

# The Fruits of a Daily Affirmation Practice

by Michele Tracy Berger



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## WHAT ARE AFFIRMATIONS?

There is a great secret which successful writers and creators from all backgrounds use—affirmations. That’s right, affirmations, phrases that affirm our work and value. And, they help us direct intention into our work. And, they can work for you. Many psychologists, mental health workers and coaches advocate the use of affirmations.

An affirmation is a short, simple, positive declarative phrase that as Eric Maisel says, in *Coaching the Artist Within*, “you say to yourself because you want to think a certain way...or because you want to aim yourself in a positive direction.” You can use them as ‘thought substitutes’ to dispute self-injurious thoughts (as a cognitive behavioral approach), or to provide incentive and encouragement when those seem to be in short supply. Affirmations rewire our assumptions about what’s possible.

In 2016 what I needed as a writer was lots of practice in self-kindness, plain and simple. I had craft, discipline and perseverance in spades. Many creative people

In 2016, I committed to a practice that changed my creative life.

I posted an original affirmation every day on my blog, *The Practice of Creativity*, from

**“Feeling worthy is a learned behavior.”**

*Beverly McIver, visual artist*

struggle with simply being self-accepting, and many can even sometimes think the meanest things about themselves. I don’t know of any writer who hasn’t felt like giving up on their writing dreams. I don’t know of any writer who couldn’t benefit from helpful, kind self-talk on a regular basis. Anxiety, unhelpful self-talk, and inner critics often stop us before we can even get to our projects. Affirmations felt like the right tool for upping self-kindness and encouraging my writing life. I love writing challenges and I thought this daily practice would be a fun way to serve the readers of my blog.

These are the three lessons I learned.

## SELF-APPROVAL IS A SECRET ELIXIR FOR WRITING

Writers can benefit from using affirmations as our inner critics, judges, and evaluators are often uninvited guests during our writing sessions. Writing affirmations that were quirky, spiritual, practical or poetic opened up a new place of permission inside of me. Even though I had been writing seriously for the past decade, I finally gained a deep sense of permission about my writing that wasn’t subject to someone’s approval. I stopped worrying about what “they thought”. Years of playing it safe in my writing melted away. This permission emboldened my fiction and nonfiction writing, too. That year, I wrote in genres that I

wouldn’t have dared to before and my submission and acceptance rate was the highest it had ever been. Writers don’t need to have self-approval in order to write. We don’t even have to like ourselves, but the writing journey is so much richer when we do.

## INSPIRATION IS ALL AROUND US

Writing one sentence a day may not sound daunting, but coming up with new material (in addition to my other writing projects) was no easy feat. Through the process, I became alert to all the possible sources for my affirmations. I wrote affirmations about every aspect of the writing and creative life that you can imagine: writing tools and aids (e.g., chairs, pens, desks), aspects of the writing life (e.g., attending open mic readings, being a good literary citizen, going on literary pilgrimages, etc.), states or qualities of mind (e.g., procrastination, fear, courage, perfectionism, etc.), and the writing process (e.g., craft, storytelling, plot). Nothing about writing and creativity escaped my notice. This kind of heightened attention to environment and daily life is a quality that can be cultivated through affirmations.

## WRITING IN SMALL AMOUNTS TAPS THE FLOW

In the past, I’d been a binge-or-bust writer. I loved doing marathon writing jags only to be followed by long periods

of dry spells. But, this daily affirmation project highlighted the value of committing to writing on a smaller scale. Knowing that all I had to do was write one sentence (or two at the most) helped keep me focused on the task. And, it was immensely gratifying to finish that task and do it well. Daily short writing kept my motivation and momentum going. I found myself thinking, “Of course I have time to write one sentence!”

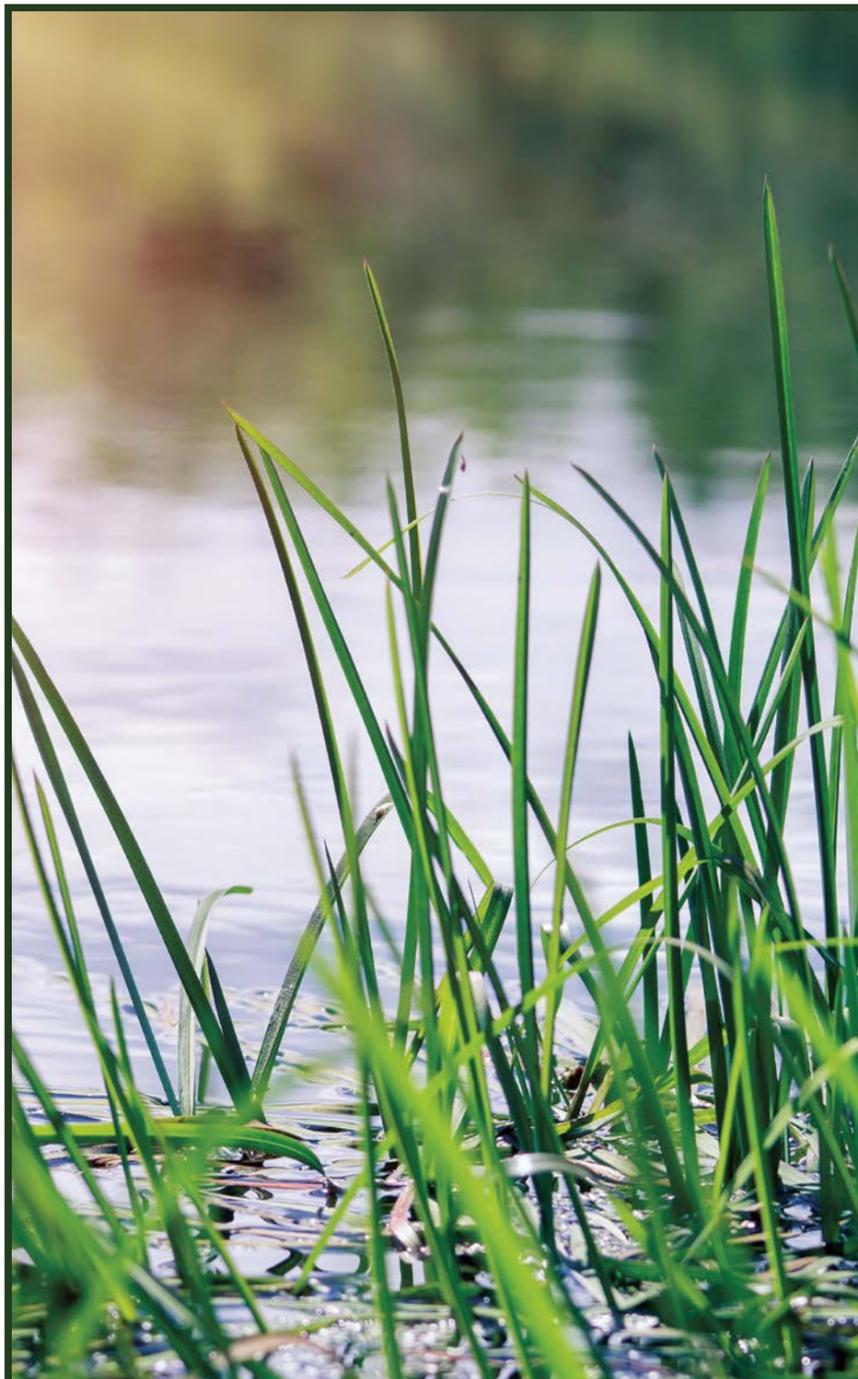
## YOUR TURN

Writing, speaking and even recording affirmations creates a powerful mindset. I’ve provided some examples below. The most useful affirmations are ones that resonate with you. Finding the phrases that are most inspiring will be the ones that you stick with over the long haul:

- My ideas come faster than I can write, and they’re all good ideas.
- Revising is the best part of writing.
- I know that there are plenty of publishing opportunities for everyone, including me.

Tell me how it goes for you.

*Michele Tracy Berger is a scholar and creative writer. She is founder of The Creative Tickle®, a creativity coaching practice. To receive her free guide: Ten Ways to Keep Connected to Your Writing Self during COVID-19 go to: <https://mailchi.mp/creativetickle/tenways>*



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