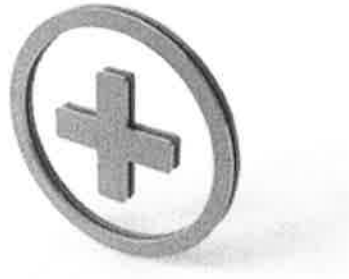


Using Affirmations

Harnessing Positive Thinking



Use positive thinking to your advantage.

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"I'm never going to be able to do this job; I'm just not smart enough."

"Why does my boss want me to present at the trade show? I'm a terrible public speaker, and I'll just embarrass the company."

"I wish I could stick up for myself at work; in every meeting, I let the others walk over my ideas. I'm never going to get ahead."

Many of us have negative thoughts like these, sometimes on a regular basis. When we have these thoughts, our confidence, mood and outlook become negative too.

The problem with these negative thoughts is that they can be self-fulfilling. Inside our heads, we talk ourselves into believing that we're not good enough. And, because of this, these thoughts drag down our personal lives, our relationships, and our careers.

This is why consciously doing the opposite - using positive affirmations - can be helpful. In this article, we'll explore how you can use affirmations to drive positive change, both in your career, and in your life in general.

Why Use Affirmations?

Affirmations are positive, specific statements that help you to overcome self-sabotaging, negative thoughts. They help you visualize, and believe in, what you're affirming to yourself, helping you to make positive changes to your life and career.

While there's limited research into the effectiveness of using affirmations in a general setting, there is evidence that the use of positive affirmations can successfully treat people with low self-esteem, depression, and other mental health conditions.

For instance, in a study by researchers at Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, people who used positive affirmations for two weeks experienced higher self esteem than at the beginning of the study.

Also, in a study published in the Journal of American College Health, researchers found that women treated with cognitive behavioral techniques, which included use of positive affirmations, experienced a decrease in depressive symptoms and negative thinking. A study by researchers at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, had similar results, and came to a similar conclusion.

Of course, it's important to realize that although some people have successfully used affirmations to overcome depression and negative thinking, the technique may not work for everyone. Some people may view affirmations as "wishful thinking," or simply looking at the world with an unrealistic perspective. Quite a lot can depend on your mindset.

So try looking at positive affirmations this way - many of us do repetitive exercises to improve our body's physical health and condition. Affirmations are like exercises for our mind and outlook; these positive mental repetitions can reprogram our thinking patterns so that, over time, we begin to think, and act, in a new way.

Note:

There has also been research that says that the higher your self-esteem, the more effective affirmations can be. This research also found that affirmations can actually have a negative effect if you have very low self-esteem. If this applies to you, work on boosting your self-esteem before you use them.

When to Use Positive Affirmations

You can use affirmations in any situation where you'd like to see a positive change take place. These might include times when you want to:

- Raise your confidence before presentations or important meetings.
- Control negative feelings such as frustration, anger, or impatience.
- Improve your self-esteem.
- Finish projects you've started.
- Improve your productivity.

Affirmations are often more effective when they're paired with other positive thinking and goal-setting techniques.

For instance, affirmations work particularly well alongside **visualization** - instead of just picturing the change we'd like to see with visualization, we're also saying it aloud using a positive affirmation.

Affirmations are also useful when **setting personal goals**. Once you've identified the goals you'd like to achieve in the short and long term, you can use positive affirmations to help keep yourself motivated in order to achieve them.

How to Use Affirmations

Remember - affirmations are positive statements that help you challenge and overcome negative thinking and **self-sabotaging behaviors**. They're usually short, positive statements that target a specific area, behavior, or belief that you're struggling with.

Start by thinking of the areas of your life you'd like to change. For instance, do you wish you had more patience? Or a deeper relationships with your friends or colleagues? Or do you want a more productive workday?

Write down several areas or behaviors you'd like to work on. Then, for each of these, come up with a positive, present-tense statement you can repeat to yourself several times a day.

It's also important that your affirmation is credible, believable, and based on a realistic assessment of fact. For instance, imagine you feel bad about the level of pay you're currently receiving. So you begin to use affirmations to raise your confidence about asking for an increase. However, it probably wouldn't be wise to affirm to yourself that you're going to double your salary: for most people, and most organizations, doubling what you're earning in one go just isn't feasible. Keep it realistic!

After all, if you can't believe the affirmations you're repeating to yourself, it's highly unlikely that they'll have any impact on your life.

Tip:

Affirmations should be formed in the present tense, as if they're already happening. This helps you believe that the statement is true right now. For instance, "I am well-prepared and well-rehearsed, and I can give a great presentation" would be a great affirmation to use if you often feel nervous speaking in front of a group.

Tip 2:

The power of affirmations also lies in their repetition. It's useful to recite your affirmations several times a day (have them pop up in your computer diary). You also need to repeat your affirmation as soon as you start to engage in a negative thought or behavior.

Tip 3:

Affirmations are more effective when they're thought or said with feeling. Every affirmation you choose to repeat should be a phrase that's meaningful to you. You need to want this change to happen.

Here are some examples of positive affirmations:

- I have plenty of creativity for this project.
- My work will be recognized in a positive way by my boss and colleagues.
- I can do this!
- My opinion is respected and valued by my team.
- I am successful.
- I am honest in my life, and my work.
- I like completing tasks and projects on time.
- I'm grateful for the job I have.
- I enjoy working with my team.
- I'm bringing a positive attitude to work every day.
- I am excellent at what I do.
- I am generous.
- I am happy.
- I will be a leader in my organization.

Tip:

The use of affirmations is just one way to make positive changes to your life. You can also use techniques such as **Thought Awareness**, **Rational Thinking**, and **Positive Thinking**, and **Cognitive Restructuring**. You may also want to take our quiz, **Are You a Positive or Negative Thinker?**

Key Points

Affirmations are positive statements that can help you overcome self-sabotaging, negative thoughts.

To use affirmations, first analyze the thoughts or behaviors you'd like to change in your own life and career.

Next, come up with positive, credible, present tense statements that are the opposite of these thoughts. Repeat your affirmations several times a day, especially when you find yourself slipping into a negative thinking pattern, or engaging in a negative behavior.

Remember that affirmations are most effective when used alongside other strategies, such as visualization and goal setting.