

Self Affirmation

Adapted from: <http://www.coping.org/growth/affirm.htm#exercise>

Before we can become self-affirming, we need to learn about the effects of negativism in our lives.

Negative self-scripts are:

- Negative beliefs you have about yourself and of which you remind yourself daily.
- Negative feedback you get from your spouse, boss, teacher, colleagues, children, parents, relatives, or others that you take personally and incorporate into your personal belief system.
- Negative self-images you have of your body, looks, face, weight, coloring, hair, feet, or other parts of your body, which as you visualize, influence your presentation of self to others.
- Negative assessment you or others have made of your competency, skills, ability, knowledge, intelligence, creativity, or common sense. You have agreed with this internally and, thus, believe it true of you.
- Feelings of anger, resentment, hostility or rage you feel toward others for real or imagined mistreatment. This so immobilizes you that your emotional growth gets stunted and you feel negatively about both yourself and life in general.
- Feelings of over-responsibility with which you burden yourself. This includes the feeling that others in your life will never be able to fully take care of themselves and that you are "responsible" for them no matter what.

The outcome of believing in negative self-scripts can include:

Over-dependence on the approval of others: You have an inordinate need to receive positive reinforcement or approval for what you are, how you act, and what you do from others, with an inability to be self-rewarding.

Lack of self-esteem and low self-concept: You have an inability to believe in your own worth, inability to see any value in your own life, a poor self-image, and a lack of belief in your competency to succeed in life.

Immobilization: A rigid belief system immobilizes you from taking risks in life, prevents you from wanting to make a change, freezes your feelings into a negative pattern, and convinces you that your only role in life is to be victimized by those from whom you cannot escape.

Negativity: Your negative view of yourself leads you to see all of your world in a negative light. You begin to believe and act as a "loser." You see nothing in a positive light and can't be convinced that there is a better option in life.

Pessimism: You no longer believe that you will succeed and are no longer willing to take an optimistic position as you look to your future. You can see only gloom and doom on the horizon.

Self-Pity: You begin to feel so sorry for yourself and how life has treated you that you become your best "pity party" guest. You are so lost in your self-sorrow, regrets, remorse, sympathy, and pity that you refuse to be shaken or changed. You begin to believe that no one will notice you if they can't feel sorry for you too.

Cynicism: You take a "yes-but" cynical look at every suggestion for change in your life. You begin to doubt in the sincerity, kindness, and love of others who are trying to help you. You create a barrier of cynicism to block them out, thus convincing yourself when they leave you that they really didn't care.

The "Guard-All Shield": You create an invisible shield, tough for others to see or to penetrate. People will approach you and try to get involved, but you zap them with your shield and they back away or turn and run. The shield is so subtle that at times you don't even know it exists, and you get confused by people pulling away from you. This shield can take the form

of coldness, wise cracking, fear of being hurt, aloofness, unwillingness to change or take a risk, fear of being taken advantage of, fear of intimacy, fear of failure, fear of hurting others, or any other feeling that keeps you from connecting emotionally with another person

Fulfillment of the Prophecy: Because negative self-scripts predict the worst, you at some subconscious level work to achieve the worst and succeed in fulfilling the negative prophecy of: failure, rejection, loss, disapproval, or any other catastrophe or malady. It is a pattern of being self-destructive with one's life.

Depression: Because of the anger, resentment, rage, hurt, disappointment, disillusionment, and suffering you experience from your negative self-scripting you are a "good" candidate for firm and long-lasting depression. Your emotions can become so stuck, rigid, and constricted that you can be embedded into a deep sense of melancholy, blue funk, and loss of hope. At this stage you are a candidate for mental health intervention before the depression reaches a despair level and you become even more self-destructive, possibly physically ill or suicidal.

Self-affirmations are:

- Healing, positive self-scripts you give to yourself to counter your negative self-scripts.
- Vehicles by which you can free yourself from the over-dependence on other's opinions, attitudes, or feelings about you and feel good about yourself.
- The visualization of a new order and sense in your life, which you can work toward achieving.
- You take personal responsibility for your health and emotional stability.
- You let go of negative emotional baggage you have been carrying. Only then will you be able to deal with your life in a realistic and positive manner.
- The resolution of feelings from the past so that you can face the present with a less obstructed view.
- You give yourself permission to grow, to change, to take risks, to rise up, and to create a better life for yourself.
- You take a healthy "selfish" or self-oriented route in your life so that you can "let go" of these people who drain your resources and keep you from experiencing full personal health.
- The recognition of your rights and affirming your claim on them, giving you an equitable chance of achieving your fullest potential.
- Success prophecies that, when visualized, imagined, or believed in, do come true.

"I" statements are one-line statements that can be repeated to cover three areas:

I am: A statement of who you are

This is a positive affirmation of a real state of being that exists in you. You can achieve a full list of I am Y statements by taking a personal positive inventory of your attributes, strengths, talents, and competencies. Examples include:

I can: A statement of your potential

This is a positive affirmation of your ability to accomplish goals. It is a statement of your belief in your power to grow, to change, and to help yourself. I can Y statements are developed after you develop a set of "short-term" (three to six months) goals.

will: A statement of positive change in your life

This is a positive affirmation of a change you want to achieve. It is a positive statement of what you want to happen. It is a "success prophecy." I will Y statements are developed after you have set your priorities for the short-term goals you have set.

Examples of Self- Affirmation Statements:

- I can be a winner.
- I am the best friend I have.
- I have solved problems like this before.
- I have the ability to handle this.
- I am a capable human being.
- I deserve to love and to be loved.
- I am a skillful and artistic person.
- I can show others a good example.
- Letting go is best for them and for me.
- They will thank me in the future.
- Nothing is worth losing my sanity over.
- I am responsible only for my own feelings.
- I owe no one explanations for my behavior, which is legally, morally, and ethically correct.
- I deserve to have my rights recognized.
- I am a deserving human being.
- I deserve to enjoy the fruits of my labor.
- I deserve to be rewarded for what I do.
- I love myself for who I am.
- It is OK to be selfish if I don't hurt anyone.
- I like the way I handle problems.
- I am able to handle any problem I face.
- I have the right to feel the way I do.
- My children will benefit from my healthy changes.
- My children will survive my healthy changes.
- My family will benefit from my relaxing more.
- I deserve to relax more and take it easy.