

EXERCISE: AFFIRMATIONS FOR STRENGTH & HOPE

Living in a hoarded home can make you feel powerless, ashamed, and stuck. Affirmations are positive statements that help you challenge negative beliefs, rebuild your sense of self, and remember what's true even when everything feels hopeless.

Affirmations aren't magic. They won't clean your house or change your parent. But they can change how you think about yourself and your situation. And that matters more than you might think.

This exercise teaches you how to use affirmations to build resilience, maintain hope, and remind yourself of truths you might forget in the chaos.

Time Needed

5-10 minutes daily



Energy Level

Low (can be done even when exhausted)



What You'll Need

The affirmation list, your voice (internal or external)

Optional: Phone Notes app, journal

When to Do This

Daily (ideally morning), or whenever you need grounding and hope

How It Works

You'll choose affirmations that resonate with you, practice saying them regularly, and use them as tools to counteract negative self-talk and feelings of hopelessness.

Why Affirmations Work

The science:

- Your brain believes what you tell it repeatedly
- Positive self-talk creates new neural pathways
- Affirmations activate the reward centers in your brain
- They help counteract negative thought patterns that develop from living in difficult situations

Why affirmations help when you live in a hoarded home:

- Counteracts shame ("This is my fault" → "This is not my fault")
- Rebuilds sense of control ("I'm powerless" → "I am in charge of my mind and my body")
- Maintains hope ("Nothing will change" → "My current living situation is not forever")
- Separates your identity from your circumstances ("I am the mess" → "This is not my mess")

What Affirmations Are (and Aren't)

Affirmations ARE:	Affirmations are NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A tool for mental and emotional resilience• A way to rewire negative thought patterns• Reminders of truths you might forget• Support for your mental health while you're surviving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toxic positivity or pretending everything is fine• A replacement for action or getting help• Denial of your real situation• Something that will instantly change how you feel

The Affirmations

These affirmations come from More Than Messy and are designed specifically for people affected by hoarding. Some will resonate deeply. Others might feel uncomfortable or untrue right now. **That's okay—start with the ones that feel possible.**

Affirmations About Fault & Responsibility

- This is not my fault.
- This is not my mess.
- I didn't break it. I can't fix it.
- It's okay if I don't enable.
- It's okay if I don't clean up this mess.

Why these matter: Living in a hoarded home, you might feel responsible for fixing it or guilty for not being able to. **These affirmations release you from that burden.**

Affirmations About Secrecy & Shame

- This is not my secret.
- I am okay.

Why these matter: Hoarding creates shame and isolation. You might feel like you have to hide your home situation. **These affirmations remind you that the shame isn't yours to carry.**

Affirmations About Choice & Control

- I choose myself.
- I choose peace over chaos.
- I choose to live in a calm, clean, and peaceful environment.
- I choose to live the life I want to live.
- I am in charge of my mind and my body.

Why these matter: When you have limited control over your environment, **these affirmations help you reclaim agency over what you CAN control—your choices, your mental space, your future.**

Affirmations About Permission

- It's okay if I don't like them.

Why this matters: You can love your parent AND not like them sometimes. **You can be angry about the hoarding AND still care about your family. This affirmation gives you permission to have complicated feelings.**

Affirmations About Your Strength

- I am strong, resilient, and in control of my life.
- I can do hard things.
- I am grateful for my life and for the strength I show every day.

Why these matter: **You ARE doing hard things every single day. These affirmations acknowledge that strength.**

Affirmations About Your Future

- I am committed to living a healthy life.
- I am committed to enjoying a clean and healthy home.
- I deserve to live a life free from clutter and anxiety.
- Every day, I do something toward a peaceful and clutter-free future.
- I am capable of creating a positive and healthy future for myself.
- My current living situation is not forever.
- I will do what it takes to achieve my goals.

Why these matter: **When you're stuck in a difficult present, these affirmations keep you connected to the future you're working toward.**

How to Use Affirmations

Step 1: Choose Your Affirmations

Don't try to use all of them. Pick 3-5 that resonate most right now.

Questions to help you choose:

- Which affirmations feel true or close to true?
- Which ones do I need to hear most?
- Which ones challenge my negative self-talk directly?
- Which ones give me hope?

My chosen affirmations (write them down):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 2: Practice Them Daily

When to say your affirmations:

- Morning (recommended): Sets tone for the day
- Before bed: Reinforces positive thoughts before sleep
- When you're stressed: Grounds you in truth
- When you're feeling shame: Counteracts negative self-talk

How to say them:

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| Out loud (most powerful): | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stand in front of a mirror• Look at yourself• Say each affirmation clearly• Repeat 3 times each |
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| Silently (if privacy is an issue): | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say them in your mind• With intention and focus• Slowly, letting each one sink in |
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Written:

- Write each affirmation 3-10 times
- In a journal, on your phone, on sticky notes
- The physical act of writing reinforces the message

Recorded:

- Record yourself saying your affirmations
 - Listen to the recording daily
 - Your own voice speaking truth to yourself is powerful
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Step 3: Make Them Visible (Optional)

If you can do so safely:

- Write them on sticky notes in your calm corner
- Set them as phone wallpaper
- Keep a list in your backpack
- Put them in your locker
- Write them in a journal you keep with you

If you need to keep them hidden:

- Save them as a note on your phone with a password
- Memorize them
- Keep them written somewhere only you can access
- Use code words or abbreviations only you understand

Step 4: Use Them Actively

When negative thoughts come up, counter them with affirmations:

Negative Thought	Affirmation Counter
"This is all my fault. If I just cleaned more..."	"This is not my fault. I didn't break it. I can't fix it."
"I'm so ashamed. I can never tell anyone."	"This is not my secret. This is not my mess."
"Nothing will ever change. I'm stuck here forever."	"My current living situation is not forever. I am capable of creating a positive future."
"I'm a bad person for being angry at my parent."	"It's okay if I don't like them. I can have complicated feelings."

Practice this actively. When you catch yourself in negative self-talk, immediately follow it with an affirmation.

When Affirmations Feel Fake

"I don't believe these things yet."

That's okay. You don't have to believe them fully for them to work. Your brain is learning. Keep saying them anyway.

- Try adding "I'm learning to believe..."
 - "I'm learning to believe this is not my fault"
 - "I'm learning to believe I deserve a life free from clutter"
- Or "I'm working toward believing..."
 - "I'm working toward believing I can create a positive future"

"They feel stupid to say."

That's common, especially at first. Affirmations can feel awkward. Say them anyway. The discomfort usually fades with repetition.

"Nothing changes when I say them."

Change is gradual. You won't feel different after one day. But after weeks of practice, you'll notice:

- Negative thoughts have less power
- You catch yourself earlier
- You feel slightly more hopeful
- Your self-talk is kinder

"Some of these feel impossible."

Then don't use those yet. Start with affirmations that feel **almost** true or **possible** to believe. As those become easier, try ones that feel harder.

Creating Your Own Affirmations

You can create personalized affirmations that speak to your specific situation.

Formula for effective affirmations:

- Use "I" statements (puts you in control)
- Present tense ("I am," not, "I will be")
- Positive language ("I am strong," not, "I'm not weak")
- Specific and meaningful to you

Examples:

- "I am capable of keeping my calm corner organized"
- "I deserve to have boundaries that are respected"
- "I am building skills that will serve me in my own home"
- "I am learning what I need to be happy and healthy"
- "I choose to protect my mental health"

Write 1-3 personalized affirmations here:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Combining Affirmations with Other Tools

Affirmations work even better when combined with other exercises:

With Meditation:

- Use an affirmation as your mantra
- “This is not my fault” repeated with each breath
- “I choose peace over chaos” as you meditate

With Gratitude & Goals:

- Include affirmations in your gratitude list
- “I’m grateful I’m learning to believe I’m strong”

With Vision Board:

- Write affirmations on your vision board
- Visual + verbal reinforcement

With Energy Check-In:

- Use affirmations when energy is low
- “I am doing my best with what I have” on low-energy days

With Boundaries:

- Use affirmations before/after setting boundaries
- “I choose myself” before a difficult conversation
- “This is not my fault” after a boundary is violated

Tracking Your Practice

Optional but helpful: Track your affirmation practice for one week.

Day	Did I do affirmations?	Which ones?	How did I feel?
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

After one week, reflect:

- Did I notice any shifts in how I think or feel?
- Which affirmations helped most?
- When was it easiest/hardest to practice?
- Do I want to continue this practice?

Accessibility Considerations

Affirmations can be adapted to any communication style. If speaking out loud is difficult, write them, think them, or type them. If writing is difficult, record them and listen, or just speak them internally. If memory is challenging, keep your affirmations list on your phone or in a visible place. If executive function makes daily practice hard, tie it to an existing habit (say them while brushing teeth, or right before bed) or set a daily phone reminder. If certain affirmations trigger difficult emotions, skip those and use only the ones that feel supportive. There's no requirement to use all affirmations or practice perfectly—use what helps, skip what doesn't.

Important Reminders

- **Affirmations are a tool, not a solution.** They help you cope and maintain mental health, but they don't fix your living situation.
- **You don't have to believe them immediately.** Affirmations work through repetition, not instant belief.
- **It's okay to have days where you skip.** Consistency helps, but perfection isn't required.
- **Some affirmations will resonate now, others later.** Your needs change as you grow and heal.
- **You can modify any affirmation.** Make them work for you.
- **Affirmations are for YOU.** They're not about convincing anyone else or performing positivity. They're about internal truth-telling.

Real Talk

Affirmations might sound like self-help fluff when your reality is a house full of clutter and a parent who won't change.

What good is saying, "I deserve a life free from clutter," when you're literally surrounded by clutter you can't control?

Here's the thing: Words matter. Especially the words you say to yourself.

You've probably been telling yourself some version of these lies for years:

- "This is my fault"
- "I should be able to fix this"
- "I'm disgusting for living like this"
- "No one can ever know"
- "I'll never have a normal life"

Those words have power. They shape how you see yourself.

Affirmations are the counterweight. They're you telling yourself the truth:

- "This is NOT my fault"
- "I can't fix what I didn't break"
- "The mess isn't me"
- "I deserve better"
- "My future is different"

You're not trying to positive-think your way out of a hoarded home. You're trying to make sure the hoarded home doesn't define who you are or what you believe about yourself.

That's the difference.

Your circumstances are temporary. But the beliefs you form about yourself during these years will follow you.

Affirmations help ensure that when you finally do get out and have your own place, you're not carrying the shame and self-blame with you.

Say them. Even if they feel silly. Even if you don't believe them yet.

Your future self will thank you for planting these seeds now.

You are not the mess. You never were.