

*Companioning the Sacred Journey:
Creating a Compassionate Container for your Spiritual Practice*

Bonus Chapter



Affirmations

“Act is the blossom of thought; and joy and suffering are its fruits; thus does a man garner in the sweet and bitter fruitage of his own husbandry.” ~James Allen, As a Man Thinketh

“Your thoughts and beliefs of the past have created this moment, and all the moments up to this moment. What you are now choosing to believe and think and say will create the next moment and the next day and the next month and the next year.” ~Louise Hay, You Can Heal Your Life

Literally, an affirmation is a declaration of truth. Intentional use of carefully crafted statements that are repeated over and over with the intention of having them become the truth are affirmations. They are intended to be spoken out loud, internally to oneself and/or written down. They have been seen as a path to miracle cures and miracle manifestations, as well as general statements of intention for one’s life.

I was first introduced to affirmations in the early ‘80s when a coworker, Linda, was diagnosed with breast cancer. The New Age movement was taking hold at that time and I was busy exploring what it had to offer.

While we weren’t very close, my co-worker Linda introduced me to Louise Hay’s work, *You Can Heal Your Life*, which dives wholeheartedly into affirmations and their healing potential in every aspect of life. In Linda’s personal journey, with the help of this book, she was able to trace some deep resentments to over-mothering her brother and eventually came to believe that she was carrying these resentments in her breasts as cancer. Although Linda eventually passed from her disease, she was able to die a peaceful death having done some deep-rooted emotional healing work with herself and her brother.

As a result of my exposure to Linda's process and Louise Hay's work, affirmations became one of the first tools I took up to reprogram my inner mind talk from one of self-hatred, anger and resentment, to one of love, abundance and worthiness. To this day, I use affirmations to help clarify my intentions and manifest my purpose in life.

For an affirmation to be most effective, it is best that it be composed in the present tense, be positively oriented, have very personal meaning and be either a generalized statement or very specific, depending on the desire. Affirmations are very powerful when practiced with genuine sincerity. They are closely related to visualizations, which is mentally painting a picture of a scene down to the minutest detail.

When my father was dying in the early '00s, I was making many trips back and forth to Oregon to his business. My long-term relationship was dissolving, though I didn't know it, but I knew deep down I was not living life to my fullest capacity--and I was caught in unhealthy and dysfunctional lifestyle choices.

On one particular trip, Shyla and I had to camp for a couple weeks while we closed my father's business and auctioned off his assets. It was a stressful time, as my father was still alive, recovering from a stroke. He had to come to grips with the dissolution of his business. There was familial discord between other siblings, myself and my father surrounding the choices being made with his properties.

Knowing I was going to be there for a while, I went into a used bookstore in the small town where I was staying and looked for something inspirational and meaningful to tide me over for the journey. There, perched in the New Age section was *You Can Heal Your Life*. It had been fifteen years since I had been introduced to the book and I was drawn to it like an old friend.

The book begins with learning to understand our issues and their source and then moves into how to recreate the life we want to live by focusing on a particular area of life, including our health, prosperity, relationships and more. As I worked my way through the book, I started memorizing the affirmations that were at the end of each chapter. Each chapter's affirmations begins with, "In the infinity of life where I am, all is perfect, whole and complete," and ends with, "All is well in my world." I learned the paragraph-long affirmations until I could recite them by heart and did so diligently every day. It took me about a half of an hour and it was the perfect thing to do while driving to work, as it set my consciousness in a place of openness, healing and clear intention each day.

Within a matter of months from beginning this work, my whole life fell apart, but I remained optimistic--because I wasn't living the life I wanted anyway. I continued diligently with my affirmations, even when everything around me didn't look like what I had in mind. It turned out that the dissolution of everything in my world was necessary so my life could recreate itself in a new way.

I began adopting thoughts and ideals for the life I wanted to live and focused on releasing the things that no longer served me. I wanted a deep and meaningful spiritually-based and emotionally mature life filled with prosperity, loving relationships, purpose and travel to different cultures. In addition to reciting the affirmations I found in Louise Hay's work, I took the knowledge I learned about affirmations and started crafting very specific, well thought out statements to create this new life. And it worked--far beyond what I had ever hoped for!

This powerful practice of thought creating reality was addressed much earlier in the classic, *As a Man Thinketh*, by James Allen in 1902. Allen, an obvious pioneer of the self-help movement, was a philosophical writer and poet in England. He believed that thought coupled with purpose become a creative force.

Around the same time, French psychologist and pharmacist, Emile Coué, was considered the father of applied conditioning. In his work with hypnosis, he focused on the Law of Concentrated Attention which states that whenever attention is concentrated on an idea over and over again, it spontaneously tends to realize itself.

In my personal quest for understanding the underlying principles and truths of the universe, I researched quantum physics, because this was the science of the smallest known particles to our scientific community to date. I wanted to find out what was true all the way up and all the way down. I read physicist Fritjof Capra's work, *The Tao of Physics, which helped me understand these underlying principles and dynamics*.

Scientists have discovered that at the quantum level, there is no real solidity to any particle, nor is there any guaranteed performance or outcome of anything. There are only high probabilities that things will act a particular way, but they are only probabilities--even if extremely strong. During their research, scientists also stumbled upon the fact that the observers of the experiments seemed to influence the end result of the experiments based on their expectations of the outcomes. In other words, their expectations affected the outcome of the experiments.

To me, this was the answer to how we create our own reality. If things only have a tendency (no guarantee) to act a particular way, then there is room for influencing that tendency and hence the outcome. This is where there is room for "miracles" to reveal themselves.

When I lived in the cabin, I created a "Let God (the Tao, the Source, the Universal Intelligence, etc.) Do It!" pile for my affirmations. This is where I placed the affirmations that I was working on for myself and others. I would reference and read these affirmations regularly as part of my morning routine.

When a situation eventually came to fruition, the slip of paper would then be placed in the "God Did It and I'm So Grateful!" pile. (But, really, these piles are one and the same because knowing that once the word is released into the universe, it is only a matter of time, attention and intention before the manifestation appears in the physical.) There is

a constant flow in and out of each of these piles. Sometimes, the affirmations stay for long periods of time, like general desires for non-harming or surrendering to the divine unfolding, as these may take many years for me to gain competency. Others zip in and zip out.

When I remember that I have the creationary power of the universe on my side, my thoughts come from a space of gratitude, which is then reflected in my affirmations. They usually begin with, “Thank you that...”, or “I am grateful that...”, because what I have come to realize through my study and work with affirmations is that they are extremely effective. I can begin from the place of knowing it has already occurred. They are in the works on an energetic level once I begin the conscious effort of intention and attention, and it is only a matter of time for them to come to fruition in the physical world.

Because of the power of thoughts, wording is of the utmost importance when putting our directed attention towards creation. Designing affirmations is a practice in precision and clarity, with an openness to flexibility and revision.

I’ve found that if I am specific enough in my affirmations about what I’m wanting, but not so specific that it narrows the opportunities to very few, or works so much against the tendencies of nature, something magnificent will eventually manifest. For example, when it was time for Shyla and I to move off the hill, my affirmation became:

“Thank you! I have the perfect-for-me living space. I am in a wonderful place! It fulfills all my needs and desires. It is in a beautiful location and at a price I can easily and comfortably afford.”

The Universal Intelligence was able to know what a “perfect-for-me” living space was and what I considered beautiful--even better than I was able to envision! I was eventually moved to a home that was far grander than I had in mind. This may stem from one of my ongoing affirmations:

“God, the Source, the Tao, the All That Is has in store for me far grander ideas and experiences than my mind or body could ever comprehend, much less create. I lovingly, gently and effortlessly surrender to the unfolding of this eternal moment.”

When Shyla’s declining health became apparent, I wasn’t sure I would be able to provide the best care for her, but I wanted to, desperately! My affirmation became:

“Thank you for my good friend, Shyla. Thank you for guiding me in how best to care for and love her as she finds her way to You.”

As time went on, I did know what to do for her best care. I believed in my affirmation and then focused my time on being present with her and in my body so that I could better receive the guidance I was asking for. That is one of the biggest roles we play in co-creation--to cultivate the fullest presence in this moment as we can.

My “God did it and I’m so grateful!” pile is overflowing with affirmations such as these, as well as tickets to places I’ve traveled, pictures of people I know or have known, my graduation notices, and then some. When I look back at this pile and all the beautiful and amazing experiences I’ve had as a result of my journey on the spiritual path and affirmations, I am truly and deeply humbled.

We are more powerful than we know. If we can turn that power toward creating meaningful experiences for ourselves, we will know no bounds and our lives will become a reflection of this beautiful creationary power we all possess.

There are many resources for affirmations online and in books. I work with my clients through an inquiry practice and then help them carefully word their affirmations to best reflect their deepest desires. I also put my energy towards their affirmations, as the more thought power focused on the same vision, the quicker and more likely it will manifest. Sharing your affirmations with friends, who you trust will want your highest and best good, will multiply the power of this process. You can always start with generalized affirmations for yourself and others, such as:

“I am so grateful that I am open and experience my highest good and truth. I’m so grateful I’ve released the patterns in my consciousness, mind and body that keep me from living this highest good and truth.”

Also, I’ve found that I have revised affirmations as my process unfolds so they better reflect my deepest understanding and desire. For example, if my affirmation started out as wanting a particular model car, I may come to realize that really what I want is a car that will provide for me particular services and comforts. With Shyla and myself, I wanted a car that we could take on traveling adventures, so my affirmation became:

“I love myself, therefore I provide for myself a comfortable car. One that fills all my needs and is a pleasure to be in. It is dependable, reliable, environmentally friendly, and meets all of mine and Shyla’s needs for our traveling adventures.”

We only need to listen to our inner thoughts and look at our outer world to know how powerful and effective our thoughts can be. With this in mind, as you begin your work with affirmations, make a concerted effort to keep your thoughts focused, pure, compassionate and kind towards yourself and others.

Also, as you begin to say things from a positive perspective of what you would like to create in your life, pay particular attention to your mind’s reaction and response to the affirmation. Sometimes, resistance or disbelief is an indicator that we may first need to let something go before we can replace it with something better. Willingness to release these thoughts, patterns and external circumstances that no longer serve us may be the first step in our work with affirmations. Keeping that in mind, here are a few ideas to get you started.

Guided Reflections

- 🌸 Are there things in your life you would like to release or create? If so, with a thoughtful reflection, can you bring yourself to believe that they could possibly manifest for you?

- 🌸 Pick one area of life you would like to see a change in. Take some time and visualize and journal what the ideal scenario would look like. Write as many details as you can. Then, write an affirmation for that scenario. Feel free to find other resources of affirmations to help you. Repeat the affirmation as many times a day as you can for the next 30 days. Reflect in your journal on the process during this time, as well as the result at the end of the 30 days. For big changes, you may only notice the shifting and changing towards something, or the releasing of what you no longer want. Continue the affirmations and revise as you discover these shifts and changes.

Affirmations are potent. Like any of the practices discussed in this book, working with them becomes a lifelong practice to be developed slowly, compassionately and thoughtfully. In working with affirmations I wish for you what a friend recently wished for me on my house search, which works as a wonderful catch all affirmation:

“May you be extremely happy with the outcome!”



If you would like to companion with others on their sacred journey or work with JoAnn Saccato directly, you can sign up for a webinar, a companioning circle, or a free discovery session at www.companioningthesacredjourney.com

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