

Using Affirmations *for* *Positive Change*

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Watch your thoughts, for they become words.
Watch your words, for they become actions.
Watch your actions, for they become habits.
Watch your habits, for they become character.
Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.
- Author Unknown

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Affirmations: Effective or Pointless?

You have probably heard of affirmations before, and perhaps even used them in an effort to improve your life. Perhaps you tried to lose weight, quit smoking, or increase your self-confidence by uttering a magical phrase that was supposed to fill you with feelings of empowerment and determination.

How did that work out for you?

If you're like most people, you probably abandoned your affirmations practice after a few days because you weren't seeing results.

Affirmations can have a transformative effect on your life and your goals - but **only if you use them correctly**. Without the proper use of affirmations, you may find yourself going around in circles, getting more frustrated by the moment.

Affirmations are defined as positive declarations, statements or judgments. When you state an affirmation, you declare that statement as being true.

Affirmations work best when they are:

- Used on a consistent basis (preferably daily)
- Phrased in the present tense
- Phrased with positive words, rather than negative. (avoid words like can't and don't)

So instead of affirming "I don't want these bills" or "I no longer have a lot of debt" you would affirm "I have plenty of money for all of my needs."

Many people resist using affirmations because they can't understand how repeating phrases again and again will change their lives. If you fit into this category, you may not understand how the process of affirmations works.

Here's something that may surprise you: **You are already using affirmations, whether consciously or not!**

You have a constant inner monologue running through your mind. You are “affirming” certain beliefs to yourself every minute of every day. What you may not realize is that the contents of these messages are within your control.

**How often misused words generate
misleading thoughts.**

Herbert Spencer

Keeping Affirmations in Perspective

Affirmations are not meant to be a “cure-all”; they are just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to self-improvement - but they are often a crucial piece of the puzzle.

When you set out to make big changes in the course of your life, whether it is financial, physical, emotional or spiritual, you set goals for yourself. These goals are results that you’d like to see take place in your life. You may want a better career, a fulfilling relationship, more money in the bank or a deeper spiritual connection. These are all results that you can achieve - but you have to remember that they are just results.

Results can’t come without the rest of the process.

Big Hint: The results you are experiencing in your life right now stem from your previous thoughts, feelings and actions.

This is why affirmations can be so effective - or so damaging. What you consistently “tell yourself” is what you will become.

In order to change your results, you need to change your thoughts, feelings and actions. The first key in the process is changing your thoughts (which will lead to changes in your feelings and actions). The simplest way to transform your thoughts is to use affirmations.

Your “internal monologue” has a profound impact upon your life. Your thoughts frame the way you experience events and relationships around you. If you are a pessimistic person and are consistently looking for the worst in everything and everyone, your feelings and actions will follow in that same line.

Self-improvement, of any type, requires that you change the way you are thinking. Your negative thoughts didn’t come out of the blue. You are just acting out of habit as a result from repeating negative thought patterns again and again. Affirmations, and their repeated use, will help to break your negative thinking habit.

When you use affirmations consistently, your thoughts, moods and actions will begin to change. If you think of achieving self-improvement success as someone trying to hit a target with an arrow, then affirmations are the **targeting** part of that process. If the

archer doesn't take the time to line up the arrow and the bow correctly, his or her shot will miss. Affirmations help you target your feelings and actions so you can get the results you want.

**Words are only postage stamps delivering
the object for you to unwrap.**

George Bernard Shaw

Programming Your Mind for Success

Why do affirmations work? That's a tough question, but it's one that is important. Some people don't care about why affirmations work; they just feel comfortable knowing that they do. However, others look for an explanation for the power of affirmations.

Affirmations are a process of deliberately programming your mind to function for you in a specific way. To understand what this means, you need to understand that your mind works in two very different ways.

The **conscious mind** is the portion of your mind that operates on your day-to-day tasks. It is very connected to the outside and material world. Have you ever noticed a running monologue going on in your head during the day? For example:

"Okay, first I've got to go to the grocery store, then I'll come back and do the dishes. Oh! There's that birthday card I was looking for. I wonder if I should send it off now. That reminds me...I need to buy stamps. I better add that to the list..."

And so on and so on. This is your conscious mind at work. You have direct control over your conscious mind. It is the part of the mind you use to coordinate your physical body and your mental thoughts.

There is another part of your brain, however, that is less under your control. The **subconscious mind** operates at a deeper level. This portion of your brain is very tuned into the "non-physical" realm. It has a connection with your emotions, including excitement, fear and motivation.

Your subconscious mind runs on auto-pilot. It isn't under your direct control, but it responds based on your past programming. This programming occurs as you grow up in the form of events and emotions you experience. When you have an inner urge to do something that you can't quite place, this is evidence of your subconscious mind at work.

So what does this have to do with affirmations? Your subconscious mind controls your life. Although your conscious mind is there for the day-to-day stuff, your **subconscious mind really effects who, what, where and how of your life on a grand scale**. In order to get your subconscious mind to work in your favor, you've got

to “program” it to do so. The programming can take place through the use of affirmations.

Anything repeated on the conscious level of your mind (like affirmations) will eventually become programmed on the subconscious level. You’ve already experienced a great deal of programming in your life up to this point. Any attitudes, behaviors or events that were repeated consistently in your life have programmed your subconscious mind.

For example, as a child your mother always rewarded you for a job well done with a cookie or other sweet treat. Over the course of your formative years, this happened hundreds if not thousands of times. Your subconscious mind developed a connection between eating sweets and rewarding yourself. This connection isn’t all bad, but it can be troublesome if you’re trying to lose weight.

You can also receive programming about beliefs and attitudes. If you were constantly told as a child “Rich people are sinners” your subconscious mind is going to do everything in its power to keep you from being rich. Even if you understand on a conscious level that being rich is not evil, the power of your programming will win out every time.

This is where affirmations come into play. Repeating positive statements about the changes you want to see in your life will reprogram your subconscious mind. However, it takes time for these new thoughts and beliefs to really take root and grow. That’s why you won’t see obvious results from affirmations in just a few days.

With consistent effort, your new beliefs will sink down into your subconscious mind and become part of your automatic behavior.

**Words without thoughts never to
heaven go.**

William Shakespeare

One Little Word that Can Give Your Affirmations Big Impact

Many people are phrasing their affirmations wrong without even realizing it. Are you one of them?

The biggest problem with affirmations is that they need to be said in the positive, present tense and with a great deal of belief. For example, instead of saying "I don't want to be fat" your affirmation would state "I am fit and healthy."

Traditionally, you are supposed to repeat "I am fit and healthy" several times per day. Over time, you'll begin to attract the circumstances, attitudes and behaviors that will make that goal a reality.

However, as you look in the mirror repeating "I am fit and healthy" you probably experience a bit of doubt - or downright cynicism! You know you aren't fit and healthy (after all, you're looking in the mirror and can see that you aren't). So as you are repeating this positive phrase, you are feeling negative about yourself and negative about the whole process.

Quite simply, you don't believe what you are saying!

It's no wonder that many people stop using affirmations very quickly after they start. They feel silly and don't see any progress in their goals.

The problem is twofold:

- 1) The affirmations aren't worded for maximum effectiveness.
- 2) Your mood when repeating the affirmation is throwing a wrench in the process.

Feelings are a very important part of saying affirmations, and removing doubt from the situation is important. There is one little word that you can add to any affirmation that will create more positive feelings, and produce faster results.

The word is "**becoming**."

Instead of saying "I am fit and healthy" you would affirm, "I am **becoming** fit and healthy." Instead of "I am wealthy" you say, "I am **becoming** wealthy."

The word "becoming" removes doubt from the equation. While your conscious mind easily scoffs at the idea that you are fit and healthy when you obviously aren't, it really can't argue with the idea that you are "becoming" fit and healthy. The same goes for other types of affirmations as well.

The addition of the word "becoming" allows you to remain positive about the affirmation. You can also try adding the phrase "I'm in the process of..." at the beginning of your affirmations.

"I am in the process of attracting the perfect mate"

"I am in the process of developing a successful business"

"I am in the process of deepening my spiritual focus."

Using these modifiers can help you accept the affirmations as true, and that will increase your positive emotions. The more you add positive emotions to your affirmations, the sooner they will come into being.

**Always and never are two words you should
always remember never to use.**

Wendell Johnson

Gratitude and Affirmations: A Winning Combination!

Too many people use affirmations robotically without really getting a lot out of them. The main reason is lack of emotional involvement in affirmations. The process of saying affirmations can be disconnected from your emotions almost entirely if you are not careful. This makes them a lot less effective.

To change this, you need to cultivate a feeling of **gratitude** while you say your affirmations. In other words, **act as if you have already received** whatever you desire.

Imagine the power of this! By expressing gratitude for the pay-raise or promotion, meeting Mr. or Miss Right, or the physical healing you desire, you are affirming to the universe that it is already your reality and you are grateful for it. Being grateful for what you don't yet have will put your emotions on the right level for receiving exactly that. Your emotional level will then be tied directly to your affirmations. You'll see quicker results and be more confident about the process.

Your emotional state during the affirmations process is vital, and gratitude is one of the most powerful emotions. It puts you in a state of receiving and allowing manifestation to happen. You can use gratitude with your affirmations by using statements similar to the following:

Thank you for my beautiful home.
Thank you for my incredible business ideas.
Thank you for my loving spouse.
Thank you for my large raise.
Thank you for my healing.

These affirmations do two things. First, they are written in the present tense, which is a requirement for successful affirmations. Affirmations must be written as if the thing you want is already happening or has already happened. Notice you do not say "Thank you for my beautiful home that is on its way." When you use a gratitude affirmation like this, you are invoking a feeling of **already having** that which you desire.

Secondly, you are putting yourself in a "receiving" emotional state. When you use an affirmation similar to the examples above, you are ready to receive what you desire.

You are signaling to the universe that you are ready to receive,
and willing to receive.

Your expectation of healing, a home, a spouse, a raise, whatever - places you in the right frame of heart (not mind!) in order to receive.

“Words of love are works of love.”

William R. Alger

Constant Gratitude: The Most Powerful Affirmation

You can also increase the positive emotional state in your life by cultivating an attitude of gratitude outside of your affirmations practice.

A lot of people forget to be grateful because they feel like they have nothing to be grateful for. They're not happy with their financial situation, job, relationships, size, weight, health, the car they drive, where they live...on and on.

Know this: no matter what else is happening in your life, there is **always** something to be grateful for. A clear sky, a child laughing, a hot shower, a good meal. These simple things are important.

Being grateful for all that you have around you will make it easier to be in the right frame of mind and heart to make affirmations work for you. Using gratitude as a constant emotional state in your daily life, as well as when you use affirmations, is essential. You'll get more out of your affirmations practice and see results more quickly.

**The right word may be effective, but no word
was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause.**

Mark Twain

Affirmation Mistakes: Are You Making Them?

There are three common mistakes that you may be making in your affirmations process that can slow down your success.

The first mistake is not spending enough time finding out **what you really want**.

If you walked into a restaurant, sat down at a table and told the waitress you'd like "something good", what would she say? She'd likely hand you a menu, recite the daily specials, and then wait for YOU to make a decision. It's not her job to decide what you should eat - nor is it the universe's job to decide what you want in your life.

However, many people, for a whole host of reasons, have trouble defining what they truly want. They've lived for so long with less than they deserve because of duty or religious beliefs or self-worth issues that it is hard to define what they want for themselves. If you're one of those people, know right now that it is **okay to want prosperity, abundance and happiness for yourself!** Many people shy away from getting clear about what they want because they fear being disappointed when they don't get it. Guess what? If you never decide what it is that you want, you won't get it either!

To clearly define what you want, first look at the things that you **don't** want in your life. Start with a list of your "don't wants" and write down as much as you can think of. If you were to design your life exactly the way you wanted...what would you get rid of or change? Once you've compiled that list, you'll have a better idea of what you do want. You'll be able to write specific and personal affirmations.

The next mistake that people often make is not saying the affirmations with positive emotions attached. They think that the words themselves hold the power, when in fact it's their own **EMOTIONS that power the affirmations**.

You've got to get excited about your affirmations. As you read your affirmations, you've got to be getting more and more thrilled with the idea of having these desires manifest in your life.

If you just stand in front of the mirror a few times a day and blankly read your list of affirmations, you aren't getting excited. It may be that what you've written down

doesn't excite you. If that's the case, rewrite your affirmations and declare what you really want.

You may also need to take a moment before you begin stating your affirmations to get in a positive frame of mind. You don't have to be positive about the specific affirmations; you just need to get positive about something. Think of your best friend, your lover, a puppy playing, a baby laughing, visiting an amusement park, a funny memory...whatever it takes! Get yourself in a good mood, and then recite your affirmations.

Finally, affirmations require **belief**. If you spend time saying your affirmations with a little voice inside your head that says "this will never happen" you are defeating the purpose. Resistance, in the form of doubt, will always outweigh your desires. If you've got a little negative voice during your affirmations sessions, then you need to work on removing the resistance.

You can remove the resistance to your affirmations by removing doubt. No matter what your desire is there are hundreds if not thousands of people who are achieving the same goal successfully. Take some time to evaluate any limiting beliefs that are creating resistance. Limiting beliefs are statements like "I can't start a new business because I'm too old" or "I can't be in a relationship right now because I have to lose weight." When you encounter beliefs like this, ask yourself if it is possible that other people in similar circumstances have been able to achieve what you want.

If others have done it - so can YOU!

**In prayer it is better to have a heart without
words than words without a heart.**

Mahatma Gandhi

Practice Makes Perfect

I hope this e-book has given you a new perspective on affirmations and the ways they can help you in your personal development journey. Like any other technique, the use of affirmations becomes more effective the more you practice it.

If you're struggling to make affirmations work for you, you might consider investing in some tools that can make the process easier.

A few I recommend:

[Affirmware](#)

Affirmware is a software program you use on your computer. Affirmations on their own can be a powerful tool, but when you add techniques like visualization, subliminal messaging and focused goal-setting, it can take them to a new level! This software can help you to multiply the power of your affirmations by synergistically combining several techniques at once and putting them on autopilot.

[Afformations](#)

This little gem of a book helps you change the questions you ask yourself, which changes your focus INSTANTLY. If you ever find yourself asking questions like these:

"Why is my life such a struggle?"
"Why can't I find someone to love?"
"Why don't I have enough time (or money)?"

It's not the answers that are the problem - it's the questions. If you change the questions, you change your life!

[I Can Do It](#)

This is a book and CD set by bestselling author Louise L. Hay. She shows you that you "can do it"—that is, change and improve virtually every aspect of your life—by understanding and using affirmations correctly. Louise explains that every thought you think and every word you speak is an affirmation. Even your self-talk, your internal dialogue, is a stream of affirmations. You're affirming and creating your life experiences with every word and thought. You need to pay attention to your thoughts so that you can begin to eliminate the ones creating experiences that you don't want.

About the Author:

Wendy Betterini is a freelance writer specializing in personal development topics. For the past fourteen years she's been on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth - because as wonderful as she thinks she is sometimes, there's always room for improvement. Just ask her mother!



For more information on affirmations, positive thinking and personal growth, visit Wendy's website: Wingsfortheheart.com. Don't forget to sign up for her [FREE Motivational Newsletter](#) and receive thought-provoking articles and subscriber-only freebies and specials straight to your Inbox!