



Episode 1: One Simple Way to Move from Stuck to Solution

Welcome to *In the Right Direction* podcast, where we believe you get to choose what's on your plate, you can manage the overwhelm, and that change is possible. I'm your host, Deb Elbaum, and I'm here to share insights and strategies to increase your happiness one baby step at a time. Let's dive in.

Hi everyone, it's Deb here. Today we're going to talk about our talking. There's a way that many of us talk that keeps our brain focused on what we do not want instead of what we do want. I'm going to share one simple strategy, and once you've learned it, you will never go back to talking the same way again. This is one thing you can do that will make you feel clearer about what you do want, who you do want to be, and where you do want to go in your life. I call this strategy reframing the nots. Here's what I mean.

The other week, a client and I were coaching, and she said something really interesting. She was preparing for job interviews, and she was making great progress to harness her courage and speak energetically and enthusiastically. We were polishing her stories and answers to common interview questions. At the end of the call, I asked her what she was choosing to believe about herself through this interview process, and she said, "I choose to not doubt myself."

Now, this might seem like it's a good thing, right? A good answer, to not doubt yourself. Maybe you feel the same way that you do not want to doubt yourself. But what if she changed her words just slightly? What if, after she said "I choose to not doubt myself," she took it a baby step further. What if she had used different words to convey the same meaning? What if she said, "I choose to step into my confidence"?

I choose to step into my confidence. That feels so much more powerful. Can you feel it? I find this a lot in my conversations with clients, friends, family, and even in my own self-talk. So much of the time, we say what we don't want; we use that word "not" all day long. I don't want to feel stressed, I don't want to feel rushed. I don't want to just be sitting at my desk all day. Because it's easier for our brain to look at our experiences and identify what we don't want. We forget that we can and should talk about what we do want, where we do want to go, and the way we do want to live.

Here's the thing about our brains and how our brains work. Our brains grab on to the words we think and say. The words we choose tell our brain what to think about next. They give our brains starting point, even if those words are preceded by the word "not." For example, if I say to you do not think about ice cream right now, I'm guessing your brain did anyway, even momentarily. I know that I just saw in my mind's eye a cone of mint chip, my favorite. If your brain is going to grab onto a word, which word do you want it to grab onto? Self-doubt or confidence? What about this example: I don't want to get frustrated versus I do want to stay calm? Which word do you want to be a launching pad for your thoughts, "frustrated" or "calm"? I hope that you say calm.

If we use unhelpful or negative words, even when we think we're using them in a positive way, we're making our brains work harder to get to where we ultimately want to be and what we ultimately want to achieve. So, let's agree to make it easier on ourselves and our brains. Let's use the words and feelings

we do want right up front. Because using positive self-talk leads us more quickly to positive thinking and intentional action.

Here's another example from a different client about the power of reframing the nots. In this situation, my client was telling me that she and her family decided to go to their other house for a week and she needed to do work from there. During the call, she kept using those not statements: "I don't have a quiet place to work there," "I don't want to get frustrated with my family," "I don't want to be yelling at them all the time to be quiet." Now, those are all great goals and all really great things to identify.

When she paused, I said, "Okay, you just told me about all the things you do not want. What do you want?" She said, "Well, I do want my own space where I can work." Great! Now we're making progress. We're getting her brain to think more effectively because we can work with those thoughts. We can make a plan. I asked her, "Okay, so let's think about the house. If you want a quiet space to work, where might that be? What might you need?" And then her brain was off and running, immediately thinking about what she could bring to make the space more homey.

Instead of her old thought patterns, she just made a brand new brain pathway, and you could hear it in her voice. She quickly went from defeated to excited. She told me about the plants and decorative pillows and inspirational quotes that she was excited to bring. Shifting her words totally shifted her attitude and perspective. It let her step into creative problem-solving mode, to move from stuck to solution.

Reframing the nots in your mind and in what you say can open up possibilities for you. Saying what you do not want can leave you in that same space without a clear path forward. Instead, reframing your words to what you do want - using more positive, intentional, precise language that reflects where you do want to go, how you do want to feel, and what you are ready for - allows you to be curious and creative, to uncover the best solution and find a next action step to take.

Here's my invitation to you. This week, listen to how you think and talk. Where are you using "not" language? When you hear yourself using a "not" statement, like what you don't want, just pause and notice. Then think about what you really do want instead, and if you want to take it a baby step further, reframe that thought or statement using intentional, positive language. See how that lifts up your mind, body, and spirit. Thank you so much for listening and being part of my community. If you found this episode helpful, please share it with a friend who might want to move their thinking in the right direction.

Until next time!