**Self-Talk & Time Management in the Age of COVID-19**

**Self-Talk:**Our self-talk can sabotage ourselves or make us soar. Our self-talk is often formed by the assumptions that we believe other people make about us. These assumptions that we hold on to, sometimes for decades, are often the opposite of what those around us think about us.  It can be incredibly helpful to ask those around you for insight on how they perceive you.

**Steps to take**

* When your inner critic pipes up, talk back to it. Assign your inner critic a name (that you don't like). This helps to separate out the critic from reality.
* Use positive "I am" statements when your inner critic starts telling you to doubt yourself. If you are about to speak in a meeting and worry how others will perceive you, tell yourself "I am prepared to speak." "I am an expert in this material." This helps to rewire your brain.  Since we often go to the negative first, it takes several affirmations to squash the negatives.
* Talk to yourself with the same compassion you would use with a friend or family member.
* If you are feeling anxiety from the negative self-talk, set a timer for 5 minutes. Give yourself 5 minutes to sift through all of the thoughts and when the timer goes off, take a deep breath and let yourself release the topic from your mind.

**Time Management**

**Attention Management vs. Time Management**

* How we were taught time management years ago is outdated. It used to be as simple as coming up with a list of priorities and executing them.
* With emails, social media posts, instant messages, and other alerts constantly hitting us, it’s enough to make our heads spin. The ability to constantly receive information breaks our concentration and makes it much harder for us to pick up a task where we left off.
* We are most effective when we practice attention management.

**TIPS for Attention Management**

* If you are a list maker, keep your one main list along with a separate one with three top priorities. This allows you to focus on getting three key things done or moved forward as far as they can go. As you knock off items off this mini concentrated list, pull others from your main list.
* Meetings, calls and unexpected priority shifts are inevitable. They will cause less disruption when you are working from three main items instead of a laundry list.
* Work to your own rhythm. If you are a morning person, tackle the biggest challenge first. If you are at your best later in the day, reverse it.  If one of your three items gives you anxiety, get it done first or it will eat up your attention all day.  Even do something to get it started and you will feel better.

With the added variable of working from home, set specific boundaries. If you tell the kids, "I will be out to play soon," they will likely come back and check on you every couple minutes until you close the computer. If you tell your partner, "I'll take a break in a bit with you," that will often result in disruptions when one person is ready before the other. Use specific times and stick to them.

Remember to calendar in self-care. It is not a luxury. It is vital for everyone and especially in your field. There were a lot of great examples in the chat box.

At the end of the session, we had you write about something that you will Start, Stop, Continue and Change. If you didn't save your answers, we encourage you to take a few minutes and write them out. This envisioning activity (similar to the one we did at the beginning of the session) will help create momentum toward reaching your goals.