

Love Life Tips & Advice by Diana Kirschner, Ph.D.

Harness the Power of Positive Self-Affirmations

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Research has repeatedly shown the power of positive self-talk, which is what most of us call affirmations. Positive affirmations have been used to: change behavior in under-achieving students; increase nurses' and doctors' well-being and lower their stress levels; reduce breast cancer patients' cortisol levels; and heighten athletic performance. People cope more easily when going into new social situations and are less likely to make downward social comparisons when they practice self-affirmations. Participants in one study who said self-affirmations before a new social encounter reduced their thoughts about being rejected, compared with another group that focused on the party and who would be there.

So how do you affirm yourself? You deliberately make positive statements about yourself in your mind and aloud that are inspiring and nourishing. Some examples are: *I am lovable; I am a good person; I am a child of God; I am intelligent; I am attractive; I am a great person.* Get the engine going until you feel freer and freer to write down whatever comes to mind. If a statement feels scary, that is good—you are pushing the edges of your growth. If it feels great to think an affirmation, then it is right on target. Choosing a thought to put your attention on is generative. I believe that attention is one of the most powerful creative forces at your disposal.

When you make self affirmations, you build on positive experiences from the past and more importantly are programming for new fulfillment in the future. Global or

glowing affirmations about yourself don't necessarily work in the time frame you would like—usually they take much longer. But they do work. Make no mistake about it. The more attention you put on the loving self-declaration, the more quickly it will manifest. But you have to put your attention on it like you would on a mantra—lightly and without attaching to the affirmation too tightly.

When doubts or other negatives arise, treat them as if you were sitting in meditation: observe them without judgment. Notice and acknowledge your self doubts and **DO NOT FIGHT THEM**. The more you acknowledge the doubts without struggle, the more quickly they will go away. Always return to your affirmation, like you would go back to a mantra after a distracting series of thoughts. Following this method will speed up your progress in creating and living from your loving self-affirmations.

You can be the prime and sole architect of a deliberate and more positive self-concept or identity using self-affirmations. Over time and with this practice, you will release your negative self-talk and delimiting inner beliefs. Together, the inner dialogue and beliefs form what I call the “Disappointing Self.” Later we will do an exercise that helps get rid of this unfulfilling self so that you can anchor in a new and more self-prizing identity.

The wonderful thing is, you get to decide how you want to experience yourself. You get to decide who you are. And the best place to decide is based in your own authenticity. Your true interests and gifts are apparent when you are real and you can build on them. For example, as a child I was crazy about dogs. But when I got one, I was not shown how to care for him. Instead my parents berated me as a “bad” pet owner and I had a great deal of guilt and shame about the whole experience. I actually repressed my love of dogs for many years and avoided relating to them. When I went to a growth course that

focused on being in the present moment, I came face-to-face with a Yorkie. I suddenly remembered that doggie affection and love. I created the self affirmation, “*I am great at taking care of dogs.*” And I am! Ask my teacup Yorkie, Ariela, who sleeps with me every night.

The most powerful self-affirmation you can create is to give your Diamond Self, your most glorious self, a name. This is often easier if you develop it with your master Love Mentor or Team Love. While uncomfortable at first, taking on and using this name is an ultimately fun and joyful creative experience. In my courses, some of the names that women have bestowed on themselves are *Beloved Mighty Isis; Amazing Grace; Magnificent Star; Sexy Inuit Sea Princess; and Precious Czarina*. Embarrassing as it is, you need to practice using your name with your Mentor, Team Love and/or closest friends. Oh, and one more thing: dress the part. You have already begun working on your ‘star’ appearance. Now you can help pull it together by thinking about your new-you name. Here is an email I received from “Goddess Jana” who was re-discovering her own beauty.

I am a stunner. I just had to tell you that Jon and I went shopping today and bought a dress for tomorrow night. I really should keep taking pictures of myself because I am so hot!

Finally, there is one more way you can reinforce your positive affirmations and self-appreciation and that is by giving to yourself every day. Every day; no exceptions. Look for new and special treats that you usually deny yourself, experiences you would look forward to. In our culture, women are taught and expected to be generous to everyone but themselves. For a woman to be giving to herself is often considered selfish. So you

must break your conditioning and learn to give to yourself especially in areas where you are stingy or withholding. From the smallest acts, like listening to your iPod more and giving your life a soundtrack, getting and wearing those cashmere socks, or splurging on a French manicure; to signing up for pole dancing, singing, or Improv; and up to the largest steps, like painting every day and declaring yourself an artist or buying that condo in the building you've been eyeing. Just do it. When you get up each day, use the affirmation, "*I give myself what I want and need to be happy.*" or "*Everything I want is here for me.*"

Then, throughout the day, check in with yourself. Take your attention inward and get a sense of how you are feeling. If the feelings are not positive, take a moment to acknowledge them as OK, and then speak kindly to yourself. If you are working on a demanding project, promise yourself a wonderful reward. Tell yourself how much you have accomplished and how well you are doing. Think about what little prize would make work more enjoyable. Heed the Bard's advice: "*Be to yourself as you would to your friend.*"

You can learn much more about this topic and how to create love that is just right for you in my new book, *Love in 90 Days: The Essential Guide to Finding Your Own True Love*. Pre-order it now from Amazon.com at a 20-25% discount.

www.lovein90days.com