

# Beyond Affirmations Journaling Practice

## Introduction

### Thoughts/Feelings -> Actions/Behaviours -> Results

All of the results we get in life come from the actions we take (or do not take). All actions and behaviours emerge naturally from our thoughts and feelings. As you may have noticed, most of our thoughts and feelings are habitual. They emerge as echoes from the patterns in our neurology.

*New experiences* can change these patterns, but their influence is typically small as most of our thinking/feeling patterns are deeply ingrained.

Another way we can change our thought/feeling patterns is through our *conscious will*. Intentionally choosing to *think something new* can birth new neural synaptic connections. Usually, however, we resort back to the original thinking/feeling patterns as is the case with new experiences.

This 'Beyond Affirmations Process' is essentially a road map to effectively creating new thinking/feeling patterns. It is effective because it acknowledges all of the common pitfalls in 'affirmations' and provides clear and pragmatic action to overcome those pitfalls.

At the end of the day though, you must 'do the work' in order to reap the benefits of transformed thinking/feeling.

Think of this like farming. It takes time to prepare soil, plant seeds and care for the soil and seeds until they grow. If you stay committed though, much like planting a field, your experience will be one of a stark and lifeless field totally transforming into a lush green field of new and abundant plant life.

## The Power of Judgement

To be human is to judge.

Judgements are not objectively 'true', but they do have impact.

When we judge another person, it impacts how we relate to them. And as a result of that, them to us.

To call a tree a tree is also a judgement. Likewise, this judgement affects our way of relating to the tree. A friend of mine doesn't just see trees. He sees specific species of trees and judges them with scientific sounding Latin names. He judges them as 'from' certain parts of the world. The way he relates to trees is very different than the way I do because he judges them differently.

My point is that judgements are not necessarily negative. They are simply relative.

In this Beyond Affirmations process, we don't consider the moral or ethical implications of judgement as positive or negative. Here we are interested in their 'utility' in the act of creation. We thus consider whether judgements are Useful or Non-Useful in creating the results we want.

The kinds of judgements we are most interested in are judgements about *o ourselves*. All of our thoughts about ourselves and the world, actually emerge from how we see ourselves. **We see through the lens of who we believe we are.**

For example, if I see myself as lucky, the world is full of opportunities. If I see myself as unlucky, the world is devoid of opportunities. (There has been extensive psychological research on this. See [The Luck Factor by Richard Weissman PHD.](#))

The highest point of leverage for changing our habits of thinking/feeling is thus *o our idea of ourselves*.

In other words, when we change our judgements about ourselves from non-useful to useful, we create the conditions for the natural emergence of new and useful thoughts/feelings.

When new and useful thoughts/feelings naturally emerge in our mind, we automatically have behaviours and unconsciously take actions that are effective in generating the results we want.

Our work, in summary, is to uncover the non-useful judgements we have about ourselves, to free ourselves from them, and then to replace them with more useful judgements.

What follows is an in-depth process which - if actually practiced with commitment and consistency - will enable you to make changes to yourself and your world beyond your imagination.

## Week 1 - Inventory Non-Useful Judgements

In a single sitting, spend some focused time creating an exhaustive list of all of the Non-Useful

Beliefs/Ideas/Judgements you can remember yourself having/saying to yourself. Phrase each of these as 'I AM (THAT)' statements.

Self-judgements are easy to word in this way;

***I am ugly.***

***I am weak.***

However, if you had a recurring non-useful habit of thought about anything other than yourself,

such as '*weak people are annoying*', you would phrase this as a judgement like this:

***I am that weak people are annoying.***

If you had a belief about what you must or should do (i.e. '*I must work hard*') this is more so a requirement than a judgement, so you can rephrase it as a judgement about yourself like this:

***I am that I must work hard.***

Once you have an exhaustive list and you can't think of any more, put the list down and go about your life.

Every morning throughout the week ahead, add 5-10 more to your list.

During the day each day, also take note anytime you catch yourself having a non-useful thought, especially the recurring ones or the ones that feel familiar. Write these down as you notice them as well.

## Week 2 - Create Useful Judgements

Next we choose useful judgements about who we are. As these useful judgements become habitual and 'true' for us, a state of being will emerge that provides behaviours and actions which will create the results we want.

The following process is *not* to be rushed. It is meant to be done patiently and even meditatively. The slower you go - the more care and presence you bring to this process - the more value you will get from it.

In summary, the process is to *first forgive yourself* for judging yourself as the non-useful idea. This forgiveness creates a psycho-emotional space within you. Typically, this space is momentary. In seeing the illusory nature of the judgement, you feel a weight lift from you.

Inside this *brief period of psycho-emotional liberation*, your mind is free to be creative and articulate alternate possibilities that it could not otherwise generate. It is during this moment that you *create a more useful judgement* to replace the one you have just forgiven yourself for.

Attempting to force this in a logical way has much less power and impact. In the same way you must remove a line of programming language code to put a new line in, you cannot effectively replace a judgement without releasing yourself of the existing one.

Self-forgiveness momentarily opens a space which not only provides the ability to generate a more beautiful judgement, but also the opportunity to install that more useful judgement into your mind.

In simple terms, if you are not genuinely forgiving yourself, then you are still believing the old judgement and any new judgement you attempt to speak as true, will be unconsciously disbelieved. Doing this can actually have negative effects in that it can make your non-useful beliefs even *stronger*. This is how research on 'affirmations' has sometimes shown them to be counter-productive. If you bullshit yourself with positive thinking, you're just going to feel worse.

There is a name for rushing this part and not actually forgiving yourself in a way that you actually feel some relief and freedom. It is called 'spiritual bypass'.

As you can now see, the deeper and slower you go with this, the more value you will get from it.

For my left-brained friends, let me point out that there is no black and white line to cross in self-forgiveness. There is no way to know *conclusively* that you have gone 'deep enough'. What does matter is that you experience something more than cognitive logic. Do this process with awareness of your full body. Feel how the words impact you (because they do!) and stay with the process until you actually feel yourself becoming more free.

## The Process

**STEP 1.** Say the following phrase *out loud* to yourself.

**"I forgive myself for judging myself that/as [insert judgement here]..."**

Note that it is important to actually speak out loud as this will help keep you focused. You are more likely to wander off in thought if you do it just in your head.

*Examples:*

***I forgive myself for judging myself as ugly...***

***I forgive myself for judging myself as weak people are annoying... I forgive myself for judging myself that I must work hard...***

You can play with the wording to make it work for you, but keep the first S / X words the same. It is important that you are present to *forgiving* yourself for *judging* yourself:

***I forgive myself for judging myself...***

Keep repeating the phrase aloud until you get a felt sense that you have genuinely released yourself from the judgement. To help this along, as you speak, allow yourself to consider how irrational and illogical judging yourself AS this was.

(If you really have a hard time forgiving yourself of a particular belief, judgement or idea, then I recommend you use The Work of Byron Katie to shake it loose.)

Once you are genuinely feeling *free* from self-judgement, proceed to the next step.

**STEP 2. Continue where you left off and speak the following phrase aloud:**

**“...for the new truth is I AM...”**

The moment you finish speaking these words allow yourself to continue speaking intuitively and with improvisation. Just speak whatever comes. Don't worry if it makes sense or if you like it. The point is to let words flow out of you as the speaking opens the floodgates of creativity.

Once you've spoken a phrase, repeat it again... **“...for the new truth is I AM...”**

And again speak whatever comes to you again.

Your job is to keep doing this over and over again as a way of **brainstorming with your mouth**.

If you feel yourself getting closed, then go back to step 1 above and do the forgiveness again.

The two most important factors here are that (A) your heart stays open and (B) you speak whatever comes to mind.

When you are creating Useful Judgements, I recommend going all the way for something amazing. For example, if you have forgiven yourself for a judgement like 'I am not enough', then while a more useful judgement might be 'I am enough', you may as well go for something bold like 'I am freaking fabulous!'

Obviously it's important that this emerges from your heart so don't add words that don't work for you, but DO make it bold and powerful for yourself. *Use adjectives and adverbs!*

I AM that I AM

After writing 'I AM that...' a number of times, you may catch yourself writing 'I AM that I am ....'. In a way this is redundant, however some people find putting 'I AM that' before a statement about who or what they are to be even *more* powerful.

Compare these two: **I am strong.**

**I AM that I am strong.**

Watch out for using the conjugation "I'm". Typically there is more power in speaking the full words 'I am'.

Of course, the point is to choose language that is most powerful for *YOU*.

Don't be too hung up on the wording. You will continually work with the language to fine tune it later. Right now we just want to create the core of something.

Keep repeating this process until you land on some wording that feels magical and powerful for you. Ask yourself; "Can I do/be this? Can I feel it? Am I there?"

Once you have something you connect with, WRITE IT DOWN in your new list of **Useful Judgements!**

After you've done that, you can cross off the Non-Useful Judgement from Step 1 in your list.

### **STEP 3. Return to Step 1 with the next Non-Useful Judgement on your list.**

HOWEVER, once you have arrived at the space of forgiveness:

- A. Check to see if any of your existing **Useful Judgements** already work here.
- B. If YES, then cross off the non-useful judgement and return to Step 1 again with the next one.
- C. If NO, then proceed to Step 2.

Keep repeating this process until you have gone through ALL the Non-Useful Judgements you wrote down in week 1. This will likely take you several sessions.

Remember, take your time with the above process. It is not just work to 'get through'.

This is actually powerful creation of who you ARE. You are engaging in true alchemy here; treat it as such.

## **Week 3 - Categorise, Consolidate & Coalesce**

Your completed list of Useful Judgements is likely to be long and have some redundancy in it. The work now is to reduce this down to a dense and powerful collection of declarations of who you are.

The first step is to reorganise all of your judgements into categories of similarity. There is no specific rule on how to do this. Just gather together the ones that are about similar things or have similar intentions.

Second, see how much you can consolidate the judgements within each category. Look for words that are used multiple times and try to find a way to say it just once. Do not force this so much that you lose power or impact. The point here is to increase the impact by having less, so only cut stuff out and summarise in ways that create *more* power by doing so.

Finally, once you have reduced redundancy and have a shortened list of powerful judgements in each category, *remove* the category titles and put all of the judgements, once again, into a single list.

*(Categorising the judgements is only a means of reducing redundancy and making your judgements more powerful. It is actually important that at the end you do NOT have the judgements categorised because this will allow your mind to be more free to create associations with them in broader contexts.)*

Read through the list a number of times. Move the judgements around based on what feels good to you. As you reorganise them, read them silently and speak them aloud, allow the judgements to coalesce into one single statement of *who you ARE*.

At this point, you may prefer to refer to your list of judgements as *affirmations* or *declarations*. I prefer the latter as affirmations feels like something I'm trying to 'convince' myself of whereas declarations feels more like a choice and statement.

You may also like to come up with a title for your list of judgments. Choose something inspiring and powerful.

## **Week 4 & Beyond**

Now that you have a clear declaration of who you ARE, the work that follows is actually getting these *into* you so that useful thoughts/feelings naturally emerge from your unconscious (leading to useful actions/behaviours).

## Using Declarations 'In the Moment'

The single most important place for you to use your declarations is in the moment of noticing yourself having non-useful thoughts/feelings. In these moments, stop yourself in your tracks and IMMEDIATELY go through the same process you used to create your declaration in the first place.

1. Notice yourself feeling any low or undesired state.
2. Notice the thinking/thought/judgement related to that feeling/state.
3. Say to yourself: *"I forgive myself for judging myself that I am (that) \_\_\_\_\_ [judgement], for the New Truth is that I am (that) \_\_\_\_\_ [Declaration]."*

## Embedding Declarations

The next most useful thing you can do is make your declarations readily available to your conscious mind. This will make using declarations 'in the moment' much easier in that you (A) will notice *contrasting* thoughts more frequently and (B) you will have the declaration ready to use for the process without having to refer to any notes.

Following is an outline of all the processes for embedding:

- Write them in your journal
- Write them left-handed (each time updated)
- Read aloud at least 2x per day
- Speak/sing them as a song or with rhythm
- Listen to audio and playback while sleeping
- Use a visual mnemonic to memorize and walk through mentally
- SMS reminders via [mygratitudebuddy.com](http://mygratitudebuddy.com)
- Listen with an Affirmations app: [ThinkUp.me](http://ThinkUp.me)

## Entangling Declarations

All of the non-useful judgements you have about yourself, which create habitual thoughts/feelings, have been living inside you for many years. They are not only in there as stand-alone ideas, but they are entangled into many other ideas and across many contexts. This is what has them be so 'sticky' in your mind.

This entanglement is essentially a web of evidence and examples that make your non-useful judgements seem 'true' to you. In summary, I call the connections that make up this web 'causality'.

Instead of waiting another 20 or 40 years for life experiences to provide new examples and evidence of causality for your declarations, you can speed up this process through intentional and conscious contemplation of causality. By considering and thinking about causality behind your declarations, you create a new neural web in support of your declarations.

In other words, by consciously contemplating how your useful judgements are 'true', you entangle these useful judgements into other things that you already hold as true within you.

Following is an outline of all the processes for entangling :

- Sit in meditation contemplating:
  - Evidence (Examples from your past of this being true.)
  - Reasoning ( $X = Y$ )
  - Motivation (Why you want it to be true.)
- Convert to Affirmations (*"Why is it?"*)
- Journal supportive evidence, examples and reasoning.
- Declaration of the Day - Choose ONE declaration to be the main principle of the day.  
Write it on a post-it. Fill any space in the day with ruminating on it, doodling it, speaking it, talking about it. Also switch to doing this any time you find yourself being unproductive.
- Bring into Conversations - Answer people's questions with your declarations.
- Follow Ups
  - ...because it matters to me/is important to me/etc.
  - ...(especially) for/with me/myself.
  - ...(especially) for/with others/Name.
  - ...4U4U / 4U4ME / 4ME4ME / 4ME4U
- Random Pair Insertions
  - "...because..."
  - "...therefore..."
  - Read a Book/Take a Course/etc THROUGH your Declarations
  - Acting - Use emphasis, facial expressions and gestures when speaking

## How to Know it's Working

With all kinds of change, we are motivated to continue when we see it working.

The most important thing you can do to make sure you stay motivated is thus to focus on what is DIFFERENT instead of what is the SAME.

A focus on difference as opposed to sameness will keep you engaged in the process and keep the transformation moving forward. This is especially important in the beginning when you are going out to the field everyday and the seeds have not even begun to sprout yet.

There is ALWAYS something different and seeing/hearing it is key to keeping you engaged in the process. Do not let this be a 'passive' process. Have it be ACTIVE by intentionally listening/looking for difference.