

THE
FOUR
VOICES

TAKING CONTROL OF
THE CONVERSATION
IN YOUR HEAD

PATRICK MORLEY

MIM Press

The Four Voices

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Requests for information should be addressed to:

Man in the Mirror, 1375 State Road 436, Casselberry, Florida
32707

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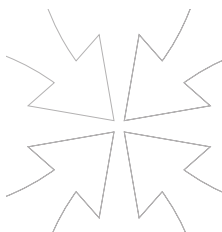
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ONE

What's Going On Inside Your Head?

*Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.*

Proverbs 4:23

One warm Florida day near the end of fourth grade, I walked into a convenience store and saw a freezer display packed full of ice cream sandwiches. At that moment, I wanted an ice cream sandwich as much as I've ever wanted anything, but I didn't have enough money.

Then a voice whispered, "It's okay. Go ahead and take one. No one will ever know." So, I tucked

one under my shirt and walked out the door.

Immediately another voice started telling me, “You were not raised like this. You need to take it back.”

Suddenly, I felt like the rope in a titanic tug of war. I had a choice to make. (I did take it back). However, as adults, we all know the tug of war only intensifies as the stakes go up, as illustrated in these three situations.

<p>“I don’t feel like people care about me, only what I can do for them.”</p>	<p><i>Situation #1:</i> Brad has built a highly respected and successful property and casualty insurance business. In a</p>
<hr/>	<p>courageously transparent moment, he told eight of us in a small group, “I don’t feel like people care about me—only what I can do for them.”</p>

I was flabbergasted. Brad and I have been involved in ministry together since his college days. I love him to death. He’s one of the finest

men I've ever known. I know firsthand how much his wife and three children adore him. As his client, I've seen how much his employees admire and respect him. Many of his other clients are also friends of mine, and they openly express their appreciation and affection for him.

Why would he think such a thing?

Situation #2: No matter what you suggest, it feels like your boss always says something negative about your ideas. At first, you took it in stride. Then it made you so angry you fantasized about choking him for always putting you down. Eventually, you felt like something inside of you gave up.

You still have what you think are great ideas, but you rarely share them out loud. Instead, because you don't feel you receive the respect and appreciation you deserve, you entertain fits of seething bitterness.

You're still in your thirties, but a recent routine physical revealed that you are borderline

for high blood pressure. Your doctor has given you a list of recommendations, none of which deals with what's going on inside your head and heart due to the stress and anxiety.

Situation #3: You're returning a product you purchased on Amazon at your local UPS Store. As you walk out, you make eye contact with a man seated against the wall just outside the door. He says, "Sir, I'm down on my luck and hungry. Could you spare me enough money to buy a decent meal?"

With indifference you say, "Sorry, friend, but I don't have any cash on me." As you walk to your car, you are overwhelmed with compassion and concern for this man. As you slide into the driver's seat, you remember that you have two water bottles in your car and feel prompted to give him, specifically, both bottles.

You walk back to the man and say, "I'm sorry I can't help with food, but here are a couple of water bottles." You sense his humiliation for being in

need, but also his gratitude as he gulps it down. Suddenly you see what you had missed before. This man desperately needed something to drink.

That Conversation in Your Head Is a Lot More Than Self-Talk

We all know we carry on a running conversation with ourselves all day. We call it “self-talk.”

We need self-talk to help us filter the bits and pieces of everyday life and forge them into a congruent story.

But our “self” is not the only voice in that conversation. Four other voices also constantly exert themselves to shape what we think, say, and do.

Every day when your feet hit the floor, three of these voices rail against the higher principles of your Christian faith. They are the root cause of hurt feelings, living to win the approval of others, not facing your problems like an adult, unforgiveness, holding grudges, oppressive and sad feelings, misinterpreting social cues, false guilt

and shame, and generally feeling the weight of the world.

Fortunately, the fourth voice in your head, the Holy Spirit, is exponentially more powerful than the other three voices combined.

Everything you're about to learn, or be reminded of, can be distilled down to this idea:

The four voices in your head are the world, the flesh, the devil, and the Holy Spirit. Your job is to figure out which voice is speaking and take control of the conversation.

The four voices in your head are the world, the flesh, the devil, and the Holy Spirit. Your job is to figure out which voice is speaking and take control of the conversation.

Understanding how to identify each of these voices and adjust the conversation is going to transform how you feel about getting up, starting your workday, going to the gym, making the most of your relationships

with your spouse and children (if applicable), meeting with friends or strangers, your value as a person, facing challenges, and so many other situations.

What's at Stake

Unless and until you understand the four voices and how they work, you will continue to have inexplicable mood swings. You will continue to act out on your worst impulses and not know why. You will continue to be pleasant at work or school, but irritable around your family.

Until you know how to adjust what's going on in your head, you will experience ongoing frustration because you can't get control of your emotions. You will find yourself going to bed angry, waking in the middle of the night in a panic, getting up in the morning feeling exhausted, and then blindly repeating the cycle all over again.

Not mastering the voices in your head will eat away at your self-worth, poison your relationships, stunt your growth as a person, and limit how far you go in life.

THE FOUR VOICES

So, before you blow up your relationship with your spouse, cuss out your boss, or send that emotionally charged email that's sitting in your outbox, let's figure out what's really going on and consider the higher principles that will help you master the narrative in your head.

We're going to devote an entire chapter to each of the four voices, but let's begin by briefly introducing each voice.

The Four Voices in Your Head

The first three voices will often overlap as this diagram illustrates:

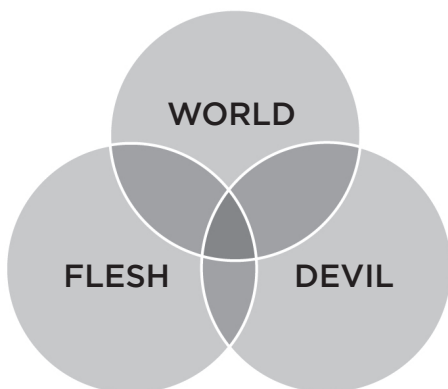


Diagram 1-1: The Overlap of the First Three Voices