

HOW TO USE AFFIRMATIONS TO BUILD YOUR BEST SELF



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Words can be powerful. Not just in what we say to others, but in what we say to ourselves. Our self-talk influences our reality, how we think, and how we feel about ourselves. This is where affirmations come in. Fans of affirmations will swear that a few positive words can change a life. But is there science to back them up?

Short answer: yep. Lots of it.

Let's delve into what affirmations are, the research behind how they work, and how you can use your Panda Planner to incorporate them into your own life.



WHAT ARE AFFIRMATIONS?

Affirmations are positive statements you repeat to yourself. Their purpose? To improve your self-perception and, in turn, give you the confidence and strength to pursue your goals.

One [psychology dictionary](#) likens affirmations to planting seeds of positivity in your brain. But if that's too abstract of a definition, think of them as a way of reprogramming your subconscious mind to let go of negative beliefs about yourself and cultivate positive ones instead.

Affirmations can be written down, spoken aloud, or both. They're formed in the present tense: In other words, they're statements that talk about how things are right now rather than how they might be in the future.

HOW AFFIRMATIONS WORK

According to [psychological theory](#), self-affirming is a natural thing we all do in response to our self-image being questioned or threatened. One way we self-affirm is to reflect on the values, beliefs, and roles that are most important to us. This strengthens our sense of self so that we're better equipped to cope when something contradicts it.


Let's give an example. Imagine for a second that you're being constantly bombarded by media messages that suggest your body isn't up to society's (unreasonably) high standards. Self-affirmation theory says that focusing on some core value — even one that's unrelated, like your kindness as a human being, how valued you are at your job, or your killer sense of humor — can help to restore your self-worth.

Using positive affirmations, by filling out the space for daily affirmations in your Panda Planner, is therefore a deliberate and focused way of self-affirming. Done right, affirmations are a simple and effective tool for building self-esteem and banishing negative self-talk.




This is important for so many reasons — not least because negative beliefs can lead us to self-defeating behaviors (e.g., quitting the gym because we believe we'll never get into shape), while positive beliefs raise us up (giving a great presentation at work because we believe our ideas are worth sharing).

WHAT AFFIRMATIONS ARE GOOD FOR, ACCORDING TO RESEARCH

We included affirmations in your Panda Planner because the science around them is so strong. According to research:

-  **AFFIRMATIONS INCREASE SELF-CONFIDENCE.** An interesting [study from 2015](#) found that people in low positions of power could boost their self-confidence, and therefore perform better, just by using self-affirmations.

Lead researcher Dr. Sonia Kang said in a [press release](#) that it's important to reflect on things that you know are good about yourself. This can help you perform better under pressure. "Anytime you have low expectations for your performance, you tend to sink down and meet those low expectations," she said. "Self-affirmation is a way to neutralize that threat."




-  **AFFIRMATIONS MAKE YOU FEEL MORE LOVE AND CONNECTION TO OTHERS.** Remember how you can focus on core values as a way of self-affirming? Well [one study](#) found that writing about an important value increased positive feelings — like love and connection — toward others.
-  **AFFIRMATIONS IMPROVE SELF-CONTROL, WILLPOWER, AND PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY.** [Some research](#) points to self-affirmation as a path to improved self-control and willpower; while [other research](#) found that affirmations can improve problem-solving ability in people who are chronically stressed.
-  **AFFIRMATIONS MAKE YOU HAPPIER, LESS STRESSED, AND... MORE LIKELY TO EAT YOUR GREENS.** And in yet more promising studies, self-affirmations were found to [promote general happiness and well-being](#), [decrease stress](#), and even lead you to [snack less](#) and [eat more fruits and veggies](#).

These are only a few of the benefits. And we'd argue there are many advantages of positive affirmations that simply haven't been studied yet.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN AFFIRMATIONS

If you're a Panda Planner Classic or a Panda Planner Pro user, then we've made it easy for you to practice affirmations. How? We've included a special affirmations box in your daily section.

Unsure how to write an affirmation? Here are six things you need to know to get your affirmations to stick and to inspire positive change.

-  **TARGET A SPECIFIC AREA OF YOUR LIFE:** Take a moment to think about what you actually want to improve upon. Do you want to be more kind? Do you want to be more productive at work? Do you want healthier relationships? Do you want to exercise more? Do you want to slow down and be more mindful?
-  **WRITE DOWN THE BEHAVIORS YOU WANT TO CHANGE:** With the above areas in mind, think about what behaviors you want to implement that can help you feel successful.
-  **MAKE SURE YOUR AFFIRMATION IS ACHIEVABLE:** Don't confuse affirmations for the so-called Law of Attraction: Saying "I have a million dollars" is (unfortunately) not going to magically change your bank balance. Focus on aspects of yourself you can really change or strengthen.

- **USE FIRST PERSON:** Begin your affirmations with “I” or “I am.” By using the first person, you turn your affirmations into identity statements. Identity statements are catalysts for self-development and change.
- **USE PRESENT TENSE:** Like we said above, affirmations work best in the present tense. This is because [our brains aren't great at planning for our future selves](#). When writing down or repeating your affirmations out loud, always use terms like “I am,” “I have,” “I can,” or “I do” instead of “I will” or “I’m going to.” The present tense helps you believe your affirmation is already true.
- **USE POSITIVE WORDS:** Avoid words like “don’t,” “can’t,” or “won’t.”
- **AS WELL AS WRITING THEM DOWN, SAY YOUR AFFIRMATIONS OUT LOUD:** There isn’t an exact formula for how often or how many times you should repeat your affirmations. Some people repeat their affirmations for 30 minutes a day; others repeat them for 3 minutes. It’s all about finding what works best for you.

It will only take about 5–15 minutes to write your daily affirmations in your Panda Planner and 3–30 minutes to repeat your statements aloud. [Research recommends](#) sticking with the same affirmation for four weeks to feel the positive effects.



EXAMPLES OF AFFIRMATIONS TO GET STARTED

Now you know what affirmations are all about and how to create your own. To make it even easier, we've listed out a bunch of examples. You can use these as a starting point or simply to get a better idea of the types of things you might construct your affirmations around.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR SELF-CONFIDENCE:

- I believe in myself.
- I can overcome any obstacle.
- I am respected and valued at work.
- I deserve to be happy and successful.
- I am confident; I trust in myself and my abilities.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR PRODUCTIVITY:

- I can complete all of my tasks and projects.
- I am highly productive and organized.
- I use my time efficiently and effectively.
- I have an incredible ability to focus on whatever task I put my mind to.
- I am motivated to pursue and accomplish my goals.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR HEALTH:

- I am becoming stronger and fitter every day.
- I stay motivated throughout the whole of my workout routine.
- I crave healthy, nutritious foods.
- I eat only what I need to feel satisfied and nourished.
- I am filled with energy and vitality.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR POSITIVE BODY IMAGE:

- My body is beautiful and powerful.
- I enjoy being in my body and I take the best care of it I can.
- I love and accept myself just the way I am.
- I am grateful for the things my body can do.
- I deserve to be treated with love and respect.



AFFIRMATIONS FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

- I am constantly changing and evolving for the better.
- I have many strengths.
- I am a positive role model for others.
- I am loving and forgiving.
- I am always willing to work on my weaknesses and am driven to become a better person.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR BETTER RELATIONSHIPS:

- I bring a positive attitude to my relationships.
- I am generous and gracious toward others.
- I am a kind and loving person.
- I am accepting and supportive of the people I love.
- I am loved and treasured for who I am.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR MINDFULNESS:

- I slow down and savor peaceful moments.
- I am mindful and calm.
- I focus on one task at a time.
- I pay attention to the beauty that is around me in everyday life.
- I am calmly centered in the present moment.

YOUR TURN TO AFFIRM

We hope we've not only informed you about affirmations but also inspired you to go forward and create your own. If you get stuck or have any questions about how to use your Panda Planner for daily affirmations, don't hesitate to get in touch. As we tell ourselves daily — we want to make life better for everyone.

THANK YOU!

We're on a mission to help you take back control of your time, reclaim your happiness, and flourish in every way. If you're getting value out of the Panda Planner and our educational resources, please consider inviting your friends, family members, and colleagues to join the movement. Be sure you check out our other eBooks and videos over on mypandaplanner.com.



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