

*(Quick encouragement! I'd encourage you to take the time to find or create some affirmations you enjoy and write them down, wherever you'll see them. This exercise has personally changed my thinking, and I hope it does the same for you as well.)*

I am loved. I am strong. I am worthy of love and good things.

These are a few examples of something called “positive affirmations.” As our world is (fortunately) beginning to focus more on mental health issues and erasing stigma, we’re also learning a lot of new techniques for ourselves. Affirmations are just one of these.

The general idea behind them is that they are short phrases, many (but not all) starting with “I am” or “I can,” designed to be repeated to yourself as a positive statement or declaration. They are made to be uplifting, confidence-building reminders when you need one, and these statements help positively redirect your brain’s focus.

Positive affirmations can also help turn negative thoughts, like *I can't do this, I'm alone, nobody cares about me* into positive ones such as *I am strong, I'm not alone, and I am loved and cared about*. As someone with OCD and therefore daily intrusive thoughts, these have been a helpful way for me to combat them when my brain is, well, yelling at me.

I think in our lives we need reminders of the truth when the lies that are constantly thrown at us.

In the media, we’re given beauty standards that few people can reach, and we’re given a definition of what is beautiful. Actually, we’re told that beauty is what gives you value in the first place! Overall, we see so, so many high standards throughout our day, and we’re told that our ability to reach these is what gives us worth.

This is far from the truth! In reality, we already have value. We don't get our worth through those things at all, and they don't define us. And, besides, we're already beautiful, smart, and strong without having to reach impossible standards! Affirmations are a wonderful tool to help us navigate this, and I hope we'll continue to see them more and more.

Some ways to incorporate positive affirmations into your day:

- Use a dry-erase marker or Post-it notes on your mirror. (found this is helpful for self-image ones)
- Pick one for the day and repeat it in your head.
- Writing helps you remember things better, so create a list of some you find most helpful.
- Place them wherever you'll see them! On a bookmark stuck in a book, a sticker on your water bottle, a message in your notebook.
- Use them to replace things like self-deprecating jokes in your head, because, yes, they can get to the point where you “believe the punchlines”. (Read about that [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).)