

Another major block to creating the life that one wants is one's negative self-talk.

# **Session 9**

## **Combating Negative Self Talk**

This Session explores a variety of ways to catch, check and change negative self-talk in order to prevent the spiral into frustration, depression, and/or despair.

## Carol's Story

Carol awoke late and listened. She heard nothing, which meant the kids weren't up either. "Great," she thought to herself, "the school is going to think I did this on purpose. They are going to think I'm a terrible mom and they are right. I can't even make sure that the kids are up in time to make the bus. Now I'm going to have to call my mom to see if she can take them, and she will tell me what a loser I am again, and how I shouldn't have had kids if I couldn't take care of them, and she is right. Joey needs a shower this morning, and now there won't be time so he will be stinky, and school will probably call family services again, and maybe they should just take the kids. Maybe the kids will have a better life with a mom that doesn't suck."

As Carol walked to the kids' bedrooms she got a glimpse of herself in the mirror. She thought her hair was thin and drab, and her gray roots were showing. "Why even bother coloring my hair," she thought, "it won't matter. No one would ever want to be with me regardless. I'm a mess. My kids are mess. Everything is a mess. I should have done better at school. Then maybe I would have a better job. I'm so stupid."

"Kids," Carol yelled, "Get up. We've missed the bus again. I have to call Grandma to see if she can take you to school." "What?" Joey yelled. "Mom, why didn't you wake me up? I told you I had to take a shower. You never do anything right!" "I don't feel good. My stomach hurts." Laney said. "I don't want to go to school."

"Not again Laney. You can't miss any more school. They said if you miss any more they will call child services, and then what will we do? Do you want them to take you away from me?" Carol sighed exasperated. Laney had already missed 10 days or more. Carol had taken Laney to the doctor because of her stomach always hurting. The doctor diagnosed Laney with Anxiety and ADHD, whatever that meant. "It is probably my fault Laney has these issues. I should have left their dad sooner so the kids wouldn't have had to see him hit me. I was weak and stupid." Carol thought to herself.

Laney begins to cry. "Please Mommy. My stomach hurts so bad." Laney holds her stomach with both hands and leans forward.

“You have to go to school Laney.” Carol says.

“NO!” Laney screams. “My stomach hurts and I’m not going. I hate school.” Laney throws her stuffed bear at Carol. “You don’t even care about me. You don’t love me. I’m sick and you don’t even care. I want to go live with Dad.”

“Fine! Stay home. And if you think you can go live with your crappy dad, call him.” Carol yells knowing that Laney can’t call her dad since they didn’t even know where he was. Carol starts to think about how maybe it would be better if the kids lived with their dad. Carol thinks to herself nearly in tears, “Even being addicted to drugs he is probably a better parent than I am. Oh God, what am I going to tell the school? They already hate me and think I’m a terrible mom, which is true. Other moms can get their kids up and to school on time. I just won’t call them. I’ll wait until they call me and then make something up. God, I can’t even think of anything to make up. If I tell them she is sick again they won’t believe me. I’m so stupid. I can’t even think. I just won’t answer the phone. I just can’t do this. Maybe I’ll die in a car accident and won’t have to worry anymore.”

**Negative Self-Talk:** Negative self-talk is the negative things that we tell ourselves that keep us from obtaining and keeping our goals.

Carol's Story – Discussion – Notes:

Carol's Story – Revisited – Notes:

Notes on – Catch it! Check it! Change it!

If you could learn to catch your negative thinking in the early stages, check it over against the actual situation, and change it to something more realistic and positive, how would your life be different? What would you be able to do that you can't do now?

List five actions you have found helpful in catching, checking and changing your negative self-talk. 1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Notes from small group discussion:

