

AFFIRMATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS

**This is a new model that I have produced; developed from both original source material and my own experience.
It was presented at a workshop at the World TA Conference in Edinburgh, 2005.**

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ABOUT AFFIRMATIONS

This model comprises a set of Affirmations that have been written for use in organisations. The actual words in the model form a base for people to work with. It's Ok to re-word them to suit your language patterns, as long as you retain their essential message.

An Affirmation is a statement which promotes growth and development. Affirmations can be used to fill gaps that people have in terms of what they do, what they can ask for and how they may behave. For example, many organisations value thinking skills. However, if an employee has previous experience of being told simply to "Get on with it" they may have taken that to mean 'stop thinking and just keep working'. In a new role they may need to think, but their past experience gets in the way, until they hear the Affirmation: "You can spend time thinking and we value this as part of work."

Therefore, Affirmations can be used to change behaviour, fill gaps and develop productive working patterns. Some people may need more Affirmations, some may need fewer. Generally speaking the more you have, the better life is. However, some organisations may decide to focus on a few key ones and promote these across the organisation.

HOW TO USE THEM TO PROMOTE GROWTH

Affirmations can be 'given' to people as verbal statements, as part of a written document or by colleagues talking about "How we work here". You can affirm people simply by saying an Affirmation to them. You may need to repeat it over time, in order for the Affirmation to really 'be heard'.

These Affirmations can be used in a variety of situations. Classic examples are listed below:

- **In an appraisal.** Give your colleague the table and ask them to circle any Affirmations they need to hear from you.
- **Team development.** Give your team a copy and ask them to identify which ones they have as a team and which ones they need to hear in order to develop and work more productively.

- **To map culture.** One way of identifying and improving the culture of an organisation is to ask people to identify which Affirmations they feel the organisation upholds. This can show similarities and differences between departments. The organisation can then decide which ones to highlight and make sure that all employees have them as part of the day to day culture. For example, an organisation may realise that its staff need an Affirmation to seek help, instead of trying to 'tough it out' on their own. They may decide to make "You can ask for help with no loss to your personal credibility" part of a central set of Corporate Affirmations that are sent to all employees and embedded in staff development plans. Business Managers and Leaders can be monitored to ensure they genuinely uphold and promote key Affirmations throughout the organisation, in order to develop a positive and unified culture.
- **New roles, new teams, new projects.** People often get scared when faced with new things, or changes, or fresh challenges. They can be frightened of taking risks, making mistakes, of being seen as an 'expert', or of stepping into an already established team. The Affirmations in the table can help people to relax, feel confident, feel less apprehensive and encourage them to ask questions and get what they need.
- **Assessment centres and job interviews.** Candidates are often nervous, particularly about being set up as a know-it-all-expert. You can make an assumption that some people will be nervous some of the time and offer them Affirmations to put them at their ease and promote the positive aspects of your organisational culture.

Affirmations can be powerful. They are a great way to develop people and culture. They can be used at work or at home. For information about Affirmations you may be interest in the following books:

Growing Up Again: Jean Illsley Clarke & Connie Dawson, 1989, Hazelden.

Improving Behaviour and Raising Self-Esteem in the Classroom: Giles Barrow, Emma Bradshaw & Trudi Newton, 2001, David Fulton Publishers

Tasks	Continuous Development	You can have gaps in your knowledge and skills and it's ok not to know everything all the time	We want you to develop and to do so at the right pace for both of us	It's ok to make mistakes, because if you don't you'll never do anything	You can talk to us about your personal development needs and we will consider them	You can find out what your own skills and talents are	You can learn new things and can develop in all directions	You can consider how you have developed and choose what to do next
	Facing new Challenges and Solving Problems	You can learn how to do the role and we look forward to your contribution	We want you to draw on past experiences and build on them	You can do things in new ways and can try new things	You can solve problems by thinking first and doing second	You can find out which tools and techniques work best for you	We want you to suggest new ideas, innovate and adapt things	You can take responsibility for your decisions and can stop or change direction when you need to
With Others	Relating to Authority and Experience	We will support you, because we want you to be successful	You can value yourself as an equal to other people in our organisation, because we do	You can be involved in agreeing objectives, priorities and timescales	You can challenge people and ask them to explain their thinking	You can ask for help with no loss to your personal credibility	We will support you when you consider your options and take calculated risks	You can ask for feedback and we will be supportive and constructive
	Being part of Groups or Teams	The team will change when you join and we look forward to you becoming part of it	You can be part of the team and still be you at the same time	We value your contribution when you are actively participating or working quietly	You can develop your own views and be prepared to support them	You can make a different contribution in different situations and within different teams	You can learn the rules and find out why things are the way they are	You can find new ways to improve your contribution
Yourself	Interacting with People	It's ok to have questions and we will discuss them	You can tell us about what you need and want and we will listen to you	You can talk to people, share information and discuss things	You can think about when to talk and when to listen	You can be aware of what you do well and what you need to do differently	You can be assertive because we value your contribution	You can praise others and can apologise if you need to
	You on the Inside	We want you to be part of our organisation and we value you	You can do a good job because you are good enough to be here	You can use all of your thoughts, feelings and intuition to help you	You can hold thoughts and feelings at the same time and can share them	You can look at things from your own perspective and can check out what the reality is	You can have ambitions and develop new personal goals	You can still wonder at the way things are and keep asking questions
	Your Health & Wellbeing	We value your health and wellbeing and your safety is important to us. So if you need anything let us know	You can make a start in the way you want to and we will help you	We want you to look after yourself, so do take breaks and balance work and home life	You can spend time thinking and we value this as part of work	We value your individuality	We value your contribution even when we have differing points of view	You can take the credit for doing a good job. We appreciate your efforts and say thank you

The vertical columns relate to the stages people move through as they develop over time. The horizontal rows relate to the basic elements encountered when being part of an organisation. Ask yourself which affirmations do you need to hear or to tell others?

SELECTION	ARRIVAL	ACTIVITY	PROCESSING	NICHE	EXPANSION	REFLECTION
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