



Positively AFFIRMING

How just a few short, simple statements have the power to zap away negative thoughts

Do the same unwanted thoughts constantly twirl around your head? Perhaps you wish there was an easy way to get rid of that little voice that keeps you feeling down? If this sounds like you, affirmations might be exactly what you need.

These are short, positive sentences that you repeat to yourself, either silently or out loud. They act like negativity zappers and help to stop gloomy thoughts dead in their tracks. Knowing how to use affirmations can even turn a bad day into a super one – instantly. The best part? This can be done in three simple steps...

The page features a light beige background with decorative illustrations. At the top center, there is a black and white butterfly. On the right side, there are several clusters of white flowers with black centers and stems. At the bottom, there are larger, more detailed white flowers with black centers and stems, some with red and yellow accents. The overall aesthetic is clean and minimalist.

Step 1: Notice the negative

Thoughts pop into the brain all the time. Some are useful – others not so much. To lessen the power of unwanted ones, the first step is to be aware of them. For the next few days, pay attention to the constant chatter going on in your head. What are the voices saying?

When a negative thought jumps into the conversation, listen carefully. If possible, jot it down as soon as it occurs, along with a note about where you are and what you're doing. You might begin to notice a pattern.

For instance, you might find you have bad thoughts about your body when you exercise, take a shower or choose your outfit for the day. When you help with the chores, like washing dishes or folding laundry, maybe you mentally berate yourself over what you said during a conversation with someone you admire. Before a test, you might tell yourself that you're not smart enough or are terrible at remembering information no matter how hard you study.

As you listen to your chatter, you might be surprised at how often you put yourself down. Don't judge yourself badly for this (everyone does it). The good news is that now you're aware of what's going on, you can take a different approach to the situation.

Step 2: Breathe deeply

When a negative thought enters your head, one way to stop it is to move the attention to your breath. Sonia Choquette, an American intuitive guide and spiritual teacher, has a great technique. She says to stick your tongue to the roof of your mouth, take a deep breath through the nose, and release the air slowly through the mouth with the sound 'aaahhh'. Do this a couple of times and it will encourage your thoughts to go on pause.

This exercise will also help to relax your whole body, allowing your mind to empty completely. It might feel too good to stop right away. Take a few more breaths if you want to. When you're ready, go on to the next step.

Step 3: Change your thoughts

As you start to relax, try to switch your thoughts to new, empowering ones. The simplest way is to go for the opposite of what you were thinking before. Let's say you're worried about forgetting all the facts you learned for an upcoming exam. You could change your thoughts to: 'All the information I need is in my mind. The answers will come to me at the right time.' As you repeat this, you'll stop worrying and help your brain focus on what it needs to do.

It's a good idea to prepare affirmations ahead of time. Whenever you come across a phrase that feels significant to you, make a note of it on your phone or write it down in a small notebook that you can carry anywhere. This way, you'll always have access to quick thought-changers.

Turn over for more on the power of positive affirmations



I AM BRAVE

To you, from you

A fun way to remember to pay attention to your thoughts is to leave little positive notes for yourself to find throughout the day. Use colourful pieces of paper and markers so you can spot them easily. Create as many as you like and change them whenever you want.

Here are some examples:

- In your sock drawer: *I am strong.*
- On your bedroom mirror: *I look great.*
- In your coat pocket: *I am amazing.*
- In your pencil case: *I am smart.*
- In your schoolbag: *I make friends easily.*



I AM INVENTIVE

Positive affirmations really can work wonders. But what if a stubborn little voice at the back of your mind insists that your new thoughts are not true, that they're just a bunch of lies? This can happen, especially in the beginning or on days when you're feeling really low.

You can squish that voice by focusing on things you know are true about yourself. Say you want to change the thoughts you have about your body when you're getting dressed. If your mind has trouble accepting ones like: 'I look great', focus on the parts of you that you love and appreciate instead. Eventually, that little voice will become quiet and leave you free to use any affirmation you want.

Once your mind is in a positive groove, your mood will be more likely to lift, allowing you to enjoy the rest of your day. Go ahead – zap those negative thoughts into oblivion.

NOTE DOWN SOME MORE POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS HERE

i If no matter how hard you try, negative thoughts are still weighing you down and affecting your life and mental wellbeing, speak to a guardian, school counsellor or your GP. Visit youngminds.org.uk, childline.org.uk and mind.org.uk for more help and information.



I AM SMART

I AM AMAZING

I LOOK GREAT

I MAKE FRIENDS EASILY

I AM STRONG