at your life, give a few helpful tools, and help you open a crack (or a huge open door) into speaking to yourself with love.

I know what it is like to be on this path and my heart goes out to you. I sit here in my little attic office with sun rays shining through the window and send you much love and energy. My daughter is now seven years old, and there isn't a day that I don't feel a huge amount of gratitude and awe that she is now here.

I leave you for now with this Buddhist prayer taught to me by my Zen meditation teacher, Hoben:

May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be peaceful, may you live with ease.

And may your most precious and loving dreams of motherhood come true, however that may happen.

Much love to you dear mom-to-be,

Maryse

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