



Positive Affirmation Self-Talk, Impacts on Well-Being, When and How to Start Doing it

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
self-talk, positive affirmation, well-being	<p>This study aims to analyze the role of positive affirmations in enhancing psychological resilience, well-being, and self-integrity. Affirmations are positive phrases used to strengthen adaptive thinking and reduce negative psychological impacts. This research is based on the theory that affirmations can increase life satisfaction by reinforcing autonomy, self-acceptance, personal development, and life purpose. The research method involves a literature review of previous studies and observations of affirmation usage patterns in various contexts. The results indicate that affirmations significantly influence cognitive and behavioral adaptation processes, enhance positive neural activity, and encourage constructive responses to psychological stress. The effectiveness of affirmations is further enhanced through techniques such as writing, verbal repetition, and visualization in a relaxed environment. The study concludes that affirmations are an effective strategy for reshaping thought patterns, fostering creativity, and strengthening problem-solving skills. The implications of this research highlight that consistent use of affirmations can contribute to emotional regulation and overall happiness. Thus, affirmations can serve as a powerful tool in supporting individual well-being and personal development.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Self-affirmation is closely linked to increased happiness and individual well-being. The concept of well-being includes positive feelings and optimal psychological functioning, which consists of six key aspects: self-acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships, life purpose, and environmental mastery. In this context, individuals who can maintain self-integrity through positive affirmations tend to have higher life satisfaction and sustained happiness (Tiwari et al., 2024). However, while confidence is often considered a key to success, achieving it is not always easy. Many individuals focus more on others' achievements rather than exploring and maximizing their own potential.

Self-affirmation interventions have been proven to help individuals maintain self-integrity and reduce the impact of psychological threats (Sherman et al., 2020a). Timely affirmations can provide benefits in various aspects of life, such as education, health, and social relationships, with effects that may last for a long time. Additionally, positive affirmations play a role in forming an adaptive potential cycle, which can gradually enhance positive life outcomes. Psychological threats, whether major or minor, can either trigger positive change or hinder an individual's adaptive coping mechanisms. Therefore, effective psychological interventions can help individuals construct an optimistic narrative in response to challenges, enabling them to persist in facing various obstacles and life pressures (Southwick & Charney, 2018).

This study is based on Self-Affirmation Theory developed by Steele (2020), which states that individuals have a fundamental need to maintain a positive and integrated self-concept. Furthermore, this research also refers to Psychological Well-Being Theory by Ryff (2022), which emphasizes six

main aspects of individual well-being. These theories are used to understand how self-affirmation contributes to enhancing individual well-being in various aspects of life.

This study introduces a new approach to understanding the long-term impact of self-affirmation in building a sustainable adaptive cycle (Manning, 2019). It not only examines the immediate effects of affirmations on individual well-being but also explores how this mechanism can create long-term positive changes. Moreover, this research investigates the role of self-affirmation as a psychological strategy in managing psychological threats and constructing an optimistic narrative when facing life challenges. Research Objectives, to analyze the relationship between self-affirmation and individual happiness and well-being. To identify the mechanisms by which self-affirmation reduces the impact of psychological threats on individuals. To explore the role of self-affirmation in shaping adaptive cycles that contribute to individual success in education, health, and social relationships (Hoffman & Schacter, 2024).

Theoretical Benefits: Expands knowledge in positive psychology studies, particularly in understanding the role of self-affirmation in individual well-being. **Practical Benefits:** Provides recommendations for self-affirmation strategies that can be applied in daily life to enhance happiness, motivation, and mental resilience. **Social Benefits:** Contributes to the fields of education and psychology by developing interventions that support increased self-confidence and overall societal well-being.

METHOD

This research adopts an interdisciplinary approach to provide both practical and theoretical solutions to identified problems. The study was conducted in [research place] with a community background relevant to the research theme during [research period]. The research approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative method explores the phenomenon in depth through interviews, observations, and documentation studies, while the quantitative method measures numerical data relevant to the research problem through surveys or experiments.

The research population consists of individuals or groups with characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The sample was selected using purposive sampling or stratified random sampling to ensure data diversity while focusing on the most relevant subjects. The total number of samples used was [sample size], considered representative for answering the research questions. The data collection instruments included a closed-ended questionnaire, a semi-structured interview guide, and an observation sheet. The questionnaire measured key quantitative variables, while interviews explored subjects' experiences in depth. Observations were conducted to capture direct field dynamics.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Affirmations, derived from the Latin word "to make steady and strengthen," are a practice that purifies thoughts and reconstructs brain dynamics, allowing us to believe nothing is impossible. They are proven methods of self-improvement, as they rewire our brains, raising feel-good hormones and pushing new clusters of "positive thought" neurons. Words, influenced by thoughts and vibrations sent forth by the Ego or Soul, can create desired change. Always feel that you are using your own willpower or common sense to heal yourself or others. Affirmations have been used to treat people with low self-esteem, depression, and other mental health conditions and stimulate areas in our brains that make us more likely to effect positive changes in our health. Affirmations are similar to other forms of positive thinking, prayers, visualization, and chanting, as they speak to the subconscious mind, which can trigger and override the conscious mind (Scales III, 2024). When speaking to the subconscious mind, it receives information and tells the conscious mind what to do.

The apparent power of affirmations is due to selective memory, where humans tend to remember the good luck and forget the bad luck (Webster, 2021). Deliberately thinking, writing, or saying positive things in our lives can have the same powerful effect. Affirmations strengthen us by helping us believe in the potential of an action we desire to manifest. They constantly remind us of our desires and bring our minds to a state of self-consciousness, allowing us to do things that are more profitable to our lives overall.⁵

"Affirmation is simply the act of repeating to yourself what you want to achieve while imagining the outcome you want." - Scott Adams.

"You are what you think", then life truly stems from your thoughts.

But we cannot rely purely on thoughts; we must translate thoughts into words and eventually into actions in order to manifest our intentions. - Dr. Carmen Harra

HOW POSITIVE SELF-AFFIRMATION HELPS

Research indicates that self-affirmations can provide a sense of control and adequacy in stressful situations, aid in non-defensive reactions, improve health, encourage open-mindedness, cope with mortality, boost self-control, reduce stress, improve problem-solving and creative thinking, and protect against chronic stress effects. The relevance, belief, and emotional response of an affirmation significantly influence its effectiveness (Epton et al., 2015).

SELF-AFFIRMATION CAN ENHANCE OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE.

Self-affirmation is an act that demonstrates one's adequacy, and even small acts can have significant effects on one's self-system (Sherman et al., 2020b). A healthy self-system is motivated to maintain integrity and generate affirming meanings. Self-affirmations can be given at times of high need, such as stressful transitions or choice points, to help people navigate difficulties and set them on a better path. The most studied experimental manipulation involves people writing about core personal values, which are the internalized standards used to evaluate the self. People review a list of values and choose one or a few values most important to them, often excluding values relevant to a domain of threat. They then write a brief essay about why the selected value or values are important to them and a time when they were important. Values affirmation intervention is not typically an act, but rather a psychological time-out to regain perspective on what truly matters. Writing a values affirmation essay can bring to mind a lifelong source of strength, as it helps people remember their core values and their importance in their lives (Palmer, 2024).

Affirmations can help lift psychological barriers to change by buffering against threat and reducing defensive adaptations. Social relationships can reassure people that they have integrity and life is okay despite adversity. Self-affirmations can also reduce defensive responses, such as cognitive and behavioral adaptations, which protect self-integrity by reducing psychological threat. These defenses serve as a psychological immune system, protecting self-integrity in the short term but can undermine growth and prove self-defeating in the long term. By curbing defensive reactions, self-affirmations promote change and help maintain a narrative of personal adequacy in challenging circumstances. This catalytic effect unleashes forces that would otherwise be suppressed by psychological threat, such as cognitive aptitude or persuasive evidence. Overall, affirmations help people maintain a narrative of personal adequacy in challenging circumstances, promoting change and reducing defensive responses (Escobar-Soler et al., 2023).

SELF-AFFIRMATION FOR HEALING

There are three classifications of healing: bodily diseases, psychological diseases, and spiritual diseases. Disease is generally considered a result of external material causes, but it can also come from the inaction of the Life Force within. External methods like drugs, medicine, massage, spinal adjustments, and electrical treatments can help restore cell harmony by chemicalization or stimulating

certain tissues. However, they cannot effectively treat a dead body, as they cannot utilize the properties of these substances. Therefore, life energy alone is the only cure, and all external stimulation methods are powerless without it. The cure is certain if psycho-physical methods, will, faith, and reason are blended together to direct the Life Energy and reach super-consciousness. Knowledge of the inherent unity of matter and spirit solves all disease problems. Individual and group directions for affirmations include time, place, and method.

HOW SELF-AFFIRMATION WORKS BIOLOGICALLY?

Self-affirmation theory suggests that people are motivated to maintain a positive self-view and that threats to perceived self-competence are met with resistance (Cascio et al., 2016a). When threatened, self-affirmations can restore self-competence by allowing individuals to reflect on sources of self-worth, such as core values. Neuroimaging methods have shown that participants who were affirmed showed increased activity in key regions of the brain's self-processing and valuation systems when reflecting on future-oriented core values. This neural activity predicted changes in sedentary behavior consistent with successful affirmation in response to a separate physical activity intervention (Strachan et al., 2020).

Potential pathways to self-affirmation include reminding individuals of psychosocial resources that extend beyond a specific threat, which allows them to focus on sources of positive self-worth that transcends the threat (Stephan & Sedikides, 2024). Self-affirmations may also work by focusing people on sources of positive self-worth, such as personal successes. This study aims to elucidate the underlying mechanisms associated with self-affirmation by examining participants' neural activity during a self-affirmation task specifically designed for functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Participants were asked to rank a list of eight personal values from least to most valued, and the main fMRI affirmation task instructed participants on different trials to think about a time when value-relevant scenarios had occurred (past) and when parallel scenarios could occur (future).

The study validated the efficacy of a fMRI self-affirmation intervention by examining its effects on physical activity and sedentary behavior (Casado-Aranda et al., 2022). Participants were exposed to health messages encouraging increased physical activity and decreased sedentary behavior. The intervention's success was assessed using behavior change effects due to experimental manipulation of self-affirmation. The results showed that affirmed participants displayed significantly greater activity in the valuation/reward network compared to control participants when exposed to value-versus-everyday scenarios. However, activity in the self-processing network and emotion regulation network did not differ between affirmed and control groups when averaging across temporal orientations. Participants in the self-affirmation condition showed steeper declines in their levels of sedentary behavior over time compared to control participants. The indirect relationship between group assignment (affirmation vs control) and changes in one's sedentary behavior (post-pre-intervention) through neural activity in valuation and self-processing systems was found to be significant (Cascio et al., 2016b). The study provides initial evidence of neural processes associated with self-affirmation, showing that affirmed participants displayed greater activity in the hypothesized positive valuation regions (VS_pVMPFC) driven by affirmations focusing on future experiences. The study presents an fMRI-compatible self-affirmation task, which can be used to examine neural mechanisms associated with self-affirmation in other behavioral or theoretical contexts (Van Ast et al., 2016).

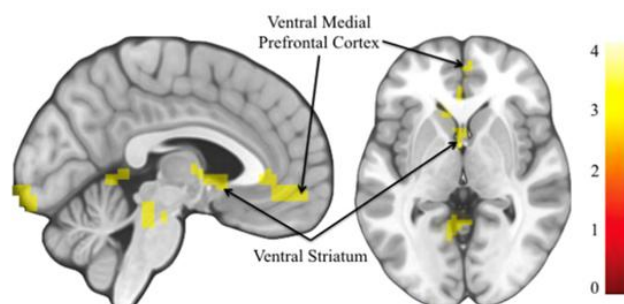


Figure 1. Whole brain analysis comparing the contrast (future value > future control scenarios) for the affirmed group > control group.⁹

WHEN POSITIVE AFFIRMATION WORKS BEST?

During affirmations, the attitude of the mind should be different, such as will, feeling, reason, and imagination. Avoid opposite mental qualities during mental cures, such as fear, anger, or consciousness of failure. Practice willingly, feelingly, intelligently, and devotionally with ever-increasing intensity of attention and continuity.¹ A study in Indonesia concluded that affirmations work best when the patient is in a state of hypnosis and high imagination, and achieving this requires a calm, safe, and comfortable condition. Consistent practice at home is crucial for successfully programming the subconscious mind.¹⁰ The most effective positive affirmations are those that address a particular problem or worry you're facing. Positive affirmations can assist you in overcoming a challenging circumstance (Long et al., 2025).

Factors Contributing To Self Affirmation

Factors contributing to this include internal beliefs, which are based on personal beliefs and influence their life path, and external beliefs, which are influenced by external factors. Internal beliefs are based on personal beliefs, which are a filter of information that individuals filter through, leading to biases, actions, or responses. External beliefs are influenced by external factors, such as the leader's ability to control their actions and the influence of unresolved issues (el Widad & Idawati, 2023).

HOW TO START DOING POSITIVE AFFIRMATION

It is indeed a powerful tool to improve your well being as in improve your health, manage stress, overcome challenges and make better decisions. Positive thinking skills start with positive-self talk using your own voice in your head to say positive thoughts about yourself in certain situations.

Write your positive thoughts about yourself:

Make a list of five to ten affirmations and write them in a diary, on a note card, or on your phone. To guarantee their efficacy, use them every day and read them once before bed and once in the morning.

Table 1. Write your positive thoughts about yourself

Words to increase self esteem and body image	Words for resilience	Words to believe in the future
I embrace my flaws because I know that nobody is perfect	This too shall pass	If I can conceive it and believe it, I can achieve it
I don't want to look like anyone but myself	Failure is great feedback	The future is good, and I look toward it with hope and happiness
I get better every day in every way	I am confident about solving life's problems successfully	I can do whatever I focus my mind on
My self-worth is not determined by a number on a scale	I learn from my challenges and always find ways to overcome them	I follow my dreams no matter what

I matter, and what I have to offer this world also matters	Everything works out for the best possible good	All my problems have solutions
I love myself deeply and completely	I press on because I believe in my path	I am open to all possibilities



Figure 2.

Repeat your words in the mirror¹³

It doesn't have to be writing, a positive affirmation is making sure your inner voice gives you the positives! Making it a daily habit helps your brain start to listen. You can look at yourself in a mirror or close your eyes to concentrate and believing on the words you are saying. Choose a time of day such as after cleaning your teeth or before you leave the house.

Repetition is the key to developing new beliefs, therefore use this new affirmation whenever you can. Put this term or phrase somewhere you'll see it while going about your regular daily business. Additionally, take little pauses during the day to remember your affirmation and take a deep breath. Recording yourself saying your affirmation and playing it a few times each day can also have a significant impact.

CONCLUSION

Regular practice of positive affirmations significantly contributes to an individual's mental health, resilience, and capacity for self-improvement. The effectiveness of affirmations lies in their ability to enhance self-confidence, reduce psychological vulnerability, and strengthen one's ability to cope with stress independently. Empirical studies confirm that positive affirmations support emotional regulation, boost creativity, and improve problem-solving skills, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling and content life. Affirmations are particularly impactful when tailored to individual challenges and applied consistently. They stimulate brain areas associated with positive self-evaluation and subconscious cognitive restructuring. Methods such as writing, vocal repetition, and visualization—when performed with focus and calmness—amplify their effectiveness. Daily practice, such as speaking affirmations aloud while looking in the mirror or engaging in deep contemplation, reinforces their

impact. The transformative potential of affirmations lies in their ability to align thoughts, words, and actions, fostering resilience, optimism, and adaptive coping strategies. By emphasizing core values and self-worth, affirmations serve as a powerful tool for personal growth and psychological well-being.

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