

newsletter for nurturing support groups

Issue 38
Volume 7, Number 2
September 1986

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 38th issue of **WE**, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support, examining attitudes and learning new skills. This issue is all about **AFFIRMATIONS**. Since the first issue on affirmations, Vol. 3, No. 1, and the issue on Annette Bodmer's book, "Gift of Affirmations," Vol. 6, No. 4, some of you have sent affirmations that you have written for special groups. Others have asked me to print both the Affirmations that appear in *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* and the new Educational Affirmations that are in Carole Gesme's *Ups & Downs with Feelings* game and will appear in the six *HELP!* books. Your last **WE** included the Educational Affirmations in a set of colored ovals. In this **WE** you will find the "Love" Affirmations which Carole is packaging separately.

Here they are. Explore and enjoy.

Jean Illsley Clarke
 Jean Illsley Clarke

Affirmations For Self-Esteem

by Jean Illsley Clarke

This article is for the many **WE** readers who use ideas from *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* or teach classes based on that book.

Need For Self-Esteem Building Affirmations

"Give them words to say. Help them express themselves better." Over and over, that was the urgent message that my husband, Dick, gave me during the time that I was writing *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*. He considered himself the advocate for the parents who would read the book. "Look, parents know they are supposed to be loving and do a good job. Tell them how to say what they want to say and what the kids need to hear."

Words, words, I, too, wanted some new words—words that would say I love you, I believe in you, and I support your growth. Lots of different words. Words that maybe this time the kids would hear. Words that would guide me, the parent, in what to do. I was looking for **affirmations, those words that express the inner wisdom that we all need to learn or reaffirm or reconnect with.**

HISTORY

John Boyle was spreading the Omega program with affirmations for business people—esteem building success oriented words to say over and over until you really believe them. Sandra Ray wrote about affirmations in "You Deserve Love" (1976), I thought carefully about their assumptions and methods.

The identification and use of affirmations must be as old as human kind. I have repeated affirmations (and negations) in religious rituals since I was a child. There was something very exciting and new for me in this concept of deliberately choosing a healthy message and repeating it to reinforce my belief in it.

What I needed was affirmations for parents to give to their children, messages connected to each developmental stage. I studied Eric Erickson and other developmentalists and watched children. I was busy designing and testing the techniques used in the *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair Parenting Classes* when I read Pam Levin's, *Becoming the Way We Are* (1974) with her "new messages," already targeted for developmental stages. Would these messages, designed to help adults get a new start, help children do their developmental tasks the first time around? My teaching colleagues and I tried them out in classes and found that many people liked them. We also found them useful in our own lives. What would Pam Levin think?

I met Pam at a conference in 1977 and told her how I was using her New Messages as affirmations. She asked how we did that and how the parents were receiving them. Pam is a therapist and had not used the messages in an educational setting. She encouraged me to write the *Self-Esteem* book and to include the affirmations.

I chose simple names for each developmental stage and published the *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* (1978) and *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair Leader Guide* (1981).

CONTINUED, P.2.

WHAT ARE AFFIRMATIONS?

Affirmations are anything we say or do that lets a person know that we believe he is lovable and/or capable. If you would like another word to use in place of the word affirm, here are twenty-one verbs, or phrases, that, if you use them in a positive context, will do the job.

announce	approve	assert
avow	compliment	confirm
declare	endorse	express belief
praise	proclaim	profess
pronounce	ratify	state
take a position	take a stand	testify
utter	validate	vow

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Read all of the words that could be used in place of the word affirm.

- Star the ones that help you think about affirmations in a new way.
- Read the list to someone you want to affirm you. Ask him which word or words he prefers. Practice asking for affirmations using the word he chose. For example, "Will you endorse what I just did?" or "Will you take a position that supports me now?"

USES AND KINDS

Since then the writing and use of Affirmations has become widespread. Annette Bodmer formed Affirmation Enterprises to make the affirmations available on rainbow colored blocks and charts. She also sells stickers and laminated circles, the symbol of unity or wholeness, which she calls "cymbals." She wrote a set of Christian affirmations. Pam Levin wrote another book, *Cycles of Power* (1980), in which she presented her messages as affirmations. I completed the adult affirmations, to which Elaine Childs-Gowell contributed the important piece, "You can trust your inner wisdom." Sandra Landsman identified the prenatal affirmations and Annette Bodmer added those two sets to her product line.

Harold and Gail Nordeman developed the Affirmations for Adult Children of Alcoholics. Rokelle Lerner responded to the need for special affirmations for daily support for adult children and published her book and tapes, *Daily Affirmations for Adult Children of Alcoholics* (1985). Peter Joyes and Carol Poole offered air-brushed affirmation posters featuring any affirmation of your choice. Annette Bodmer wrote and published *The Gift of Affirmations* (1985); see **WE** Vol. 6, No. 4.

There are numerous other books about affirmations and their use on the market. This **WE** features several sets of affirmations that have been developed for use with specific populations.

Why New Education Affirmations?

During the past eight years as I have taught the *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* classes and used the affirmations as stated in that book with children, I have been aware of the need for additional developmental messages. As I have done workshops with people from an ever increasing range of socioeconomic, religious and ethnic differences, I have worked with more and more people who were unwilling or unable to search for the implications behind the words, or to read the Postface, the section of *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* that explains what each affirmation means and ways to avoid misusing it.

I have been challenged repeatedly to publish the affirmations that I have been identifying that are "I" messages to promote bonding rather than "you" messages to give permissions. These affirmations speak directly to children, do not need to be interpreted, and are all "do" messages which tell kids what to do. The "don't's" in Pam Levin's messages, the ones currently in *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*, are powerful releasers for those of us who have developed some compulsive attitudes and behaviors, but they sometimes need interpretation for youngsters. I recall one five-year-old who, when told "You don't have to hurry," responded in a startled way, "But I wasn't hurrying. Was I supposed to be?"

I also recall with discomfiting clarity the night I was doing a workshop for parents and students in a Junior High School. I had posted two sets of affirmations from the *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* book, BEING and STRUCTURE. It was not long before Christmas. One Mom rushed in, sank into a chair and said, "Well, Jean, what good stuff do you have for us tonight?" I pointed to the posters. She read "You don't have to hurry" and snorted, "That's a lie!" Then she read "You can do it your way" and sighed, "That's another lie." I said, "Wait, let me explain what those mean." "I'm busy," she exploded, "Why don't you say what you mean in the first place?" "I'm working on that," I mumbled. "Well" she pushed, "make it top priority." I did.

The new set of messages which I call "Educational Affirmations" have been widely tested by adults with children and are included in the *HELP!* books (Harper & Row, 1986) and in Carole Gesme's game, *Ups & Downs with Feelings* (see Vol. 7 No. 1). They are written specifically for children—for people incorporating messages

AFFIRMATIONS FROM *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*

Being, Stage I, 0-6 months

- You have every right to be here.
- Your needs are OK with me.
- I'm glad you're a girl/boy.
- You don't have to hurry.
- I like to hold you.

Doing, Stage II, 6-18 months

- It's OK to do things and get support at the same time.
- You don't have to do tricks to get approval.

Thinking, Stage III, 18 months-3 years

- I'm glad you are growing up.
- I'm not afraid of your anger.
- You don't have to take care of me by thinking for me.
- You can think about what you feel.
- You can be sure about what you need and want and think.

Identity and Power, Stage IV, 3-6 years

- You can be powerful and still have needs.
- You can express your feelings straight.
- You don't have to act scary or sick or mad or sad to get taken care of.

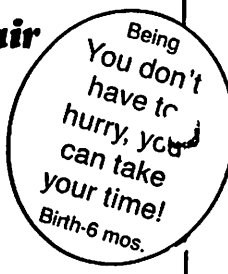
Structure, Stage V, 6-12 years

- You can think before you make that rule your own.
- You can trust your feelings to help you know.
- You can do it your way.
- It's OK to disagree.
- You don't have to suffer to get what you need.

Sexuality and Separation, Stage VI, 13-18 years

- It's OK to know who you are.
- You can be a sexual person and still have needs.
- You're welcome to come home again.
- I love you.

These affirmations have been expanded to six per set and are available in circular stickers, circular laminated discs, laminated blocks and laminated or plain charts. They are color coded to indicate the age at which each starts. For information on how to purchase them, write to *Affirmation Enterprises, P.O. Box 21, Savage, MN 55378, or see p. 9.*



the first time around. Carole chose to manufacture these educational affirmations in ovals to symbolize growth. These messages may need rewording to fit exact vocabulary levels, but they do not need interpretation. They are easy to use with children or in any setting where you want to make them available or to use them without explanation. They are messages designed to promote healthy bonding and healthy separating at each stage. Each developmental set has a specific love message beamed to the developmental tasks of that stage. The response to these love affirmations has been tremendous.

As I tested and polished the messages for each stage I looked carefully at the similarities and differences between the Educational Affirmations and Pam Levin's New Message affirmations and gained even more respect for the consistent and often subtle ways that her messages encourage adults to release themselves from old stuck positions and to grow into greater wholeness and health.

I encourage you to do your own experimenting, invent new ways to use all of the affirmations in this issue and send your findings and your special affirmations to **WE** to share with other readers.

Jean Clarke

EDUCATIONAL AFFIRMATIONS

From *HELP!* for Parents

by Jean Illsley Clarke

Being
I'm glad
you are
alive.

Birth-6 mos.

Being, Stage I, 0 to 6 months

- I'm glad you are alive.
- You belong here.
- What you need is important to me.
- I'm glad you are you.
- You can grow at your own pace.
- You can feel all of your feelings.
- I love you and I care for you willingly.

Doing, Stage II, 6 to 18 months

- You can explore and experiment and I will support and protect you.
- You can use all of your senses when you explore.
- You can do things as many times as you need to.
- You can know what you know.
- You can be interested in everything.
- I like to watch you initiate and grow and learn.
- I love you when you are active and when you are quiet.

Thinking, Stage III, 18 months to 3 years

- I'm glad you are starting to think for yourself.
- It's OK for you to be angry and I won't let you hurt yourself or others.
- You can say no and push and test limits as much as you need to.
- You can learn to think for yourself and I will think for myself.
- You can think and feel at the same time.
- You can know what you need and ask for help.
- You can become separate from me and I will continue to love you.

Identity and Power, Stage IV, 3 to 6 years

- You can explore who you are and find out who other people are.
- You can be powerful and ask for help at the same time.
- You can try out different roles and ways of being powerful.
- You can find out the results of your behavior.
- All of your feelings are OK with me.
- You can learn what is pretend and what is real.
- I love who you are.

Structure, Stage V, 6 to 12 years

- You can think before you say yes or no and learn from your mistakes.
- You can trust your intuition to help you decide what to do.
- You can find a way of doing things that works for you.
- You can learn the rules that help you live with others.
- You can learn when and how to disagree.
- You can think for yourself and get help instead of staying in distress.
- I love you even when we differ: I love growing with you.

Identity, Sexuality and Separation, Stage VI, adolescence

- You can know who you are and learn and practice skills for independence.
- You can learn the difference between sex and nurturing and be responsible for your needs and behavior.
- You can develop your own interests, relationships and causes.
- You can learn to use old skills in new ways.
- You can grow in your maleness or femaleness and still be dependent at times.
- I look forward to knowing you as an adult.
- My love is always with you. I trust you to ask for my support.

Interdependence, Stage VII, adult years

- Your needs are important.
- You can be uniquely yourself and honor the uniqueness of others.
- You can be independent and interdependent.
- Through the years you can expand your commitments to your own growth, to your family, your friends, your community and to all humankind.
- You can build and examine your commitments to your values and causes, your roles and your tasks.
- You can be responsible for your contributions to each of your commitments.
- You can be creative, competent, productive and joyful.
- You can trust your inner wisdom.
- You can say your hellos and good-byes to people, roles, dreams, and decisions.
- You can finish each part of your journey and look forward to the next.
- Your love matures and expands.
- You are lovable at every age.

Being
I love you
and I care
for you
willingly.

Birth-6 mos.

Doing

I love you
when you are
active and
when you
are quiet.

6-18 mos.

Thinking

You can
become
separate from
me and I will
continue to
love you.

18 mos.-3 yrs

Identity and Power

I love
who you
are.

3-6 yrs.

Structure

I love you
even when
we differ;
I love growing
with you.

6-12 yrs.

Identify,
Sexuality,

My love is
always with
you. I trust
you to ask for
my support.

13-19 yrs.

Interdependence

You are
loveable at
every age.

Adult

Interdependence

Your love
matures
and expands.

Adult

From the six books *HELP! for Parents of Children of Different Ages*, by Jean Illsley Clarke, et al. Harper & Row, 1986, \$3.95.

These Educational Affirmations are featured in the game *Ups & Downs with Feelings*, and they are available as complete sets in oval stickers, and oval laminated discs. They are color coded to indicate the age at which each starts. The "love affirmations," also available as a separate package, plain or gift boxed.

For information about ordering the game or the affirmations, contact Carole Gesme, 4036 Kerry Ct., Minnetonka, MN 55345.

Three Suggestions for Using the Two Sets of Developmental Affirmations Together

♥ Starting Activity: Affirmations for Today

by Jean Illsley Clarke

The purpose of this activity is to become acquainted with the two sets of developmental affirmations and learn how they may be useful to you.

Give each person a set of the round affirmations (from page 2) and a set of the oval affirmations (from page 3).

Ask each person to:

1. Lay out the red "Being" affirmations from each set.
2. Choose the ones that feel good today. Lay them aside.
3. Do the same for each color. Note that the lilac "adult" affirmations are the same in both sets so you need examine only one set of those.
4. Pick up all of the affirmations that you did not choose and put them back in the plastic bags.
5. Lay out all of the affirmations that you chose, look at them, and think about them.
6. Ask people to share what they learned from using both sets.

♥ Activity for Using Both Sets in a Family Systems and Chemical Dependency Workshop on Secrets or Rules

by Carole Gesme

The purpose of this activity is to give people a tool for dealing with destructive family secrets or rules.

Give each person a set of round and a set of oval affirmations.

Ask each person to:

1. Choose a round affirmation that is related to one family secret that you need to work on.
2. Tell your partner what you will do about dealing with that family secret during the next month.
3. Choose the oval affirmations to take home that will support you as you change that old rule about secrets.
4. Read those affirmations 5 times morning and night for the next month as you make your changes.

♥ Activity for Using Both Sets to Help Resolve an Old Problem

by Karen Sackett

The purpose of this activity is to give people a tool for dealing with unwanted behavior and attitudes.

Give each person a set of round and a set of oval affirmations.

Ask each person to:

1. Pick a specific personal problem (ex: perfectionism, shame, procrastination, lack of self-confidence)
2. Look through both sets of affirmations and set aside the ones that give "permission" to deal with the problem.
3. Now look through the remaining affirmations and set aside the ones that offer "how to" messages for working on the problem.
4. Read the "permission" affirmations morning and night for the next month. Use a different one each day from the "how to" affirmations and choose one specific behavior or attitude to change that will help resolve the problem for that day.

♥ Additional comments from people who have been using both sets.

Carole Gesme: "I use the ovals for people who have no background on how affirmations work. When I use the circles I offer guides and background on what they mean. I believe the ovals help children build their own inner parent."

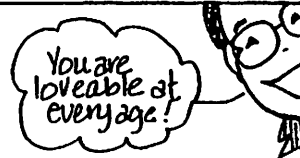
Suezy Begin: "When I'm in the here and now I use the ovals. When I'm working on old stuff I use the circles."

Nancy LeTourneau: "I have parents of troubled youths pick out ovals to offer to their kids and circles they would like to hear for themselves."

Karen Sackett: "I use the ovals as releasers to help me go back to the circles to figure out what I need to do so I can pick up the ovals for help on how to do it."

Carolyn Kelleher: "The oval Educational Affirmations are more behaviorally oriented. They remind me that children are doing what they need to do for themselves; they are not doing things against me."

Suggested Activity Introducing The Adult Affirmations



The purpose of this exercise is to give adults the opportunity to integrate the developmental affirmations from earlier stages with the adult affirmations.

- Hand each adult a copy of the Affirmation sheet (page 3) or a complete set of affirmation circles or ovals.
- Ask each adult:
 1. "Will you examine the Adult Affirmations, (Stage VII) and star or set aside the affirmation message that is difficult to believe today or that you wish you believed more firmly."
 2. "Now examine the other messages (Stages I through VI) and star or set aside the affirmation from the earlier set that will help you believe the adult message."
 3. "Read all of the messages you have chosen aloud to yourself or ask your partner to read them to you."
 4. "Choose two or three messages to concentrate on. Read them to yourself five times each morning and evening every day for two weeks and then check to see if you are doing better at believing the message you have chosen to internalize." Notice if you have been using new behavior and attitudes to support your affirmations."

Exploring the Love Affirmations

The "Love Affirmations" promote bonding.

- Pick one to say to yourself every day for a month and then notice if you are taking better care of yourself.
- Read each one saying "like" instead of "love". Think which people you would be willing to say "love" to and for which people "like" would fit better.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS



I use Affirmations and visualize myself creating a new future.

Alcoholism is a family disease. I am a survivor and I can change.

I am realistic about my capabilities, and I am in charge of my self-esteem.

I am a whole person, enjoy people, and respect authority.

I prioritize my needs and others' needs, and retain my identity in the process.

I am OK around angry people; and I reject harmful personal criticism.

I respect myself and use appropriate behavior.

I develop intimate relationships.

I marry or share my life with a healthy person. This helps me fulfill my bonding needs through an autonomous relationship.

I live life from a position of OKness and I attract, and am attracted by, that strength in my life, friendships and career relationships.

I am a responsible person and I balance concern for others and myself. This encourages me to look at my strengths, my faults and my responsibility to myself and others.

I feel happy, sad, scared and/or angry when I stand up for myself instead of giving in to others.

I enjoy both excitement and tranquility in appropriate ways.

I am learning to nurture and be nurtured.

I am independent and interdependent. I can end a relationship without feeling abandoned. I will do what is necessary for a healthy relationship.

I nurture the people I love rather than pity and rescue them.

I can recall my feelings from my traumatic childhood. I now have the ability to feel and to express the full range of my feelings. Being in touch with my feelings is one of my basic strengths.

I choose when to act and react.

I am learning what is normal.

I follow a project through from beginning to end when I value the project.

I have fun.

I take myself seriously when necessary.

I react appropriately to changes over which I have no control.

I feel MY feelings, which may be different from other people's feelings.

I am loyal when I see evidence that the loyalty is deserved.

I take a course of action while giving serious consideration to alternative behavior and possible consequences. This helps me control my environment. As a result, I spend my energy getting the task accomplished.

I balance immediate and deferred gratification.

Being truthful is important to me. I use my thinking ability and the energy from my feelings to resolve problems.

I value agreements with myself and with other people.

It's OK for me to know what I know, and for me to be who I am, and to realize my limitations.

I implement structures to give my life the level of stability I want or need.

I am lovable and capable of loving.

Permission is given to reprint the Affirmations for Adult Children of Alcoholics. Copyright 1984, © by Harold and Gail Nordeman, Directors of A GROWING PLACE. 9656 Sycamore Trace Ct., Cincinnati, Ohio 45242.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR STAYING SMOKE FREE

I think about what my body is feeling.

I ask for support.

My body is important.

I think about how I feel and separate it from what I do.

I don't have to hurt. I figure out what my body needs in a healthy way.

My feelings are okay and they are important.

I know what chemicals are doing to my body.

I say no and set my own boundaries.

I think about what I need.

Anger is OK. I express it in an appropriate way.

I find ways to nurture myself so I won't suffer.

I tell people about what I'm doing and how I'm feeling.

I am responsible for my needs and behavior.

I take time to look at my own values.

My life is important, the people around me are important.

I can make a mistake and not fail.

I celebrate each step I take. (I can enjoy my journey.)

I'm glad I was born.

I'm glad I am me.

I have the power to make changes in my life.

I want to live.

I want to be healthy.

I am responsible for my own well being.

Permission is given to reprint the Affirmations for Staying Smoke Free.

Linda Buranen
2640 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Plymouth, MN 55441



WINNERS

Win at being human beings; they don't have to "beat"

Do some things just to please themselves

Take the positive strokes offered them → Make winning decisions

Choose friends who are winners

Have a "Fun List" → Have a "Want List"

Become aware of negative feelings they collect & throw them away

Set up situations to get rewarded

Invite other people to win → Record their wins

Keep a good stroke reserve → Take care of themselves

Find good in others & record it & reward it

Collect good feelings & wins & savour them & think about them instead of staying hurt or depressed

Invite others to get rewarded → Are around winners

Expect to win

WIN. ✓

In loving memory of
Hedges Capers, who
offered these messages to
the world, and who died
on April 15, 1986. ✓

AFFIRMATIONS FOR KIDS

These affirmations appear on pink balloon cards in Carole Gesme's game, **Ups & Downs with Feelings**.

I know what I'm feeling.

I can have fun.

I am lovable.

I have a wonderful smile.

I ask someone to help me.

I am a terrific person.

I am a good thinker.

I can tell the truth.

I am kind.

I am capable.

I keep myself healthy.

I learn many new things.

I can be happy.

I can be sad.

I am special.

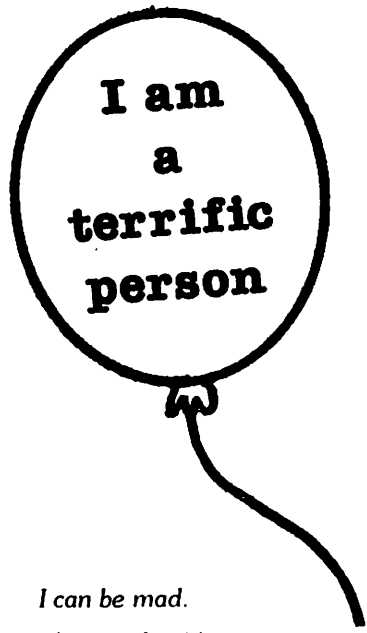
I choose my friends.

I have friends.

I am important.

I am loving.

I am a good friend.



I can be mad.

I know what I know.

I like myself.

I can change my behavior.

I can help others.

I can do many things.

I express my feelings.

The Educational Affirmation ovals are also included in that game.

AFFIRMATION FOR PARENTS OF 0 - 6 MONTH OLDS

You don't have to be perfect, only loving.

You don't have to know what to do, just be willing to learn.

You are a loving parent and your child senses it and thrives.

by Christine Ternand, Pediatrician, 2304 Lake Place, Minneapolis, MN 55405.

Affirmations Found on a First Grader's Desk at Open House in a Yakima School

I am a good self-manager.

I am a good listener (listen to announcements).

I remember and follow classroom rules.

I manage my time well (assignments in on time).

I complete my work.



Affirmations for Parents of Children with Special Needs

Marilyn Neel works at United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Louisville, 982 Eastern Parkway, Louisville, Kentucky 40217.

She has written these affirmations which she offers to the parents of the children she works with.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR BEING FOR PARENTS OF SPECIAL CHILDREN

As a parent of a child with disabilities you are always welcome here and to call for whatever reason. You are an important person. You can adjust to your child's limitations at your own pace. I will not rush you to accept your child's disability or talk about it when you are not ready. Even though your child's needs seem overwhelming, you, too have needs and it is okay for you to take care of them. You are loving and caring.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR THINKING FOR PARENTS OF SPECIAL CHILDREN

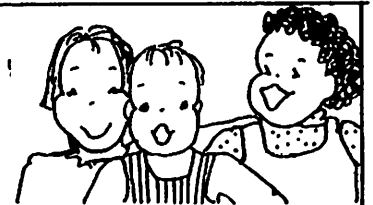
I see that you are working through some thoughts and feelings that are particular to having a handicapped child. You can feel and think about your needs as a person and as a parent of a special child. You can feel and think about what you need to do for your child. You are capable of thinking of different resources including schools, agencies or people to consult about you and your child's needs. Sometimes you are angry or sad. When you are, I'll listen to you and what you are angry about. I'll decide if I need to do something about that. But I'll not be responsible for your bad feelings. You can be sad or angry and think and take care of yourself at the same time. Let yourself know what you really need! You can use cause-and-effect thinking to help you get what you need and want.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR STRUCTURE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Because you have a child with a disability (i.e., cerebral palsy, delayed development, etc.) your family situation will be different. You bring a lot of skills and knowledge already into this situation. You may be told a lot of different information by many people. You may disagree with them. You can decide how you feel about the information and what to do about it. It is okay to disagree. You can work towards an agreeable solution for everyone.

You are capable of figuring out how to fit your child's therapy program into your daily lifestyle. You do not have to get sick or depressed or overwhelmed before you ask for help. You are capable and lovable.

Affirmations Are Important for Children



When we teach children about affirmations and offer them a wide variety of affirmations, we help them know how to find affirmations as adults. When we use the Developmental Affirmations from **Self-Esteem: A Family Affair** or the **HELP!** books, we need to be careful not to rush children by offering them the affirmations from stages beyond their years, except for the Love Affirmations which are all appropriate for all ages.

Suggested Activity for Teachers and Students

Dear Jean:

Enclosed are some affirmations written by members of my 8th-grade Careers class. I always have a basket of these affirmations on my cart or desk and as students are entering the classroom I often walk around offering them to students. If I forget, many times a student will go get the basket or ask for one of those nice "thingies."

This age group has really responded enthusiastically to the written affirmations. Sometimes one will say, "I don't believe this," or "I don't want this one." I encourage him to take another one and then write one that sounds good to him.

Warmly,
Shirley Knox
2024 Highland Drive
Prosser, WA 99350

- I can make responsible and good decisions.*
- I can handle difficult situations.*
- I am aware of the rights my friends and family have.*
- I am a nice kid because I am neat and responsible.*
- I show good manners at all times.*
- I can think about my anger and choose what to do.*
- I am honest in all that I do.*
- I am beautiful, understanding, loveable and liked.*
- I like the way I look and the way I think.*

How To Design and Use Your Own Affirmations

by Rokelle Lerner

In *Daily Affirmations for Adult Children of Alcoholics* Rokelle Lerner says, "Affirmations are positive, powerful statements concerning the ways in which we desire to think, feel and behave . . . The messages which we give to ourselves are the most important messages we hear . . . What we choose to believe will ultimately rule our world. If we continue to believe we are victims—so we are. However, if we choose health, joy and love—we will have it . . . Affirmations are a way to wake us up, to make us fully conscious and aware of the daily choices we make . . ."

Here are Rokelle's suggestions for designing affirmations.

1. Keep them in the present.
2. Frame them in the positive.
3. Keep them short and simple.
4. Know what you want.
5. Let your emotions surface.
6. Remember that repetition is important. Fit the repetitions in to your day. Don't create a system to abuse yourself.
7. Remember, what you believe you will become.

Rokelle Lerner is the co-founder of Children Are People, St. Paul, MN. The training kit for their Chemical Abuse Prevention program includes these Slogan Stickers to reinforce learnings:

- Children are people.*
- All of my feelings are O.K.*
- I have choices—I can make decisions.*
- I am special.*
- My family is special because _____.*
- My needs are important.*
- Defenses come, defenses go.*
- I can't cause it — I can't cure it — I CAN cope with it.*

OPENING ACTIVITY FOR GETTING AND GIVING AFFIRMATIONS

Materials:

- One complete set of developmental affirmations. Use either the circle set from *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair* or the oval set from the *HELP!* books and *Ups & Downs with Feelings* game.

Directions:

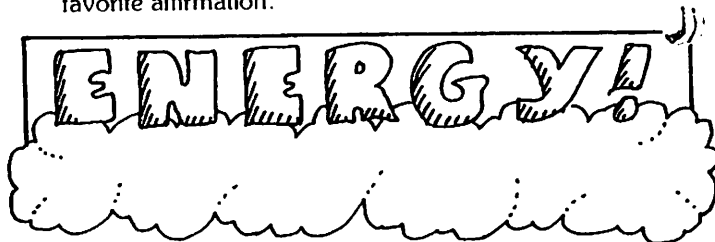
- Paper for name tags in the seven colors of the affirmations.

Read all of the affirmations quietly to yourself. Choose a set of affirmations of one color that you especially want to hear today. Select a colored piece of paper for your name tag that is the same color as the affirmations you chose. Find a partner. Hand your partner your colored paper and the affirmations you chose. Ask her to write your name on your name tag and read the affirmations to you. Do the same for her.

Jean Koski

CLOSING ACTIVITY That offers everyone a positive personal message

- At the end of the meeting briefly review the activities of the meeting.
- Ask for Resentments. Listen to resentments, do not defend or explain.
- Ask for Appreciations.
- Ask the whole group to listen as each person reads aloud his favorite affirmation.



LEADERSHIP SKILLS USING AFFIRMATIONS TO RAISE GROUP ENERGY

Suezy Begin was leading a Bible Study Group.

She:

Recognized that group energy was low.

Remembered that an affirmation exercise raises group energy.

Decided to invent one on the spot.

Connected it with the material of the lesson. "Good works and God works".

Here are directions for the exercise she created:

Ask:

- Will each person write your name on a piece of paper to pass around?
- Will each person who wants to, write how you see God working through the person whose name is on the paper? Put your name by what you wrote if you choose to. Examples are, "You have the gift of friendship." "Relates to people well." "A good listener, very compassionate."
- After the papers have been passed around tell people to read them, take them home and keep them in an important place.

Suezy reported that the energy level of the group rose remarkably.

oops!

Our apologies to Barb Kobe of Golden Valley, MN, whose name was misspelled in the previous issue. She illustrated the Ups 'n Downs with Feelings game by Carole Gesme.

Suggested Format for Group Meetings

Place _____

Date _____

Time _____

Person in Charge _____

Program:

- Opening activity that offers everyone a positive personal message
- Ground rules
- Celebrating wins and sharing problems
- Asking for support
- Practice skills, new learnings, play
- Suggestion circle
- Plan the next meeting
- Resentments and Appreciations
- Closing activity that offers everyone a positive personal message

Facilitator Training Workshops

**February 2-6, 1987
Minneapolis, MN
June 22-26, 1987
Seattle, WA**

A week-long workshop for people who want to . . .

- **Facilitate the Self-Esteem: A Family Affair** parenting model, or
- Improve group leadership skills for working with growth, education, or support groups.
- Receive advanced training in the use of Transactional Analysis in educational settings.

**Led by Jean Illsley Clarke.
Write to WE for details.**

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- News from other support groups

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