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People Are Shocked to Discover That Not Everyone Has an Inner Monologue

By Jessica Stewart on February 4, 2020





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H ave you ever had a conversation with yourself, one that took place inside your head? If so, you are one of many that have an **inner monologue**—or inner voice—that narrates your thoughts throughout the day. But did you know that many people have no such inner dialogue? While that might seem strange to some, it's equally odd for someone who doesn't have an inner monologue to imagine how that manifests itself.

some don't," he [tweeted](#). "As in, some people's thoughts are like sentences they 'hear', and some people just have abstract non-verbal thoughts, and have to consciously verbalize them. And most people aren't aware of the other type of person."

This caused strong reactions online, as people on both sides of the coin imagined what life would be like with or without their inner monologue. The phenomenon itself has been debated for years by scientists. Psychologists began looking into the function of inner speech in the 1930s. It was the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky who suggested that external conversation can become internalized. He even proposed that this inner speech was highly abbreviated and included a lot of omissions. The idea of external speech becoming internalized is also supported by evidence that it's the same part of the brain—Broca's area—that deals with both.

So if you have no inner monologue, should you be worried? Not really. Studies show that some individuals never experience it at all, while others only experience it occasionally. "I'm confident that inner speech is a robust phenomenon; if you use a proper method, there's little doubt about whether or not inner speech is occurring at any given moment," [writes](#) Russell T. Hurlburt, professor of psychology at the University of Nevada. "And I'm confident about the individual differences—some people talk to themselves a lot, some never, some occasionally."

Interestingly, researchers at [Harvard University](#) have found that visual and verbal thinking are highly linked. While people often think of themselves as being either more verbal or visual, this isn't necessarily the case. In fact, people with a clear inner monologue typically have stronger mental visuals to accompany their verbal thoughts.

Whether you have a constant narration present in your head or hear nothing at all, the debate raises interesting questions about how we think and process information. Certainly, the next time you see someone lost in thought, you might just wonder what the conversation is inside their head.

KylePlantEmoji created a stir on Twitter with his information about inner monologues.

As in, some people's thoughts are like sentences they "hear", and some people just have abstract non-verbal thoughts, and have to consciously verbalize them

And most people aren't aware of the other type of person

168K 4:37 AM - Jan 27, 2020

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The reaction was firmly divided between those we can't imagine life without their inner voice...



zainab @howd9rk · Jan 27, 2020

Replying to @KylePlantEmoji

Wait so some people don't have to suffer through the voice in their head going on a constant monologue?? Is that what it means to achieve inner peace??



ali

@Cinderella

Telling my inner voice to shut up is NOT possible. It's like "ok gotta be quiet. Don't think about anything. Think nothing... not a thing.. not... knot... garlic knot... bread.. I'm hungry. Is chipotle is open this late? I could always go to Target-"

159 8:57 PM - Jan 27, 2020

[See ali's other Tweets](#)



Sam Strake @SamStrake · Jan 27, 2020

Replying to @KylePlantEmoji

I have whole-ass fake conversations with myself. Part of it is social anxiety, but it's still funny to me that some people don't mentally script their every conversation.



AshLEY - President of the Aerith Stan Club

@PopSixxSquish

I've also gotten myself upset over a theoretical conversation and had to remind myself that, well, it hadn't even happened yet.

107 9:03 PM - Jan 27, 2020

[See AshLEY - President of the Aerith Stan Club's other Tweets](#)



Beverly Tjerngren  @beverlyrevelry · Jan 27, 2020

Replies to [@KylePlantEmoji](#)

I've always thought this was so interesting. I think in sentences and though I know not everybody does, I find it impossible to imagine how non-verbal thought works.



Cum Goblin

@ProstateWizard

I genuinely have full conversations with myself in my head. I'd get so bored if I didn't have an internal monologue.

6,985 4:51 AM - Jan 27, 2020

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And those who can't believe that some people have an inner narrative all day long.



sir yuh, behind-the-wall @_pequod · Jan 27, 2020

Replies to [@KylePlantEmoji](#)

You telling me thinking isn't always just a silent conversation with yourself? Like when someone thinks out loud on TV some people just take that as a metaphor?



Alice Cann

@alicecann

I absolutely used to presume that someone thinking out loud on tv, or passages of thought in books, were a metaphor, or artistic license. It still amazes me that many people think like that & not in concepts like me. Thoughts are thoughts for me, separate from words or images.

1,749 10:06 AM - Jan 27, 2020

[106 people are talking about this](#)

I'm sitting here trying to imagine what hearing your own voice in your head constantly narrating your every waking moment feels like and I'm so fucking glad my mind doesn't do this.
twitter.com/KylePlantEmoji...

 Kyle 🌿 @KylePlantEmoji

Fun fact: some people have an internal narrative and some don't

As in, some people's thoughts are like sentences they "hear", and some people just have abstract non-verbal thoughts, and have to consciously verbalize them

And most people aren't aware of the other type of person

40 10:49 AM - Feb 2, 2020

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WitchyTwitchy on OnlyFans ⓘ

@witchytwitchytv

This is so wild to me I can't imagine thinking in actual sentences and hearing an internal monologue. People really think in sentences???? twitter.com/KylePlantEmoji...

 Kyle 🌿 @KylePlantEmoji

Fun fact: some people have an internal narrative and some don't

As in, some people's thoughts are like sentences they "hear", and some people just have abstract non-verbal thoughts, and have to consciously verbalize them

And most people aren't aware of the other type of person

563 7:10 PM - Jan 27, 2020

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Learn more about why some people have an internal monologue in this video.



h/t: [[IFL Science!](#), [Vice](#)]

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JESSICA STEWART

Jessica Stewart is a Contributing Writer and Digital Media Specialist for My Modern Met, as well as a curator and art historian. She earned her MA in Renaissance Studies from University College London and now lives in Rome, Italy. She cultivated expertise in street art which led to the purchase of her photographic archive by the Treccani Italian Encyclopedia in 2014. When she's not spending time with her three dogs, she also manages the studio of a successful street artist. In 2013, she authored the book '[Street Art Stories Roma](#)' and most recently contributed to '[Crossroads: A Glimpse Into the Life of Alice Pasquini](#)'. You can follow her adventures online at [@romephotoblog](#).

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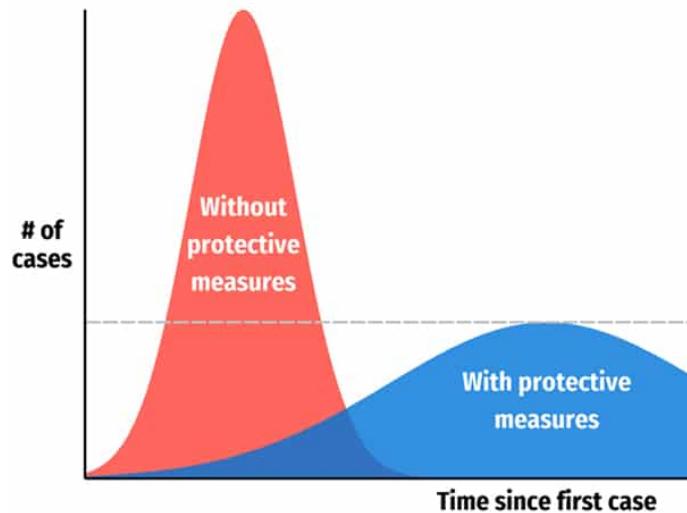


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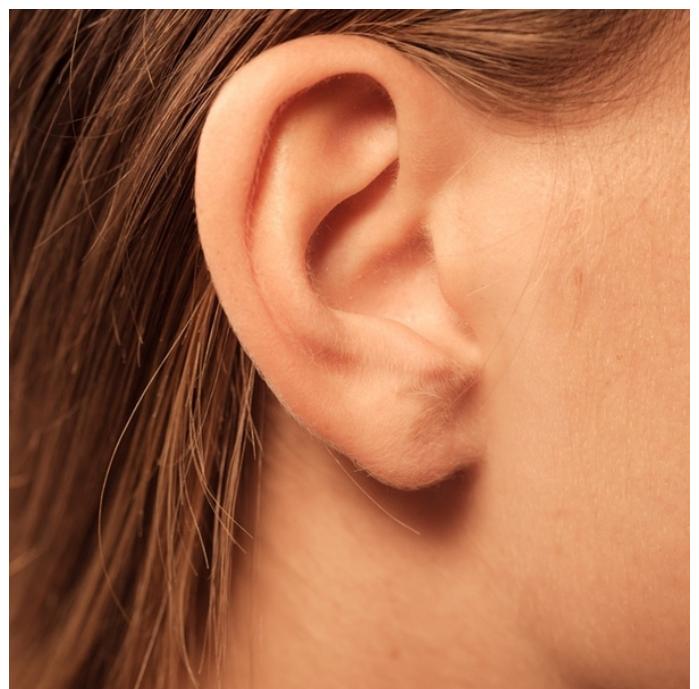
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brittany packnett cunningham 
@MsPackyetti

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