

## **Essential Tips for Using Affirmations**

**By Mindy Benowitz, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist**

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The following are essential tips to get the most from using affirmations—about how they work and how to do them. I am Mindy Benowitz, a licensed psychologist in Minneapolis, MN. To learn about my other recordings or join my email list, please visit [www.mindybenowitz.com](http://www.mindybenowitz.com).

Affirmations are positive statements about what we'd like to feel, do, or believe more. Our beliefs about ourselves are like our operating system—they lead us to make the decisions that shape our lives. Affirmations are a tool for changing *negative* beliefs, for changing incorrect messages we learned about ourselves that got embedded in our brains. We can't just erase old messages we learned. We have to *replace* them with something else.

I want to be clear: I'm *not* saying that painful feelings are wrong or bad. *All* of our feelings have an important place in our lives. They give us vital information about what we've experienced, and what we need. For example, our emotions might be telling us we need to grieve, to get support, to rejoice, or set a boundary. But there are times when painful feelings come from incorrect beliefs about ourselves. In that case, affirmations are an intentional, powerful way to replace those negative beliefs with messages that can lead us to fuller authenticity and happiness.

Affirmations work best when you do them in a state of relaxation, so you can give them your full, deep attention. The 2 most fundamental ways to strengthen the positive beliefs are through *repetition* and *feeling*. It's ok if it's hard to totally believe them. If you believed them fully you wouldn't need to be practicing them! Find the grain of truth in it and expand it in yourself. When you say the affirmations to yourself, try to *feel* as much as possible that they are true. Because, it's not the words themselves that have power—it's the feelings they elicit. Sense how your body and emotions would feel if it were fully true. For example, when you repeat to yourself "I love and appreciate my beautiful body", don't focus on what you don't like or on your sore foot; instead concentrate on things like the vitality your body has overall, on all the things your body can do, or how grateful you feel for how your body heals. Also, know that if there are any affirmations you don't like or don't feel ready for, you have choices. You ignore it and wait for the next one or change the message to make it more helpful for you. Feel free to change the wording to what fits best for you.

Singing these messages is a wonderful way to use repetition and to deepen their connections in your brain & body! You can make up your own tunes or listen to the recordings I offer of melodies that I put to them.

After repeating these, you can move through your day knowing that the power of the affirmations, and the feelings connected to them, are growing stronger in you from practicing them. Over time, you'll notice that you are living in accordance with the affirmations, more and more.

Now that you know how to activate the affirmations so they're most effective, feel free to choose any of the affirmation recordings from my website, or find some on other providers' sites. As you practice them regularly, you'll feel your energy shifting in the direction your heart is longing for!

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