

Affirmations



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**Using Affirmations
for Success**

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Introduction

The Collins English Dictionary defines affirmation as: “A statement of the truth of something; assertion.”

Affirmations are a powerful ingredient in positive thinking. They are not statements that you *wish* to be true; they are statements that you must believe *are* true.

Affirmations are personal, positive statements describing the desired condition in your life. That condition may not yet exist, but the affirmation is spoken as though it does – present tense. A simple example might be: “I am at peace with my life.” This is repeated several times on a daily basis, out loud or mentally, the aim being to program the subconscious mind into producing the desired outcome. They must be sincerely felt, and spoken in the present tense with conviction and enthusiasm.

We carry out such mental programming every day whether we know it or not; the trick is to make this programming conscious and positive. The alternative is to be unaware that we are issuing negative affirmations to ourselves. If you have ever made a mistake and muttered “I am such an idiot”, you have given yourself a negative affirmation. The problem is that any negative affirmation you give enters your subconscious mind and has a harmful effect – it creates your reality.

Positive thinking as a popular psychology can be traced back to 1937, with Napoleon Hill’s bestselling *Think and Grow Rich*. This book remains important today, although there have been countless similar guides written in the years since on the subject of positive thinking for personal success.

Many books on positive thinking, like *Think and Grow Rich*, focus mainly on the financial benefits to be gained from altering your thoughts. The reason for this is obvious: it taps into the desire of so many people to become wealthy. Although this may be geared to capturing the public imagination, it may also give doubters and newcomers the impression that affirmations are all about money.

Affirmations are so simple that they are easy to dismiss, but simple does not always mean easy. Reprogramming a mind that has suffered negative thoughts and affirmations for years can be tough.

Positive thinking has the power to transform your life, and affirmations are the cornerstone of beginning and maintaining this successful transformation.

Why Make An Affirmation?

Personal Goals

Positive affirmations are made because you want to achieve something. That may be more money, a new car, a bigger house, a better job, more success, or, on a more personal level, love, health, happiness or peace. We all have such desires – but these outcomes can sometimes seem so far beyond our grasp that we do not really dare to think that they could be ours for the asking. Instead, we focus on how far away from our desired outcomes we are, and negative affirmations become our mantra.

- We desire to be wealthy, so we think: *I'm never going to be rich.*
- We want that promotion, so we think: *It's bound to go to someone else.*
- We want love in our life, so we think: *No one's going to love me.*

We *are* thinking about the things we want but from a negative perspective. This has been proven time and again, so there is no doubt as to why it is a good idea to flip the coin and start talking positively both with our words and our thoughts! It is not as though we are being forced to start doing something we aren't doing already, or that is in any way laborious. How much effort does it take to say one sentence to yourself, and repeat it throughout the day? And wouldn't it be nice to speak to yourself in positive terms to bring you the life you want? An added bonus is living each day in a positive mindset, which will bring you a higher quality of day to day life.

Be Careful What You Wish For ...

You will doubtless have heard this saying in the past. In full, it says: “Be careful what you wish for; you may just get it.”

This may appear an odd saying because who in their right mind would wish for negative things to happen? Unfortunately, too many of us are thinking negative thoughts every day. Look at the examples above – how it is so easy to have a positive desire that is expressed in a negative way.

Take the example of your desire for a promotion. Instead of repeating to yourself: “The promotion is mine”, you think: *It’s bound to go to someone else, I don’t want to get my hopes up.* Perhaps this is a means of protecting yourself from disappointment, but what you are actually doing is repeating a negative affirmation. Your subconscious is receiving the message that you will not be promoted, and it interprets this as an order.

You may think that your subconscious cannot affect the decision made by your boss, but your negativity comes through loud and clear. Your boss may be looking at you and feel reluctant to promote you because they sense you are not the positive person they want in a position of increased power.

So you fail to win the promotion largely because you have been thinking you won’t, and your boss has picked up on something negative that they don’t like. Although you didn’t actually *wish* that you would fail, you helped make it happen because failure was the dominant thought in your mind. The above saying may speak of wishes, but it more correctly refers to thoughts that are uppermost in your mind for the majority of the time. In other words: “Be careful what you *think of*; you may just get it.”

The results that are manifested in your life can be directly affected by the thoughts in your head, and the affirmations you give to yourself.

The PMA/NMA Coin

Another good reason to create positive affirmations for yourself is that it is so simple to do. As already mentioned, that does not mean it is necessarily an easy process to carry out – which will be dealt with in the next chapter – but it is certainly a simple process to *understand*.

In positive thinking, your mental attitude is often referred to as a coin. It's an apt description. You have two forms of mental attitude: a positive mental attitude (PMA), and a negative mental attitude (NMA).

Just like the heads and tails of a coin. And just like a coin, it can be flipped very easily and it will never come to rest on its edge. This means there is no third option of a neutral mental attitude. It is either positive or it is negative.

When something is so easy to understand, there is very little reason to simply stare at your coin and leave it lying there with its NMA side upwards! Whenever you notice that you are feeling negative, or you catch yourself making a negative comment to yourself, make a conscious effort to flip the coin to its PMA side, and counter the negative thought with a positive affirmation. As wonderfully complex as your mind is, it does not have the capability to focus on more than one thought at any one time. If you are thinking a negative thought, you can instantly dismiss it by bringing a positive thought to mind.

Controlling and Understanding the Subconscious Mind

This is a useful life-skill, and affirmations can help forge closer links between your conscious mind and your subconscious mind.

Once you start making your positive affirmations and you begin to see that they are working, you have proven your ability to control a part of yourself that remains out of reach to so many other people. Your subconscious mind is like the registry of your computer. A computer's registry is its database that stores configuration settings and options. Most people have a vague idea that it's there, some may realize what it does, but very few will be able to open it up and start deleting or adjusting any of its keys or values because they won't know what anything in there means.

You need to understand that it is possible to adjust your subconscious mind, and positive affirmations are the way to do this. It is how you can

clear out all the redundant and harmful data your subconscious stores, and allow you to know exactly why you may be behaving in a certain way in a certain situation. When a computer is behaving oddly or sluggishly, it is often a muddled and messed up registry that's responsible. Even when you delete a program, there will usually be remnants of it remaining in the registry.

Your aim with positive affirmations is to reprogram your subconscious mind and to continue to clear out any negative traces that remain from your previous ways of thinking.

Positive affirmations help you become more in tune with how your subconscious operates, and why you may respond poorly to certain circumstances. The more you program your mind positively, the more easily you will recognize negative activity and be able to jump on it and delete it. Equally, you will find that you are far more tuned into the whisperings of your subconscious mind that often bring answers to difficult dilemmas in your life.

Overcoming Bad Habits

Depending on how they are phrased, affirmations can create good or bad habits. You may start out with affirmations that relate to some grand goals, such as a better career, or a more peaceful life, but don't forget that affirmations can be applied to any area of your life. They can be used to help control your weight, to quit smoking, to cut back on the booze, so stop biting your fingernails. You name the habit, and a positive affirmation can be phrased to deal with it.

Increased Confidence

Positive affirmations have a knock-on effect beyond the result named in the affirmation. As your life gradually improves, you will feel a sense of growing confidence, whether or not you have ever phrased an affirmation regarding a boost in your confidence levels. This is the natural

consequence of personal achievement. Your outlook on life changes and your self-image is transformed. You create a virtuous circle where a vicious one may have existed before.

Better Physical Health

Again, better physical health is a side-effect of positive affirmations even when you have not phrased one that relates directly to your health. Negative emotions are draining on the psyche, and this can have a debilitating effect on your physical well-being. Negativity causes you to feel lethargic and can cause genuine physical illness. Where positive affirmations can make you feel at ease, negative thoughts and habits cause you dis-ease. This is in part why people develop psychosomatic illnesses.

Psychosomatic means mind (psyche) and body (soma), and an illness of this sort, therefore, involves both the mind and the body. You can make yourself “sick with worry” as is entirely possible to make yourself ill through stressful thoughts. Some physical dis-eases are thought to be particularly affected by mental factors such as stress and anxiety. In fact, there is a mental aspect to every physical disease in how we react to it and cope with it.

Positive affirmations can improve your health in three ways: Firstly, your mindset is healthier overall with a positive mental attitude, thus your immune system is stronger; secondly, a specific affirmation can be phrased to augment your health and counter illness appearing; thirdly, they can be used to speed recovery if you do get ill.

Happier Relationships

Positive affirmations create better relationships, as other people instinctively respond better to positive vibes and success. This can affect every type of relationship in your life – with your partner, your kids, your relatives, friends, acquaintances, strangers, work colleagues, and your boss.

Again, this is an area that will naturally improve as your affirmations take effect, even if they have not been targeted specifically at your relationships. You are far more likely to be successful if you have created a more attractive aura for yourself through positive affirmations.

Because Everything Begins in Mind

This is the truth that grounds both positive affirmations, and positive thinking. This is the concept that must be accepted if you are to truly embrace the possibility that positive affirmations can improve your life and bring success.

The easiest way to verify this statement is to simply look around you right now. Apart from nature, everything you can see started life as a thought in the mind of a human being. The clothes you wear, the car you drive, the street you drive along, the house you live in, the TV you watch, the books you read, the computer you work at, the chair you sit in, the company you work for, *everything* started out as an idea in mind.

The power of your mind to invent and achieve is practically limitless.

How To Make Affirmations

Remember that affirmations program the mind as you would program your computer. In the computing world, there is an acronym: GIGO. It stands for Garbage In, Garbage Out. This means that your computer can and will only respond to what is input into its system. If your machine is running cleanly, then you download and install a program and your computer crashes, it's likely that the program had a virus. If you put garbage into a computer, you can expect to get garbage out.

Be Genuinely Positive

It is the same with the human mind. You cannot consistently program your mind with negativity and expect that good things will be the result. When you approach the affirmations process, you must make certain that you do so with a positive frame of mind. Making successful affirmations is far more than speaking a few words in a set order. You may speak ten different affirmations each morning and evening, but if you don't really believe that the whole affirmation process can work, you will most likely follow each one with a negative thought or comment that screws up all your good work. For example:

You affirm: "I am a happy and successful person."

You think: *Yeah, buddy, in your dreams.*

You affirm: "I am a wealthy individual."

You think: *Sure, once I win the lottery.*

You affirm: "All is well in my world."

You think: *When I'm asleep perhaps.*

You get the idea. Making positive affirmations is not enough. You must believe them to be true to the exclusion of any and all counterproductive thoughts or feelings. Cynicism is a sure fire way to negate positive affirmations.

Use Positive Wording

Although it may seem silly even mentioning that positive affirmations should be positive, this is an essential part of framing a positive affirmation and refers to the specific words you choose. For example, to quit smoking, you should not say: “I don’t want to smoke anymore.” Instead, you could try: “I am free from smoking”, or “I live a smoke-free, healthy life.” Your affirmations must be about what you desire to happen, not about what you don’t want to happen.

Use the Present Tense

We live our lives in the present moment. It may not seem that way when you are worried about the future or regretting the past, but there is really nothing more than what is happening *now*. Louise L. Hay writes in her best-selling book *You Can Heal Your Life*, that the “point of power is always in the present moment.” We hear people say that you have to live in the moment, and we understand the sense in doing so, but it remains a notoriously difficult practice to master.

However, in positive thinking and in positive affirmations especially, the present tense is paramount; if not your ability to actually live in the moment, certainly your willingness to accept its importance in reprogramming your mind.

Your mind works in the present tense. It knows no other way to think. We create a past for ourselves in our memories and the emotions attached to them. We build a future for ourselves with our hopes and desires, or fears and sorrows. But our mind lives in the now. This means that any negative thoughts about your past that you carry with you at this moment create your present. You are perpetuating your past. You know how this works. If

you recall a very sad situation, even from many years ago, it can make you cry.

Your mind is interpreting this memory as happening now and creates an appropriate response. It cannot differentiate between what happened ten years ago and what happened ten seconds ago; it can only react to what is in your mind right now.

The upshot for your positive affirmations is that they must be phrased so that the mind can act upon them at this moment in time, therefore you must use the present tense.

Let's take the obvious example, and assume you want to be rich. You have three options as to how this is phrased:

- The past tense – In this case, you might say: “I always wanted to be rich.” Your mind takes this to mean that you did want to be rich but not anymore, therefore it does not take the required actions to bring it about.
- The future tense – In this case, you might say: “I will be a rich person.” This might seem the obvious choice because you are planning for your future, but this is also the wrong way to phrase your affirmations. Your mind interprets this as meaning that you will be rich in the future, but not now, so fails to take any action.
- The present tense – In this scenario, you might say: “I am a rich person.” Don’t worry, your mind is not going to take issue with you on this because you may not actually have very much money; rather it will respond by attempting to create the circumstances to match the affirmation. You have, in effect, given your mind an order that must be acted upon *now*.

If this smacks of a little self-delusion, this is just something you have to cope with. You are programming your mind in the way it must be programmed. Clearly, you have to exercise a little caution here. Telling your mind you are rich does not instantly put money in the bank. If you see

a Ferrari drive by, you can say: “That Ferrari is my car”, but that does not mean you should run to your bank and withdraw all your funds to put down a deposit at your local Ferrari dealership.

Such behavior will obviously provoke immense panic on your part once you realize you now can't buy a tin of beans for dinner, and thus it will work against your positive attitude.

Talking in the present tense is not about deluding yourself or ignoring your current reality; it is about giving your mind orders in the language it best understands.

Be Passionate

This almost goes without saying, because if you have heartfelt desires you should automatically be passionate about them. However, there may be times in your life when the burdens of the world are weighing on you and your affirmations take a knock. Your mood drops and you cannot summon the enthusiasm for even those people or things closest to your heart. Just remember that this can become a vicious circle, and the only way to break it is to replace your negativity with positive thoughts. Making the effort to repeat your affirmations passionately can help resurrect your mood in very little time.

Add Visualization and Other Senses

This may come naturally to some people who think in visual images, but it is something everyone should be practicing when they speak their positive affirmations. This is most effective when you have a little quiet time for your affirmations, so you can sit down and close your eyes and back up your words with your senses.

Let's stick with the Ferrari example. Owning a Ferrari might represent the pinnacle of achievement for some people. It may be the only affirmation

they utter because they know that they will only come to own one through the attainment of riches generally.

So here's the affirmation: "I own a Ferrari F430 Spider." Naming the car makes it specific and personal and allows for a deeper emotional involvement. But to make this affirmation as powerful as possible, you should know what one looks like so you can visualize it and see yourself sitting in it; you should know what one sounds like; you should be able to smell the leather interior; you should be able to feel the vibrations from the engine.

Your intention must be to convince your mind that your affirmation is real in every detail, and this means bringing as many senses into play as possible.

Be Patient and Persevere

There is a saying: "Good things come to those who wait." Affirmations do not produce immediate results, so be prepared for this. Unless you win the lottery, your dreams of instant riches are unrealistic. Depending on the desired outcome of your affirmation, you may be waiting days, weeks, months or years. Be patient and keep up with your affirmations.

As Often as Possible

Your affirmations need to be spoken regularly for them to be effective. This is where the analogy with computers ends. You program a computer once and it is all set up. Not so with affirmations. Affirmations work with repetition. In this respect, it is more akin to training a puppy. You get it to obey the command to sit, but the next time it is too interested in chewing your shoe. It is only with repetition that the penny finally drops and you achieve your desired results. The mind needs to be trained in exactly the same manner.

Your mind is prone to drifting and going its own sweet way. This is why so many people are at the mercy of their emotions and their thoughts; why their lives seem so out of control. The orders you give to your mind need to be given regularly. Could you train a dog by telling it to “Sit!” once a week? Equally, no matter how many times you told it, could you train a dog by telling it “I always wanted you to sit!”, or “You will sit tomorrow!”

The only way to do it is to speak in the present tense and repeat the order until the message gets through. This also highlights the importance of keeping your affirmations short and to the point. This makes them easier to remember and punchier.

As for exactly how many times to repeat your affirmations, the answer is as often as possible. You could always strive to do this in the morning and the evening verbally. These might be 5 to 10-minute sessions that really focus the mind. However, the time in the morning when you are still half-asleep in bed is also ideal because your brainwaves are still in alpha, which is considered the optimum brainwave activity for connection with the universe. During the day, of course, there will be times when you are concentrating on other matters, but there will also be numerous opportunities when it is possible. Whenever your mind is free, put it to work with your affirmations. Even if you cannot speak out loud or close your eyes and engage your senses, repeat your affirmations mentally to yourself.

As far as possible, try to attain a relaxed mood during your affirmations. Stress and tension detract from your mind’s ability to focus.

Useful Affirmations

Here are a few ideas for affirmations. Three of my personal favourites that can be applied to all areas of life. They come from the aforementioned book by Louise L. Hay, *You Can Heal Your Life*:

- All is well in my world
- Out of this situation, only good will come
- Everything always works out for my highest good

For Love and Peace

- I am happy
- My mind is at peace
- I am calm and relaxed at all times
- My thoughts are happy and at ease
- I am surrounded by love
- I radiate love and peace
- I have a loving relationship with my wife/husband
- I am at peace with the Universe
- I love and accept myself
- I am surrounded by loving people
- I am loving and accepting of others
- I trust the wisdom of my inner being

For Prosperity and Success

- I am wealthier every day
- I study and learn fast
- I have the perfect job
- I am living in my dream house and loving it
- I am successful in whatever I do
- I always have more than enough money

For Health

- My body is healthy
- I have lots of energy and vitality
- I control my health by loving and nourishing my body
- I easily maintain my ideal weight

Personalize these examples and come up with your own affirmations exactly suit your personal goals and desires. Remember to keep them positive, present tense, personal and passionate.

Cosmic Affirmations

Now that you understand how affirmations can be used to improve the quality of your thoughts on a personal level, it is easy to grasp how a positive attitude can create a more attractive and amenable personality so that other people respond more positively in return.

However, there is another aspect to affirmations, and that is how positive thoughts are transmitted to the Universe. This is an area that requires a leap of faith, although there is also sound evidence for believing that such a form of communication is possible.

Let's look at what this deals with. The suggestion here is that we are a minuscule part of a cosmic whole. That cosmic whole is the creator of everything in the universe and it goes by various names. Some obviously refer to it as God or the Divine; others who are not religious call it the Universal Mind, Universal Consciousness, or Cosmic Power. As we are a part of it, our thoughts are connected with it, and we can, therefore, communicate our thoughts and desires to it. Still with me here? As it is the ultimate creator of everything in existence and continues to be so, it is able to reply to our desires and create the exact circumstances in our lives that we have requested. However, just like our own minds, the Universal Mind is an order-taker and so we have to be extremely careful what we ask for, i.e. *think of* or affirm both positively and negatively.

It is not unusual for people to reject this idea. We look in the mirror and see a separate entity, connected to nothing else around us in physical terms other than the ground we stand on. Our border is defined by our skin, and it is easy to doubt a connection to anything outside ourselves. However, your cell phone is also a separate entity, yet you do not deny its ability to connect you with another person on the other side of the world with no wires involved. Why then is it such a leap to suppose there is a form of communication that might allow our thoughts to be sent halfway around the world, and to all parts of the world?

There is certainly plenty of anecdotal evidence of telepathic abilities in humans, and many laboratory tests have proven that information can be transmitted from one person's mind to another person's mind in a remote location.

Perhaps this is the tip of the iceberg. Perhaps these people are just the select few who are cognizant of their abilities. It might be that we all have this power but are not sufficiently aware of it to bother trying to channel it.

Thankfully, to a certain extent, science can help us overcome our doubts about universal communication. In scientific terms, everything in the universe is made up of just one thing: atoms. An atom is a basic unit of matter consisting of a central nucleus surrounded by a cloud of negatively-charged electrons. Although this matter may take on different forms – solid, liquid, gas and plasma – so that we see different objects all around us, *everything* is matter.

More importantly, the atoms in your body are actually 99.99% vacuum, which means pure energy. These are the same atoms that are found in everything else in the universe. Energy is in us, flows through us, and is all around us. We may not be able to see it, but we are all connected to each other and to everything else in the universe. Although it is certainly not proof beyond a reasonable doubt, it does at least provide a theoretical reason why your affirmations can be carried far and wide.

Conclusion – The New Theory Behind Affirmations

Before you can hope to master the Universe, you must learn to master yourself and so we will end with a return to the more personal level, and a popular theory from an internationally-respected neuroscientist, Candace Pert, Ph.D. Her theories, based on her discovery of opiate receptors – cellular binding sites for brain endorphins – and her further laboratory research, may explain exactly how your thoughts and affirmations create your personal reality.

What follows provides a completely different perspective on why we must watch our thoughts at all times and to maintain a healthy, positive mental attitude.

This first part is fact. Human beings are made up of around 50 trillion eukaryote cells, which are cells with a nucleus that carries our DNA. The fact that each of these does carry DNA means that each one contains the equivalent of all the body's functional systems – nervous, circulatory, digestive, respiratory, excretory, endocrine, immune, muscle and skeletal, integument (skin), and reproductive. Each cell is a living organism in its own right and has the capability to grow as a single entity when placed in a Petri Dish. Consider the furor over stem-cell research at the moment because of its potential to essentially create human body parts.

Now to the crucial issue that impacts your affirmations – the popular theory of how these cell receptors may be responsible for your emotional make-up.

Research shows that your emotions are triggered by a part of the brain called the hypothalamus, which is known to be responsible for certain metabolic processes and other activities of the Autonomic Nervous System. Pert believes that when your thoughts provoke an emotion, your hypothalamus creates a chemical that is matched to that particular emotion. These chemicals are called peptides, or neuropeptides, which are sequences of small chain amino acids – the building blocks of protein.

Each time you have a certain emotional thought, the hypothalamus releases the same related chemical into the bloodstream. It travels through your body and seeks out cells, each of which can have over 1000 receptor sites, some of which will be receptors for that particular peptide. When the peptide locks onto these sites, the proteins in the peptide are released into the cells and physically change their structure. The cells then create the given emotion throughout the body.

The more often a certain emotion is felt, the quicker the receptor sites are found on the cells and the quicker the emotion is experienced, and the deeper it is felt. This would clearly have catastrophic consequences if the emotions we feel most of the time are negative. This may be why depression can take hold so quickly and be so hard to lift out of.

Remember where this all starts: as a thought in our mind. *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter and Miracles* by Bruce H. Lipton, Ph.D., describes similar findings in simple language, illustrations and humor.

Here's the theory simplified:

- You have an emotional thought
- Your hypothalamus releases an appropriate peptide
- That peptide enters the bloodstream
- It locks onto cell receptor sites
- It enters the cell and alters its structure
- You feel the emotion attached to it

However, the power of positive affirmations does not stand or fall on the ultimate proving or disproving of any theory. No matter what causes affirmations to work, they *do* work.

Positive affirmations have the power to bring about the circumstances in your life that will allow you to become the successful person you always desired to be. Simply put, change your thoughts, change your life.

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As a Heal Your Life® Professional Educator and Coach Trainer for Canada, Victoria is fulfilling her dharma of supporting and facilitating people through their personal and professional evolution.

Although Victoria has held many executive positions within corporate business, her true passion has come from successfully building two thriving businesses that were built on the belief of empowering and helping others.

Not only will you find Victoria to be highly personable and relatable, she teaches in a conversational style that uplifts and inspires people. As well as being an internationally certified business coach, Victoria is also certified to facilitate in-depth business training for corporate leaders, employees and entrepreneurs alike. She has both studied and taught this work in Canada, the USA, India and the UK.

Not only has Victoria graduated from multiple coaching and team building programs, she is also a Certified Addiction's Counsellor, student of economics, and is the author of a trilogy of children's books. Victoria enjoys using her creative talents as editor for the worldwide publication – Heal Your Life® Good News and Inspiration, as well as writing a regular wellness column for a published magazine in British Columbia, Canada.