



Throw out the "Trash Talk"

It's the bottom of the ninth and the batter steps up to the plate. "You couldn't hit the broad side of a barn!!" Yelling catcalls, the opposing team's fans try to distract the batter and psych him out. His concentration breaks...his confidence is shaken...he strikes out! "Trash talk" is a strategy commonly used at sporting events to intimidate opponents and get them "off their game".

How often have you trash talked **yourself** without even realizing it? Too often, we can be our own harshest critics...unwittingly setting ourselves up for failure. "I can't lose weight". "I'll never make that putt". "I'm such an idiot for losing my keys". "I look so fat in these jeans". "I'm not good enough to get that promotion". Sound familiar???

You've probably heard the old saying: "Negativity begets negativity". Focusing on "can't", "won't" and "not" sets the stage for failure. Trash talking yourself is no different from the effect it is intended to have at a sporting event. A more effective and productive approach is to **focus on the positive**. By shifting your mindset, you shift your energy. Focusing on the positive, you will feel more confident, upbeat and relaxed in your approach...setting the stage for success. Positivity instills belief in yourself and your outcome. "I *will* lose that last 5 pounds". "I *can* make that putt". "I *am* good enough to get that promotion".

I became acutely aware of just how badly our own trash talk can affect us when playing golf with a friend last summer. I'll call him "Sam" to "protect the innocent". Before we had teed up the first ball, "Sam" was already bemoaning how bad his golf game had become. At every hole, I listened to him berate himself in a mumble under his breath before his club came anywhere near the ball. Needless to say, he shanked most shots...leading to more self-beration, head shaking and #\$\$!@%! directed at his golfing abilities. With each hole, he became more frustrated, more vocal and yup, his golf game got worse. He was so focused on missing each shot that he never gave himself a chance to *make* a good shot...he was breaking his



own concentration, unintentionally tensing his swing and altering his stance. Although a beautiful summer day, he never gave himself the chance to just enjoy it and *play* the game. Instead, the game became hard *work*. (By the way, my own golf game wasn't so great that day, but who cared?? The sun was shining, I was having fun and I had one awesome shot that made my day!! Not sure the goose in its path felt the same way but hey, he should have flown outta the way!! Rest assured, though, he wasn't hurt!)

Listen carefully to how you talk about yourself. Hear your words. Listen to your tone. Pay attention to how others talk about themselves. By increasing your awareness, you will see how prevalent trash talk can be in everyday life situations and the negative effects that it will have. When you become *aware*, you are then in a position to stop your own trash talk

in its tracks. Make the shift from the negative to the positive. See how it makes you feel. See how it affects your outcomes. Set yourself up for success!