

# Self-talk

Most people carry on silent conversations with themselves during the course of the day. When things go slightly wrong, we may call ourselves names, like *stupid!* or *you clumsy idiot!* Research has suggested that, on average, 87% of the things people say to themselves is negative and undermining. Often the content of this self-talk reflects the values and behaviour we learnt as a child.

Self-talk has a direct impact on your thoughts and behaviour. If, during an interview, you tell yourself *I'm a shy, nervous person*, you are sending a message to your brain and your brain will dutifully dole out shyness and nervousness in buckets.

The good news is that you can deliberately change the way you talk to yourself. For example, if you have a particularly challenging event coming up, you can prepare for it by creating self-talk messages that will work for you. For that interview, you could have *I'd be great for this job*, or focus on particular qualities that you are confident about – for example, *I'm good at getting on with different people*.

Attitudes that are particularly self-defeating in challenging situations are **perfectionism, comparing** yourself unfavourably with others, and **defeatism**. These attitudes bring with them their own self-talk; and so a perfectionist starts insulting him- or her-self the moment anything deviates slightly from plan.

