

Synopsis:

A Social-Scientific Examination of the Dynamics of Communication, Thought, & Selves

(By Seif Sekalala, Ph.D.)

As of December 2022, news outlets in the USA and around the world are earnestly covering several topics in relation to mental health. For instance, in a news story published on PBS.org on Dec 11 (2022), it is reported that four navy sailors in Norfolk (VA, USA) seem to have committed “suicide in less than a month (link: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/mental-health-workers-find-hopelessness-exhaustion-rampant-in-navy>).” In New York City, the mayor has decreed a new involuntary-commitment measure (e.g.: <https://www.foxnews.com/us/experts-react-to-nyc-plan-to-involuntarily-commit-mentally-ill-homeless-band-aid-on-gaping-wound>); and several outlets have covered and critiqued the Netflix documentary of (and apparently endorsed by) Prince Harry and his wife, Megan Markle (Duchess of Sussex). At least one critic has even alleged that the Prince and his wife are “sharing” a (contrived/exaggerated) mental disorder—i.e. Maureen Callahan, via a Daily Mail op-ed article (e.g.: <https://www.geo.tv/latest/458164-meghan-markle-prince-harry-have-a-shared-mental-disorder>). Overall, such news reports might commendably increase the destigmatization of mental health and illness issues, which might in turn result in a more conscientious search for mental illness treatment(s)—e.g. psychotherapy, and pharmacological remedies.

But what if all/most humans have an innate ability to improve their day-to-day functioning vis-à-vis mental health, as well as other general life domains—e.g. school or work, relationships, as well as self-concept? In a nutshell, this is the argument explicated by Dr. Seif Sekalala’s book on “...*Communication, Thoughts, and Selves*.” In this research and nonfiction-genre book, Dr. Sekalala attempts to answer the question: What is intrapersonal-communication—also known as self-communication, and how can we use it to improve our lives? In his attempt to answer this question, Dr. Sekalala’s research highlights a variety of forms and functions of self-communication; e.g. at school or work, and/or at home (among other spheres); as well as in our interpersonal (personal and professional) relationships, and for purposes of enhancing our self-confidence.

Ironically/paradoxically, in the first chapter, Dr. Sekalala’s analysis highlights a popular (and rather comical) fallacy about self-communication—namely, that it is a sign/“symptom” of severe mental illness (link: <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-odd-science-teacher/306925>). But contrary to this misguided notion, self-communication can immensely help us in our day-to-day lives.

Ultimately, the book crystallizes several potentially priceless utilities of self-communication: e.g. via meditation and mindfulness, positive self-talk, and (general/popular and academic-) metacognition. And as the author points out in the book’s preface, the book “can [/will] be helpful to readers of various academic levels.” Moreover, “instructors of various humanities and social-science subjects...might [also] find it useful,” and the research can also contribute to advanced disciplines and applications such as ICT and AI, and cognitive science.