

Week 3/Video 2: Affirmations

The first technique to help make change are self-affirmations. Just as our unhelpful thinking patterns reinforce other depressive symptoms, research has shown that drawing attention to our positive qualities can inhibit or stop the downward spiral. Additionally, attending to our positive characteristics makes it easier to change and move towards goals.

While depressed, it's easy to see all the things that we believe are "wrong" with ourselves and it's a challenge to identify our positive traits. This is because depression narrows our view of ourselves and only looks for information that supports the negative things we already feel about ourselves. With affirmations it is important to say things to yourself that are true and that you would believe if you were not depressed about yourself or that you believe is true for all humans. If some part of you doesn't believe what your saying, affirmations won't be helpful and you may even feel like it shines a light on the things you feel you are lacking. For example, when feeling depressed you might forget that you are a strong and capable person. When feeling down repeating this self-affirmation for us in moments when we are feeling low can help us start to feel stronger and more capable in the moment. How you talk to yourself matters.

In a moment, I am going to ask you to review some common affirmation and construct your own. If this is a new skill, it might take some time to get really good at using self-affirmations. Even if it's hard or you think it's a little silly, I encourage you to keep saying an affirmation daily. You can create a new one every day or repeat the same one if you know you can draw strength from it. Try to say them at a specific time (like before bed or upon waking up).

You may also find when trying to practice your affirmations that it's not enough to simply write them out. When we finish writing them we can forget them until we are forced to write a new one. Sometimes, we need to place them where we can see them in order to be reminded of our affirmations on a regular basis. You might put your affirmations on your desk where you study, next to your toothbrush, or on the save screen of your phone!

Now I'd like for you to take some time to practice this skill of focusing on our positive qualities. On **page 27** of your workbook, there is a tool that helps us create self-affirmations. Take a moment to write one self-affirmation for yourself right now using these guidelines and following the examples provided before moving on to the next video.