



The Voice Between Points

Self-Talk & Performance Worksheet for Volleyball

Name: _____ Date: _____

Team: _____

Why Self-Talk Matters in Volleyball

Volleyball is a fast, rally-based sport. You have only a few seconds between points to reset and refocus. The words you choose in those moments directly impact your confidence, composure, and execution on the next rally.

You cannot control the last point.

You can control the voice you bring into the next one.

Types of Self-Talk

1. Unhelpful / Unproductive Self-Talk

What it sounds like:

- “I always choke in big moments.”
- “Coach is going to take me out.”

- “I can’t pass today.”
- “That was terrible.”

What it does:

- Increases tension
- Slows reaction time
- Reduces confidence
- Makes it harder to recover between rallies

Key idea: It focuses on the mistake, not the next action.

2. Helpful / Constructive Encouraging Self-Talk

What it sounds like:

- “I’ve got the next one.”
- “Stay aggressive.”
- “Trust your training.”
- “We’re fine.”

What it does:

- Builds belief
- Regulates nerves
- Supports resilience

Key idea: Encouraging does not mean fake positivity—it means steady belief.

3. Helpful / Constructive Instructional Self-Talk

What it sounds like:

- “High hands.”
- “Platform early.”
- “Fast feet.”
- “Snap and finish.”
- “See seam.”

What it does:

- Directs attention to controllables
- Improves execution
- Simplifies thinking under pressure

Key idea: One short cue is better than multiple swing thoughts.

4. Helpful / Constructive Reset Self-Talk

What it sounds like:

- “Next ball.”
- “Let it go.”
- “Side out.”
- “Back to base.”

What it does:

- Speeds emotional recovery
- Keeps focus in the present
- Improves between-point composure

Key idea: Use the space between rallies as your reset opportunity.

Activity 1: Rewrite the Rally

Rewrite each unhelpful thought into a more constructive version.

Scenario 1: Missed serve at 22–22

Unhelpful thought: “I just cost us the set.”

Reset phrase:

Instructional cue:

Encouraging phrase:

Scenario 2: Shanked pass early in the match

Unhelpful thought: “I can’t pass today.”

Reset phrase:

Instructional cue:

Encouraging phrase:

Scenario 3: Blocked on a big swing

Unhelpful thought: “I shouldn’t have hit that.”

Reset phrase:

Instructional cue:

Encouraging phrase:

Activity 2: Build Your Between-Point Routine

Create short, repeatable phrases (2–4 words each).

After a mistake (Reset):

Before serve/receive (Instructional):

In a pressure moment (Encouraging):

Team-focused phrase (communication cue):

Reflection

1. What type of self-talk do you use most often right now?

2. In what situations do you struggle most with unproductive thoughts?

3. What phrase will you commit to using in your next match?

Takeaway

Strong volleyball players are effective thinkers. They are able to reset quickly, use short constructive cues, and compete with composure from one rally to the next. Improving your self-talk can make you a more consistent, competitive, and more efficient volleyball player and teammate.