

Self-Motivation - You Are What You Say!

By Paul J. Meyer

Your self-talk determines who you are, what you have, and how you live. Perhaps it's time to pay attention!

We all do it even if we are embarrassed to admit it; we all talk to ourselves. But what you might not know is that what you say is literally *sealing your fate*. I always cringe when I hear someone say, "Nothing good ever happens to me" or "I don't have the right connections to get ahead." While these may sound like normal expressions of frustration, they are far more powerful than you can ever imagine!

It has long been recognized that the human mind does not differentiate between fact and fiction, but merely receives whatever it hears as truth. If negative things were said about you during your childhood, plus you have continued to say the same things about yourself as an adult, your mind now firmly believes them to be true and you are probably acting accordingly.

That's why many students that were failing in school were actually discovered to be quite intelligent. They had been told by abusive parents that they were dumb and would never amount to anything, and therefore they believed it and proceeded to live out that expectation.

Am I stuck with my beliefs or can they be changed?

The 20th century novelist William James was quoted as saying, "Human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind." And since attitudes are simply *habits of thought*, the good news is that you can definitely change your thoughts; and once you change your thoughts, everything else in your life will have to respond.

The most powerful tool ever discovered for changing your thoughts, beliefs, and ultimately your actions, is a tool called *affirmations*. An affirmation is a fancy word for self-talk or self-suggestion. It's basically talking to yourself. And since we've already agreed each of us does that, why not make the type of self-talk you use work in your favor.

How do affirmations work?

Affirmations are positive statements used *repetitively* to alter your attitudes, self-confidence, and behavior patterns. In time as you *constantly repeat* positive statements about yourself, your subconscious mind accepts them as truth, which changes your belief, which changes your habits and actions. In other words, new fresh input will eventually override previous negative conditioning.

Steps for developing successful affirmations:

1. Decide what you want to become, what you want to do, and what you want to have. Stating things in general terms,

such as "I want to spend more time with my family" will not be effective. Instead say, "I spend an hour each night talking with and reading books to my children." Be very specific!

2. Use the first person pronoun "I" in your statement, never "we." Although you may have mutual goals with your family, each person's affirmation must be stated individually such as, "I cooperate with the financial goals my family has set."

3. State your affirmation in a positive way. Say, "I enjoy public speaking" rather than, "I don't feel afraid when I have to speak publicly." Omit negative words like "don't."

4. Use the present tense. Say, "I *am* the Vice President of the company" not "I want to be the Vice President." Remember, the mind does not differentiate between what is true and what is false, so you will want to plant the seed that you have already arrived so that your mind will begin to influence your behavior and actions toward your goal.

5. Make your affirmations fun. Motivation arises from the expectation of the fulfillment of your needs and desires. Enjoy your affirmations; be creative!

6. Write down your affirmations. Writing crystallizes thought and thought motivates action. Write your affirmations on small cards to keep with you, tape them to your mirror or refrigerator; repeat them the first thing each morning and the last thing each night.

You can create an affirmation for every area of your life: personal development, job promotion, family relationships, and spiritual growth. Affirmations are aided by pictures of your goals, such as posting a floor plan of your dream house on a bulletin board; by number combinations, such as I make 10 calls a day, 6 become appointments, and 3 become sales; and by actions such as listening to motivational tapes, practicing a piece of music over and over, or using a daily "to-do" list.

Affirmations are used by all self-motivated, successful people. They possess an inner drive for achievement that keeps them striving toward their goals and are not dependent on outside circumstances or others to make their life work.

Self-motivation is a learned skill; if you don't presently have it, you can acquire it by using positive affirmations. The simplicity of affirmations sometimes causes them to be overlooked or discounted. But they are incredibly powerful. If you are patient and consistent, you can literally change your destiny. You are what you say!

Paul J. Meyer, best-selling *New York Times* author and founder of the Success Motivation Institute has written two dozen full-length programs plus numerous books on attitude, motivation, goal setting, management, leadership, and time management. In his inspirational and instructive CD, *Self-Motivation for Winners* available at www.pauljmeyer.com, Paul shares the principles of becoming the success he is today.

