

# CHANGE YOUR WORDS, CHANGE YOUR LIFE

How many times in a day do you say “I have to...” or “I should...” or “I can’t...”?

Think about it. You’re lying in bed and think, “I have to get up now”. Once you’re up you say “I should eat something for breakfast” and then “I have to go do my workout”. Later in the day it’s “I have to make dinner now”. Maybe you have general thoughts like “I should lose weight”, or “I should eat healthier” or “I should be more grateful”.

The words are small, but they pack a lot of power. And your choice of words can impact your overall attitude and perspective on life. Words like “I have to”, “I should” or “I can’t” strip a very important power away from you: the power of choice.

I’m not going to say, “you should change the way you talk to yourself”. But, if you *want* to, you *could* consider paying attention to how you speak to yourself and experiment with a few simple swaps. Here are three very small changes that can dramatically change your outlook on life. I’m going to focus on nutrition and fitness, but the concept can apply to many different avenues of life, from relationships, to household chores.

1. You could replace “I have to” with “I get to”. This change is perhaps one of the most powerful. The words “I have to” are a joy kill. They quash any potential for being grateful, being excited for, or simply enjoying the task. “I have to go for a walk” means you have no choice, you have to. Some external force is making you do it. “I get to go for a walk” however, implies that you have a choice, and it’s something you are lucky to be able to do. The words ‘get to’ naturally create a sense of gratitude for the task. No one says “I have to go to the spa now”. And when you really think about it, you are fortunate to have the ability to go out for a walk.

2. You could swap “I should” with “I want to” or “I could”. How many times do you think you should do something? “I should eat better” is different than “I want to eat better”, if you actually want to eat better. Again, “should” implies that an external force is making you do something that you don’t really want to do. If you’re not quite ready for “I want to”, what about “I could”? “I could” at least puts you back in the drivers seat to make a choice.

3. You could switch “I can’t” or “I shouldn’t” for “I choose not to”. For example, if you’re out at a dinner party and someone offers you some chocolate cheesecake, you can either think ‘I can’t eat that’ or ‘I choose not to eat that’. In the latter thought, you’re acknowledging that you have power over your decision. Because you CAN eat that- but you are actively deciding that at this moment you are choosing not to. And, on the other hand, if you choose to have the cheesecake, you are making that choice.

I could go on about the transformative changes that occur when you change your words, but I encourage you to experience it for yourself. Think of a few ‘have to’ statements, such as

“I have to go grocery shopping today” or “I have to get up now” and switch “have to” for “get to”. Notice a difference?

Acknowledging that you have a choice is simple and very powerful. However, remembering to actually change the words you choose is not always easy. Experiment with it, and try to pay attention to your words (if you want to!). By choosing different words, you get to impact your outlook on daily tasks and dramatically improve the enjoyment of your day.