

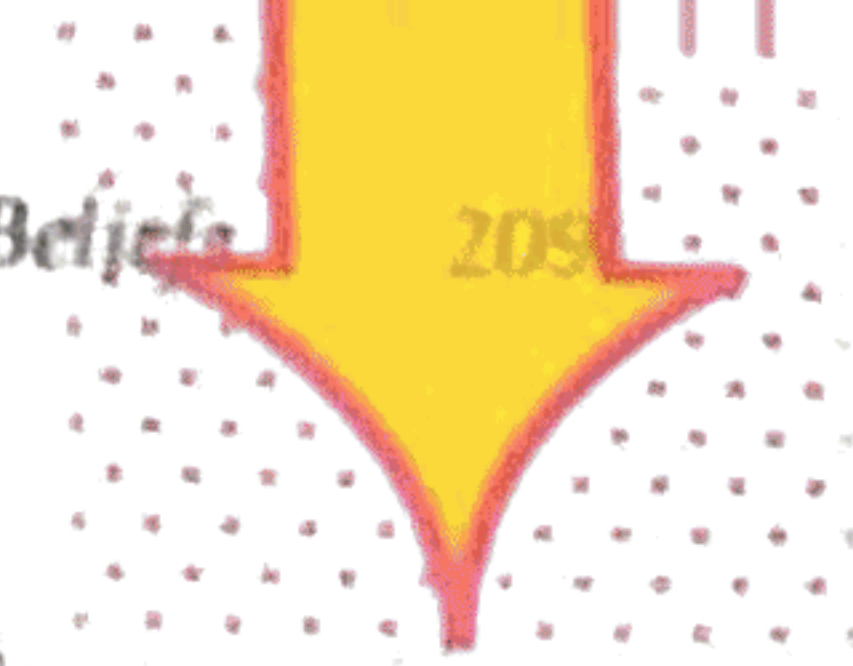
by taking small risks at my own pace," then you might list all of your successes in reducing your anxiety and/or confronting phobic situations. Or if you're working with the statement "I'm learning that there is more to life than success in my career (or school)," you can list all the occasions when you derived enjoyment from other activities to demonstrate the truth of your new belief.

Reinforcing an affirmation by noting real-life events that confirm it will go a long way toward strengthening your conviction of its truth.

## Examples of Affirmations

Below are examples of affirmations you can use to counter statements from the *Mistaken Beliefs Questionnaire*. Use any that feel right to you or use them as guidelines for making up your own.

1. I'm responsible and in control of my life.
2. Circumstances are what they are, but I can choose my attitude toward them.
3. I am becoming prosperous. I am creating the financial resources I need.
4. I am setting priorities and making time for what is important.
5. Life has its challenges and its satisfactions—I enjoy the adventure of life. Every challenge that comes along is an opportunity to learn and grow.
6. I accept the natural ups and downs of life.
7. I love and accept myself the way I am.
8. I deserve the good things in life as much as anyone else.
9. I am open to discovering new meaning in my life.
10. It's never too late to change. I am improving one step at a time.
11. I am innately healthy, strong, and capable of fully recovering. I am getting better every day.
12. I am committed to overcoming my condition. I am working on recovering from my condition.
13. I can recover by taking small risks at my own pace.
- 14/15. I am looking forward to the new freedom and opportunities I'll have when I've fully recovered.
16. I am learning to love myself.
17. I am learning to be comfortable by myself.
18. If someone doesn't return my love, I let it go and move on.
19. I am learning to be at peace with myself when alone. I am learning how to enjoy myself when alone.
20. I respect and believe in myself apart from others' opinions.
21. I can accept and learn from constructive criticism.
22. I'm learning to be myself around others. It's important to take care of my own needs.

- 
- 23/24. It's okay to be myself around others. I'm willing to be myself around others.
  25. I appreciate my achievements, and I'm much more than all of them put together.
  26. I am learning how to balance work and play in my life.
  27. I am learning that there is more to life than success. The greatest success is living well.
  - 28/29. I'm a unique and capable person just as I am. I am satisfied doing the best I can.
  30. It's okay to make mistakes. I'm willing to accept my mistakes and learn from them.
  31. I'm willing to allow others to help me. I acknowledge my need for other people.
  32. I am open to receiving support from others.
  33. I am willing to take the risk of getting close to someone.
  34. I am learning to relax and let go. I'm learning to accept those things I can't control.
  35. I am willing to let others assist me in solving my problems.
  36. When I love and care for myself, I am best able to be generous to others.
  37. I'm doing the best I can as a \_\_\_\_\_ (Optional: And I'm open to learning ways to improve.)
  38. It's okay to be upset when things go wrong.
  39. I'm okay if I don't always have a quick answer to every problem.
  40. It's okay to make time to rest and relax.
  - 41/42. I do the best I can, and I'm satisfied with that.
  43. It's okay if I'm unable to always foresee everything.
  44. It's okay to be angry sometimes. I am learning to accept and express my angry feelings appropriately.
  45. I'm learning to be honest with others, even when I'm not feeling pleasant or nice.
  46. I believe that I am an attractive, intelligent, and valuable person. I am learning to let go of guilt.
  47. I believe that I can change. I am willing to change (or grow).
  48. The world outside is a place to grow and have fun.
  49. Worrying about a problem is the real problem. Doing something about it will make a difference for the better.
  50. I am learning (or willing) to trust other people.
  51. I'm making a commitment to myself to do what I can to overcome my problem with \_\_\_\_\_.
  52. I'm learning that it's okay to make mistakes.
  53. Nobody's perfect—and I'm learning (or willing) to go easier on myself.

54. I'm willing to become (or to learn to become) self-sufficient.
55. I'm learning to let go of worrying. I can replace worrying with constructive action.
56. I am learning, one step at a time, that I can deal with the outside world.
57. I'm inherently worthy as a person. I accept myself just the way I am.

The purpose of this chapter has been to increase your awareness about mistaken beliefs and help you identify some of your own. Countering negative self-talk and mistaken beliefs with positive thinking and affirmations can go a long way toward helping you lead a calmer, more balanced and anxiety-free life. While the earlier chapters on relaxation and exercise were designed to help you overcome the physiological bases of anxiety, the intent of the last two chapters has been to give you tools to deal with that part of anxiety that is in your mind—what you say to yourself and what you believe. Chapter 12 will examine the important relationship between anxiety and feelings.

## Summary of Things to Do

1. Complete the *Mistaken Beliefs Questionnaire*, checking off those beliefs you rated 3 or 4. Note any subgroupings of beliefs where your total score exceeds the criterion value for that group. The theme for that subgroup deserves your special attention.
2. Reread the section "Countering Mistaken Beliefs" until you are thoroughly familiar with various ways to challenge them. Use the "Five Questions for Challenging Mistaken Beliefs" to call into question any belief that has an emotional hold on you or seems intellectually plausible.
3. After challenging your mistaken beliefs, develop affirmations to counter each one of them. Use the "Guidelines for Constructing Affirmations" to assist you, and refer to the section "Examples of Affirmations" at the end of the chapter for a list of examples. On the questionnaire, write each of your affirmations in capital letters underneath the particular mistaken belief you're countering.
4. Reread the section "Ways to Work with Affirmations" and decide which method of rehearsing affirmations you want to use—for example, writing them repetitively, listening to them on tape, working with a partner, or taking your affirmations into meditation. Work with this method for two weeks to one month on a daily basis, and afterwards whenever you feel the need.

## Further Reading

- Bloch, Douglas. *Words That Heal: Affirmations and Meditations for Daily Living*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990. (The best single book on working with affirmations I've seen.)
- Burns, David. *Feeling Good: The New Modern Therapy*. Revised edition. New York: Avon Books, 1999.