



WHAT YOU SAY IS WHAT YOU GET....

The Power of Affirmations

IN BRIEF: Have you ever heard the saying "what you think about, you bring about"?

It may be more than a saying, say proponents of affirmations.

Learn how to harness the power of words to bring about change in your life.

What are affirmations?

Affirmations are spoken statements of desirable intentions or conditions of the world or the mind. They are deliberately meditated on or repeated in order to implant it in the subconscious mind. The idea of affirmations is to convince the mind that what you are repeating is the truth, thereby changing your reality.

The theory behind it

Most of what you do is not run by your conscious mind, but by your unconscious mind, which you've programmed over the years. Some of that programming is useful, and some (like bad habits or low self esteem) get in your way. Affirmations are designed to "re-programme" you. When we learn a new skill, like walking or riding a bike, we are consciously aware of what we are doing. Once we've mastered it, it becomes "automatic", which makes things a lot easier (just imagine you had to concentrate on putting one foot in front of the other every time you walk!). Much of this "programming" happens early in life (psychologists say that most of our core beliefs are in place by the time we're ten years old). And it's not only actions that become automatic. You "install" ways of looking at the world and certain key phrases through repetition (have you ever been shocked to hear your parents' words coming out of your mouth?). Through repetition, these are ingrained in you, as are your most important beliefs.

Many of these beliefs serve you, while some hold you back. Those that can hold you back might not even be your own thoughts or words, but those of others who criticised you, which you have internalised (such as "I'm clumsy" or "I'm selfish"). You may think it's silly, but your unconscious mind takes it literally. It has no sense of humour and it can't judge if something is "good" or "bad". Whatever you "tell" it repeatedly and with intense emotion ("positive" or "negative"), is taken as gospel.

Affirmations are one way of "installing" new beliefs in your unconscious mind. By repeating them, over and over, they can be "programmed" into your unconscious. Some find it very helpful, while others pooh-pooh the idea that your reality can change by simply repeating a few words.

Do they really work?

Although there is no quantifiable measure to study the effectiveness of affirmations, its success is not completely unthinkable. The technique of using positive thinking or self-talk is frequently, and successfully, used in therapy. It is also not very far removed from the age-old religious practices of repeating a prayer or chanting. But, experts say, affirmations are only effective if they are formulated correctly.

How to formulate powerful affirmations

Although a book is a useful guide, your own affirmations will be more effective. The stronger your connection with the affirmation, the deeper the impression it will make on your mind, and the sooner you will experience positive results. If you prefer to use someone else's affirmations, change it somewhat to make it your own.

Effective affirmations have the following in common:

- They're stated in the present tense. An affirmation is more effective when stated in the present tense. For example, "I now have a wonderful relationship". Don't affirm something in the future tense, such as "I am going to have a wonderful relationship" - the results will always be waiting to happen!
- They express a positive statement. Affirmations need to be stated in the most positive terms possible. Affirm what you do want, rather than what you don't want. Use, for example: "I am now perfectly healthy in body, mind and spirit" instead of "I am no longer sick".
- They're short and specific. Short affirmations are easy to say and have a far greater impact at the subconscious level than those that are long and wordy. Keeping them specific and to the point adds power as the idea is uncluttered by irrelevant elements.
- They're connected to behaviour and goals. Affirmations should be a clear statement of what you want or how you want to change. For example, "Every day I am more productive" or "I always spend money wisely".

Many experts suggest writing your affirmations down and keeping it where you can see it. When we write affirmations, the mind, hand and eye are all involved. Many people resist the notion of writing because it sounds so simple, but it's perhaps because of simplicity that this method often works so well for many people.

Once you've formulated and written your affirmations down, it is essential that you repeat them at least every morning and every night. If you can, repeat them throughout the day, particularly when you are stressed or negative thoughts emerge. The more you repeat it, the quicker it will become an automatic thought pattern.

To get the most out of your affirmations:

- Do them daily, at the same time. It's a great way to start and end the day!
- Relax and meditate for just a couple minutes before the affirmations to connect with your spiritual side.
- Speak the affirmations clearly and slowly.
- Affirm with meaning and feeling.
- Feel the power behind your words, proclamations and declarations.
- Relax for a minute afterwards to complete the integration of the affirmations.
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Initially, you'll probably feel a bit silly. You may even think you are telling yourself a big fat lie. You don't need to believe it at first. Once you succeed or your needs are met, you'll want to commit to saying your affirmations as if it were true already. Affirmations are an extremely powerful tool for personal growth. Put these principles into practice, and you may just be pleasantly surprised!

~ *Source: Consolidated E-Care Newsletter*

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Note: This article and other useful articles can also be found on our website.

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