

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
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**Self-Absorbed?** But Enough About Narcissism. Let's Talk About Me.

Paul Asay  
Freelance writer, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**What Happened:**

Do you like to talk about yourself? If you said no, you might be lying. According to new research from Harvard University, our favorite subject is ourselves—so much so that our brains get a little charge of happiness when we talk about ourselves.

According to researchers, talking about ourselves increases the dopamine released in our brains—the same chemical our brains release when they want to reward us for something (i.e., eating something particularly tasty, buying a new pair of shoes). Some tests suggest the wider audience we have for our personal thoughts and anecdotes the happier we are.

That's not necessarily a bad thing, of course. Telling people what we think and feel helps people get to know us better. If we're free with our own personal experiences, we can entertain our friends or prevent others from making similar mistakes we've made.

Given there are so many ways to express ourselves now—YouTube, Facebook, Twitter—some wonder whether all this self-disclosure might get out of hand. More than 80 percent of posts on Facebook and Twitter are announcements about one's own immediate experiences. Could we be so interested in what we have to say that sometimes we forget to listen?

**Talk About It:**

Harvard scientists say that when we talk, we spend about 30 to 40 percent talking about ourselves. Do you think you spend more time relating your personal experiences? Less? Are there times when you really needed to talk to someone about a problem but couldn't find anyone to listen?

Do you have friends who do nothing but talk about what's going on with *them*? How does that make you feel? On the other hand, do you ever wish your friends would talk a little *more* about themselves?

Is it bad to talk about yourself? Why or why not? When does self-talk become an indication of self-absorption?

Do you think other teens are more concerned with their own lives than they are with others? Do you think Facebook and Twitter might make you more inclined to think about yourself (because that's what your posts tend to be) or less (because you're reading so much about other people)? Can social networks help us connect to other people and other worthy causes?

**What the Bible Says:**

“And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort” (2 Cor. 1:5).

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

“Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God” (Ecc. 5:2).

“I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that” (2 Cor. 11:1).

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Rom. 12:10-11).