

## **“Choose your words wisely...because what you say can influence how you feel”**

Life is full of challenges of all kinds. Have you noticed though why some people seem to carry on and even find positive meaning in the situation, while others struggle? While the ability of some people to meet life’s challenges with calm directness might be explained by a more easy-going personality, there is more to it than that and in fact it may partially explain why some people may cope better than others. What we **tell** ourselves **about** the situation has a powerful impact on how we may **experience** the situation. The good news is that there are some strategies that can be learned to help all of us manage life’s unexpected events with more confidence and less stress. These strategies can be put to use in any challenging situation, including and extending beyond the management of health issues.

One way to reduce the impact of any ongoing health issue, including tinnitus, is to become aware of the **language** we use when we are thinking or talking about the various ways the condition may be impacting your life. For example, if we say to a friend or professional that “I **suffer** from tinnitus”, we only reinforce our belief that we are the victim of something that we have absolutely no control over. While it is true that presently there is no ‘cure’ for tinnitus, there are numerous proven management techniques that allow us to gain a sense of control over this condition, and these techniques can be learned.

In no way are we trying to suggest that the tinnitus has not had significant impact on many areas of your life. Activities that you once enjoyed may bring you less pleasure and the silence that you once took for granted is now something you crave. However, by using words and phrases with less emotional impact, you will experience decreased negative emotions related to the tinnitus, which will in turn leave you calmer, more in control, and less anxious.

When we think of or describe ourselves as **‘suffering’**, we begin to see ourselves as trapped and helpless, with no hope of improvement, a belief that unfortunately may have been reinforced when one or more professionals told you that there was nothing that could be done to help. By becoming more aware of the way we talk about the tinnitus, we can rephrase our statements so that the message we are giving ourselves is more neutral or positive, and therefore more hopeful. For example, rather than saying “I suffer from tinnitus”, try “I find the tinnitus challenging a lot of the time”. The latter statement acknowledges that the ongoing nature of the condition can be a challenge (notice I said the ongoing nature of the **“condition”** rather than the ongoing nature of the **“problem”**) while leaving open the opportunity of rising to the challenge and potentially improving our situation.

Whenever there is a possibility of improving a challenging situation, we experience the wonderful feeling of HOPE. Hope is what motivates us to carry on, rather than giving up. It is the possibility that there are better days to come and empowers us in the knowledge that we have control over our reaction to a situation that we may have come to believe has controlled us and our lives.

So listen to your words when you talk both out loud and to yourself....simple changes in the language you use can significantly reduce the emotional impact that the tinnitus has on your life. If you would like further information on management techniques, please feel free to contact our clinic - we are here to offer you hope and to empower you with tools to improve the quality of your life.