

Believe in Your Self!

I was saying "I'm the greatest" long before I believed it! - Muhammad Ali

Believing in yourself

Certain personal qualities will be necessary to achieve your goals and dreams. For example, if you desire a happy family life, you'll need to be loving, supportive, and communicative. Think of the short and long term goals you have for your education. What are personal qualities you'll need to accomplish them? Will you need to be intelligent, optimistic, articulate, responsible, confident, mature, focused, motivated, organized, hard working? The potential for developing all these qualities, and more, exists for every healthy human being.

During childhood, a person's judgment of his personal qualities seems to be based mostly on what others say. If your friends, family, or teachers told you as a child you're smart, you probably internalized this quality and labeled yourself "smart." But if no one said you were smart, perhaps you never realized your own natural intelligence. Worse, someone important may have told you that you were dumb, thus starting the negative mind chatter of your Inner Critic.

As adults we can consciously choose what we believe. As a psychology professor used to say; "In your world, your word is law." In other words, my thoughts create my reality, and then I act according to that reality.

An effective way to strengthen desired qualities is to create a personal affirmation, a statement in which we claim desired qualities as if we already have them in abundance. Here are some examples:

- I am a bold, joyful, lovable man.
- I am a confident, creative, selective woman.
- I am a spiritual, wise, and curious man, finding happiness in all that I do.
- I am a supportive, organized, and secure woman, and I am creating harmony in my family.

Affirmations help us breathe life into personal qualities that we choose to strengthen. Affirmations need reinforcement to gain influence in your life. Here are three ways to empower your affirmation: Repeat...Dispute...Align.

1. **Repeat your affirmation:** In this way you'll remember the quality you've chosen to strengthen.
2. **Dispute your inner critic:** Realize that you already possess the qualities you desire. You already *are* creative, persistent, loving, intelligent ... whatever. These are your natural human qualities waiting to be re-empowered! To confirm this reality, and quiet your inner critic, simply recall a specific event in your past then you displayed a quality that is in your affirmation.
3. **Align your words with your deeds:** At each point, be what you affirm. If you say you are "bold," make a bold choice. If you claim that you are "organized," do what an organized person does. At some point, you'll have the evidence to assert, "Hey, I really am bold and organized!" Your choices will prove the truth of your affirmation and your new outcomes and experiences will be the reward.

In this activity, you will create a personal affirmation. If you repeat your affirmation often, it will help you make choices that will strengthen the personal qualities needed to achieve your goals and dreams.

Journal Entry 1: Write a one sentence statement of one of your most motivating goals or dreams in your role as a student.

Journal Entry 2: Write a list of qualities that would help you achieve your educational goal or dream. Use adjectives such as persistent, intelligent, hard-working, loving, articulate, organized, friendly, confident, relaxed, and so-on. Write as many qualities as you can.

Journal Entry 3: Circle the three qualities on your list that seem the most essential for you to achieve your goal or dream as a student.

Journal Entry 4: Write three versions of your personal affirmation. Do this by filling in the blanks in sentence formats A, B, C below. Fill the blanks with the three personal qualities you circled in journal 3 above. NOTE: Use the same three personal qualities in each of the three formats.

FORMAT A: I am a _____, _____, _____ man/woman.

Example: I am a strong, intelligent, persistent woman.

FORMAT B: I am a _____, _____, _____ man/woman,
_____ing _____

Example: I am a strong, intelligent, persistent woman creating my dreams.

FORMAT C: I am a _____, _____, _____ man/woman,
and I _____

Example: I am a strong, intelligent, persistent woman and I love life.

Don't copy the examples; create your own unique affirmation.

Journal Entry 5: Choose one sentence from Journal 4 that you like best and write that sentence five or more times. This repetition helps you to begin taking ownership of your affirmation and desired qualities.

We are what we imagine ourselves to be. - Kurt Vonnegut

Journal Entry 6: Write three paragraphs - one for each of the three qualities in your affirmation. In each of these paragraphs, write about a specific experience when you displayed your desired quality. For example, if one of your desired qualities is persistence, tell a story about a time in your life when you were persistent (even a little bit). Your paragraph might begin like this: *The first quality from my affirmation is ... a specific experience in my life when I demonstrated that quality was*