

Give to Yourself: Positive Self-Talk



grades: 3-5



45 minutes

*“Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening.”
– Lisa M. Hayes*

Lesson Summary

This lesson highlights the power of positive self-talk as a key part of self-care. Students participate in a Four Corners activity to reflect on their self-care habits, then complete a worksheet that fosters self-compassion by exploring what it means to be human. The lesson guides students to see how nurturing themselves with supportive words prepares them to support others.

Students will Examine

- What is self-talk?
- How self-talk affects their emotions.
- How positive self-talk can create a ripple effect beyond themselves.

Pre-Activity Prep

- (Offline programs) Print and cut the Reflection Questions: Give to Yourself: Physical Self-Care ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (SHARE section).
- Prepare and hang the Four Corners signs—STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE (THINK.GIVE section).
- (Optional) Print or digitally share the Worksheet: I am Human ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) (1/student) (THINK.GIVE section).



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals
Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#))
Warm-up Activities ([PDF](#))
Reflection Questions: Give to Yourself: Physical Self-Care ([PDF](#))
Quote Image ([PDF](#))
Paper (Four Corners signs)
Worksheet: I am Human ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Give to Yourself: Positive Self-Talk](#) | Slide Notes ([PDF](#))
Read-aloud book: [I am Human](#) (2:35)

WARM-UP ACTIVITY

Word Association

Divide students into groups (5-7 students/group). Each group forms a circle. One student is the leader in each group and chooses a topic (see examples below). Everyone else takes turns saying a word that is



TEACHER TIP

Start each lesson with a warm-up activity to help your students connect, especially if new participants are joining during the program.

associated with the topic. If someone takes longer than ten seconds or says a word unrelated to the subject, they become the new leader and choose a new topic.

Age-appropriate and culturally inclusive topics include: mammals, sports, ocean life, colors, neighborhood places, outer space, household items, and more.

Refer to the ThinkGive Warm-up Activities ([PDF](#)) for other ideas.

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take a few minutes for students to reflect on and share the action they've taken since the last lesson.

If using the online portal:

Students log in to post their action and respond to the reflection questions. When they're finished, invite a few students to share their actions with the group.

If working offline:

Hand out the Reflection Questions: Give to Yourself: Physical Self-Care ([PDF](#)) (1/student).

- Side 1: In the reflection figure, students write the action they took to care for their body since the last ThinkGive lesson. When ready, they can display it on the bulletin board.
 - Side 2: (Optional) Students respond to two additional reflection questions on the back.
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★ TEACHER TIP

The Bulletin Board fosters a collaborative environment where student actions and ideas are visible, strengthening community and enriching learning.

★ TEACHER TIP

If students feel dissatisfied with their actions or have yet to act, remind them that small, consistent actions help develop kindness muscles (ThinkGive Three), so keep trying!

OPEN

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Quote/Image

Display the Quote Image ([PDF](#)) and/or read the quote or ask for a student volunteer to read it (see slides): "Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening." – Lisa M. Hayes

Ask: What does this image/quote mean to you?

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Explain: In our last lesson, we focused on caring for our bodies by creating a self-care plan. Remember, it is important to care for ourselves before we can truly give to others and create ripples of kindness. Today, we'll explore another form of self-care: the way we talk to and support ourselves—our self-talk.

Discuss:

- What does self-talk mean to you?
- Why is it important to notice how we speak to ourselves?
- How can positive self-talk affect how we feel?
- How does caring for ourselves help us give to others?

Activity: Four Corners

Label the four corners of the room: STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE, and STRONGLY DISAGREE. Read a statement aloud (see list below). Students move to the corner that best matches how they feel. Pause between statements to let students share why they chose their corner.

Sample statements:

- I can name at least one thing I like about myself.
- It's easier to give to others than it is to myself.
- I do something every day to care for myself.
- Caring for myself makes me feel happier.
- Giving to myself creates a ripple.
- I know ways to calm myself when I feel worried or upset.
- Being kind to myself helps me now and in the future.
- I can name more than one of my strengths.
- I can think of a time I felt proud of myself.
- I feel comfortable being who I am.
- Taking care of my emotions is important.
- I'm my biggest cheerleader!
- Saying kind things to myself is hard.

Allow time for reflection in pairs, small groups, or as a whole group.

Discuss:

- What, if anything, did you learn about yourself during this activity?
- What, if anything, did this activity reveal to you about your self-talk?
- Did you notice any patterns about yourself? Explain.



VOCAB

Self-talk: noun; talk or thoughts directed at yourself.



CONNECTION

Read-aloud book: Sticky Brain (6:07) by Nicole Libin, Ph.D. Aria feels like she's having a terrible day—until she learns how to shift her thinking. **Discuss:** Do negative thoughts ever feel like they're stuck to you, like glue? Do you ever feel stuck in a bad mood? How can we help our brains hold onto good things instead?

Tech Option

Read-aloud book: I am Human (2:35) by Susan Verde. If you have access to tech, play this short read-aloud before the Positive Self-Talk activity. The story explores self-compassion, resilience, and the shared human experience. One example of positive self-talk from the book is: "I am not alone. I am connected to my friends... to my family... to the world. We are all humans together."

Discuss:

- How does remembering that we are all human help us care for ourselves?
- Which positive self-talk line stood out to you, and why?

Activity: Positive Self-Talk

OPTION A:

Students practice self-affirmation by reading positive statements aloud. Display affirmations (on slide #9 or the board), and invite the group to add more if they like. Each student chooses one affirmation, writes it on a Post-it, and places it somewhere meaningful. Then, they share it aloud with the group, who echoes it back. Example: Student says, "I am a loving person." Group responds, "You are a loving person."

OPTION B:

Students complete the Worksheet: I am Human ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)), which includes prompts for positive self-talk and reflection to help build self-compassion.

Discuss:

- Is positive self-talk easy or hard for you? Why?
- What ripple effects might positive self-talk have? Can it impact others, too?

DIGGING DEEPER

Discuss:

- When others are hard on themselves, how can we protect our positive mindset?
 - When you catch yourself engaging in negative self-talk, how can you respond with kindness?
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CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take Action

Explain: Before the next ThinkGive session on [give date], practice using positive self-talk. To help you remember, write a positive statement on a Post-it and keep it somewhere you'll see often, or carry it with you as a reminder.

Things to Consider

- The ThinkGive Three focus is on being True. Make sure your actions feel authentic to you.
- When is positive self-talk most helpful? Try it in those moments.
- Do you notice a ripple effect when you speak kindly to yourself?

Brainstorm Actions

Review some of the positive self-talk comments from the lesson. Here are additional action ideas for inspiration. Brainstorm more together if needed to build confidence in taking true, small, and brave actions.

- I wasn't doing as well as others in art class. Instead of comparing myself, I reminded myself how much I've improved this year.
- After a fight with my aunt, I felt awful. I told myself it was okay—everyone loses their patience. I apologized, and we agreed to show more respect during disagreements.
- I was nervous to try a new sport, but I told myself to focus on doing my best. It was challenging, but fun. I'm proud I gave it a shot!

Closing Quote

Use this Quote and/or Image ([PDF](#)) to close the lesson.

"Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening."

– Lisa M. Hayes

Discuss:

- What does this quote/image mean to you now?
- How does this quote/image connect to the lesson?

★ THINKGIVE THREE

1. True: be authentic
2. Small: small is all
3. Brave: step into your courage zone

★ CONNECTION

Use journaling to deepen reflection and strengthen writing skills—students respond online or use the Journal Questions: Give to Yourself: Positive Self-Talk ([PDF](#)) if working offline.

★ CONNECTION

Lisa M. Hayes is a writer and life coach who helps people improve their lives and relationships through self-care and kindness.

Student Journal Questions

- Do you treat yourself with more or less kindness than you show to your family and friends? Explain.
- Describe a time when you used positive self-talk. If you haven't yet, write about a time when it could have helped.
- What is a quality you have—or want to develop—that makes you feel proud or good about yourself? Why?

Extensions

DO

Positive Self-Talk Circle

Students stand in a circle. One at a time, each student shares a positive self-talk statement they might say to themselves. After each share, the group repeats the statement aloud. Continue until everyone has had a turn. Students may pass or ask for more time if needed. To close, invite everyone to take a few deep breaths and notice how they feel in their bodies.

WATCH

Video: [Your brain is wired for negative thoughts. Here's how to change it.](#) (4:02). This video explores why our brains hold onto insults more easily than compliments, and what we can do to shift that.

Discuss:

- Why do our brains hold on to negative thoughts more than positive ones?
- What are some ways we can train our brains to focus more on the positive and let go of the negative?

READ / LISTEN

Poem: "Self-esteem" ([PDF](#), page 18) by Ellie Irving.

Discuss:

- Have you ever felt like you're not good at something or that others are better than you?
- Does it take bravery to try new things, even when you might not be good at them at first?