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Brain Babble

“Whether you believe you can or can’t, you are right.”
— Henry Ford

Are You Thinking What You Think You’re Thinking?

Every day you think between 20,000 and 60,000 thoughts, and each one of them has an effect on how you perform: They either motivate you *toward* success or *away* from it. You can’t go for longer than about 11 seconds without talking to yourself (that’s just how interesting you are!) and up to 90 percent of the thoughts you will have today are copies of those you had yesterday. If you’re going to *ride* in a positive way you’re going to need to *think* in a positive way.

Brain babble has been called many things including “internal dialogue,” “self-talk,” “positive affirmations,” and “thoughts.” Regardless of the name, your riding *emotions* always influence your riding *motions*: When they’re negative, they create *doubt*, and when they’re positive, they create *confidence*.

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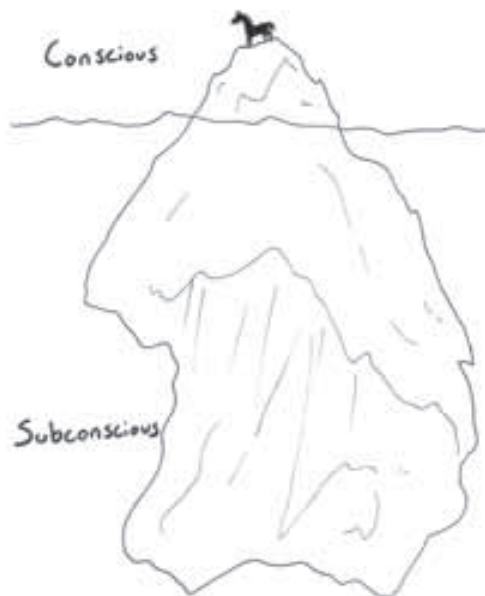
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**You can do it—
nothing to it.**

No thoughts are neutral. Even those like “Maybe I can do it,” or “I think I’ll do well,” are still considered negative because they don’t deliver their message with 100 percent confidence. The self-fulfilling prophecy, “*Be careful what you wish for, you might just get it,*” describes *brain babble* well. Repeat the words “I can’t do it” over and over again and don’t be surprised if you get *what you’re wishing for*. Every single thought counts so it’s important that you learn to use all of them in a positive way.

The Conscious and Subconscious Mind

Let’s take a look at how your mind works. When you walk through the barn, do you need to consciously concentrate on every step? When you eat a sandwich must you consciously concentrate on digesting it? Or, when you go to sleep do you have to consciously concentrate on continuing to breathe? The answer is no because your *subconscious* mind takes care of all of these tasks for you. If you had to think of every step, every bite, and every breath you’d never have any time left to ride.



Conscious

Your mind is similar to an iceberg: There’s the small part you see—the *conscious*—and the much larger part that you don’t see—the *subconscious*. Your *conscious* mind is responsible for making daily decisions, like when to walk through the barn, what to eat, and when to go to bed. It can even help you decide how fast to walk through the barn, how many sandwiches you’re going to eat, and what time to set the clock so you don’t oversleep. Additionally, it also helps

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you with basic awareness by telling you that your feet hurt in those boots, that you've eaten too much (sometimes a little too late), and that you're not tired enough to fall asleep yet.

Subconscious

Your *subconscious* mind occupies the much larger portion of your iceberg: The portion that lies under the surface and guides the smaller, conscious portion. Even though you're more aware of your conscious thoughts, it's the hidden subconscious ones that have the greatest impact on your performance because they contain all the programs for moving, riding, talking, solving problems, and more. It's there that all your conscious thoughts get compiled into action. For example, when you learned to canter it took a lot of conscious thought and effort, but with time it became automatic (*sub-conscious*), therefore no longer requiring the *conscious* effort.

Your mind is like a garden: When you plant a *conscious* thought your *subconscious* will make it grow. When you *consciously* say, "I know my jump course," your *subconscious* mind will work hard to make it happen. It takes what it hears, sets it as a goal then works to make it come true. It believes everything you say to yourself and directs action toward it. You have to be careful, though, because your *subconscious* is not discriminating. It'll grow negative seeds just as quickly as positive ones. This means that if you consciously say to yourself, "I always forget my course," your *subconscious* mind will set it as a goal and work to make it happen as well.

Your *subconscious* mind works by thinking in pictures. If you say to yourself, "I'm confident," it will create a picture of what you look like when



**If you say you can,
you will. If you say
you can't, you won't.**

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you're confident and then take action to make the picture come to life. Likewise, if you say to yourself, "I'm horrible under pressure," it will create a picture of what you look like when you're not coping well then take action to make the picture come to life. Remember that your subconscious mind always works hard to make your *dominant thoughts* come true.

If you don't have anything nice to say (to yourself), don't say anything at all.

It's also important to remember that your *subconscious* cannot think the opposite of a command. If you say to yourself, "Do not be nervous," it will still paint a mental picture of what you look like when you're nervous. Repeat, "Do not look down," or "Do not be nervous," and the first thing you'll likely do is look down and get nervous. With this in mind, it's important for you to direct your *conscious* thoughts in a positive direction by saying things like, "Look up," or "I am calm," so that your *subconscious* mind gets the picture of you

looking up and being calm. Once it's accomplished this, it can set it as a goal and start directing action to make it happen.

Positive Brain Babble

To create positive *brain babble* you must create a positive *cause-and-effect relationship*, which means that your thoughts should *cause* a desired *effect*. You must also create a positive *belief-and-experience relationship*. This means that your *beliefs* should cause a positive *experience* (rather than letting negative beliefs cause a negative experience).

