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Using the Power of Affirmation

We mold our lives constantly by what we think and say. With positive affirmation, you can harness this creative force to improve your life.

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The idea behind affirmations is that through the repetition of positive statements, we can improve our self-concept, make greater progress on the spiritual path and in general increase our magnetism to success. To progress spiritually, a positive self-concept is essential. For this, the use of affirmations can be quite helpful.

What exactly is a positive self-concept? It is thinking of oneself as a worthy individual deserving of a wonderful life and fully capable of achieving it. Unfortunately, many of us reach adulthood with a negative self-concept, feeling that others are better than we are, and life has little to offer. A negative self-concept

occurs when, while growing up, we are criticized constantly or cruelly by our parents and teachers. Having a positive concept about our outer self allows us to identify with our spiritual nature so that we truly feel we are a divine being.

Let's look for a moment at changing our self-concept from a negative one to a positive one. If our physical body becomes weak due to a serious illness, after the illness is gone everyone knows that we can overcome the resultant physical weakness and, through consistent exercise, regain our normal strength again. If, however, because of difficult experiences our outlook on life has become negative, and we feel that we just can't be successful, many people assume this is something that cannot be changed. However, just as we can strengthen the body's muscles through exercise and become fit again, we can also remold the subconscious mind and change its composition through the power of affirmation.

What exactly is an affirmation? As our Gurudeva, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, explains, an affirmation is a series of positive words repeated time and time again in line with a visual concept. Such a statement can be repeated mentally, or preferably verbally, many times a day. The idea is if one feels "I can't," he cannot. If he is always criticizing himself and lamenting over what he cannot do, then he can reverse this pattern and change the flow of magnetic mental force, enliven its intensity by saying orally and feeling through all the pores of his body "I can. I will. I am able to accomplish what I plan." Gurudeva calls this remolding the subconscious and gives useful insights to seekers on how to accomplish this: "My devotees succeed by remolding subconscious magnetic forces. They purge the dross through writing and burning past transgressions and current problems and then use positive affirmations."

There is a very important key to being successful in affirmations: when repeating the affirmation, simultaneously think, visualize and feel what the affirmation is manifesting. Think means to consciously be aware of what the affirmation means. Not thinking would be to repeat the affirmation out of habit while thinking about something else. Visualize means to create a mental picture depicting the affirmation. For example, see yourself making a plan to earn extra money to remodel your home. See yourself earning the money and doing the remodeling. Feel means to have the same feeling you will have when this is consistently happening in your life. In the case of the above affirmation, it is the feeling of confidence and success that goes along with being able to accomplish what you plan. You need to feel now how you will feel in the future when you are successful and confident. Until you awaken this feeling, you should not expect the affirmation to work.

Why don't you try this practice for five minutes a day in the morning, at noon and in the evening and see the positive results it produces? Simply repeat out loud the affirmation "I can. I will. I am able to accomplish what I plan" while utilizing the three keys of thinking, visualizing and feeling. During this exercise, you may find yourself feeling "I can't. I won't. I am not able." If that is the case, it shows that there is a strong negative self-concept in the subconscious mind. Therefore, great benefits to your spiritual and material life will occur if this exercise is continued for a long period of time, because it will result in the negative self-concept being replaced by a positive one.

If you like, a longer affirmation can be used in your daily exercise, such as the following one. When done in the early morning, this affirmation sets a positive mood for the day. "I am now open to a flow of spiritual energy in which I perceive the most worthy course of action for this day. My service, being selfless, opens new doors of supply, making available all of the tools required so that my work will be beautiful, energetic and influential to the highest degree."

Here is another affirmation that is more of a purely divine nature that strengthens our identity as a spiritual being. It is most effective when repeated several times before sleep and upon awakening. "I am not my body, mind or emotions. They are but shells of the infinite energy that flows through them all. I am this energy. I am its source."

However, as in the saying "Be careful what you wish for," the power of affirmation needs to be used with wisdom. Affirmations remold the subconscious mind and thereby change our future. Therefore, we need to be careful that the future we are creating is one in which the responsibilities and challenges are within our abilities to successfully handle. It is wiser to choose a future that is a natural step up in life from where we are than one that is many, many steps away from us. For example, it is a natural next step for someone who is renting an apartment to purchase a modest house, while purchasing a mansion would probably be too big a step up to successfully handle.

For many years, as part of our pre-dawn worship, the monastery has repeated an affirmation. We recite it aloud together. It has been effective in reminding all the monastics of the overview of what we are doing and the importance of integrating

the blessings of the Deities into our everyday affairs. A few years ago we developed a similar affirmation for families to repeat together every morning. We have included it in the sidebar, and suggest that all members of your family recite it together each day.

In conclusion, through repeating positive statements you can improve your self-concept, make greater progress on the spiritual path and in general increase your magnetism to success. Remember, success depends upon utilizing the three-fold key—to think about the meaning, create a visualization for this meaning and feel how you will feel when this is consistently happening in your life.