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Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

"Affirmations"

By Walt Stanchfield

AFFIRMATIONS

I've been toying with the idea of doing a handout on motivational stuff, but since not everyone feels comfortable with this subject, I hesitated. So I presented my dilemma to the members of the drawing class and there was a resounding vote of approval - so here goes. In the past, occasional affirmations that I've slipped in, here and there, have met with favorable acceptance, at least by those who are not averse to a little help-from "Above." Everyone, by nature, has a built in positive / negative mechanism, which due to early training or personality may favor one or the other. I don't know if it's possible to change a negative person to be a positive one, but I know that a negative person will react in a positive way to compatible positive statements. Some negative die-hards would not be caught dead using a positive affirmation. I'm no Norman Vincent Peale when it comes to positive thinking, but hear me out....

Was it the communist's who said, "Religion is the opiate of the people?" Well, I'm addicted to affirmations, whether it comes in the form of spiritual aphorisms or just plain old home spun philosophy. I was channel surfing one Sunday and paused long enough to hear a little of Rev. Fred Price's sermon on faith. He said of faith, "I'm sold on it, I'm a fanatic on it." I don't care to be fanatical about anything but I do want to get involved enough to guide my life in the direction I want it to go.

If there are a few of you who need to change direction, or need your juices activated, or want to soar a little higher, I'd like to offer a few helps. Now, I believe in the principle of synchronicity, a word C.G.Yung used for the fortuitous inter-meshing of events. But those who believe in a Universal Mind power, (or in Jiminy Cricket's, "When you wish upon a star, you're dreams come true,") believe that when you are in sync with that Universal Creative Mind, It will somehow make available to you what you need or desire. Well, I started this writing one night and the next day at our local, health food store, my friend, Pat, who works there, and who also believes in synchronicity gave me a magazine on health, the HEALTH COUNSELOR (June/July). In that issue was an article by Terry Lemerond, nutritionist, author, and motivation enthusiast, called, I am not making this up, "AFFIRMATIONS," subtitled, 'Talking yourself into a better reality.' Some will call it a coincidence, but I call it synchronicity having that magazine find its way into my hands just when I needed it.

Here's are some samplings: "Just as negative statements often become self-fulfilling prophecies, so do positive statements. It may sound simplistic, but I truly believe that we can talk ourselves into greater accomplishments, more satisfying relationships, and better health."

"Affirmations are highly personal - you need to develop ones that specifically work for you. Here are some examples.

I am unique and special.
I am feeling greater physical health and vitality.
I am reaching my goals.
I deserve a rich and rewarding creative life.
Here are some of my own (Lemerond's),
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Love flows through me in avalanches of abundance."

Everyone is not as wishy washy as I am. I can read a horoscope in the morning and though I'm neither a believer nor an unbeliever in horoscopes, I can let it arrange or rearrange my attitude for the day. For instance here's a Cancer horoscope for May 30: Sex appeal highlighted, (hey, I like this one already) creative juices activated, (yes, yes, I can feel them yearning for expression), style imprinted (hey we're talking my style - no one else in the world quite like it), break from routine (what an adventuresome sound that has to it ... I'm ready!), create your own tradition. (this sounds like SARK, a writer of inspirational books. She advises us to change moods like clothes, do everything backwards or upside down, exercise your soul, begin something brand new today, be looking for messengers of magic, etc.) And to finish off with this day's horoscope: Stress originality, independence, willingness to rely on capabilities. Coming from any source, that would be inspiring stuff.

You can start your days with any attitude you like, or you can launch into the day with a cup of coffee and let circumstances determine your attitude. Personally, I'm a sucker for positive thinking material, no matter what form it comes in. I'm a veritable male Pollyanna.

In Christopher Schink's new book, *COLOR AND LIGHT FOR THE WATER COLOR PAINTER*, he says, and he's talking about painting - but if you're an alert positive thinking buff you'd interpret it as a possible philosophical gem, "Without direction you'll end up just filling in the spaces. Determine the direction you're going to take before you begin painting." Well, before you start living, determine the direction you're going to want to go (or end up) and fortify yourself with all the mental help you can get. Just "filling in the spaces" has a horrible fatalistic tinge to it. Of course we want to fill in the spaces, but we want to do it creatively our way.

Marianne Williamson, quoted in Time Magazine article, *FAITH AND HEALING*, June 24, 1996, says, "The atonement is so gentle you need but whisper to it and all its power will rush to your assistance and support." Atonement in Christian Science means: the state of union with God in which man exemplifies the attributes of God. Prettttttty heavy stuff, eh! Meaning: if God is universal - we being part of the universe must be part and parcel of God. So if God is so close that we are as He is, He's so close that we need only whisper our desires. As a matter of fact all you have to do is think it, and man you are locked in to the Source. My memory is shot but I seem to remember, possibly Shakespeare, having said, something, something, something, "....but thinking makes it so."

That statement by Williamson is the epitome of synchronicity. To simply desire something, is to set the Power in motion ... to your assistance and support It just doesn't get any better.

In the same issue of Time Magazine there is an article on Deepak Chopra, that delightful new age/old age Indian guru (he doesn't like to be called a guru, but I can get away with it - he'll never read this handout) and he said, "All of us are connected to patterns of intelligence that govern the whole cosmos. Our bodies are part of a universal body, our minds an aspect of a universal mind."

When I check in to the Safari Inn for lodging on my trips to the studio, Johnnie, the desk clerk, always lectures to me on the cosmos and the universality of things. On my June trip he said, "Universal Intelligence is everywhere present, is available and needs to be respected." I took him to mean that #1, we should recognize It as a vital part of our makeup, #2, call upon It when there is a need, and #3 believe in It and be thankful for the creative energy that is made available to us.

"When you wish upon a star/ Makes no difference who you are/ Anything your heart desires/ Will come to you/ If your heart is in your dream/ No request is to extreme/ When you wish upon a star/ As dreamers do/ Fate is kind/ She brings to those who love/ The sweet fulfillment of/ Their secret longings/ Like a bolt out of the blue/ Fate steps in and sees you through/ When you wish upon a star/ Your dreams come true." Even the Disney Cartoon characters are into positive thinking. Most, if not all the Disney Feature Cartoons have a touch of magic in them. You certainly won't be going against company policy if you engage in a little positive thinking.

To be fair, I think I ought to present some of the "other" side's argument. This bit of negative thinking philosophy comes from a delightful book I'm in the hilarious throes of reading, *ALMIGHTY ME*, by Robert Bausch. I have to pick it up mid chapter:

"I understand her thinking completely. It was an odd sort of game she played all the time in her head. She believed in the power of negative thinking. Probably four fifths of the human population believes in it. Whatever you want real badly, if you expect to get it, you won't. You have to expect not to. Then all sorts of wonderful things might happen. Of course, if the fates are on to you, you have to get fairly complex. You have to expect to get what you want and say you expect not to, while secretly thinking you won't really get it and don't care one way or the other if you do. The fates work with what goes on in your head, not all the time with what you say, and you can confuse them pretty easily if you convolute everything with several layers of ambivalence and ambiguity. So sometimes you have to say, "I'm going to win" when you want to lose, but in the tiny, secret, nonverbal part of your

mind you really want to win, even though you are truly expecting not to, so the fates will go against what you expect and let you win.

“Anyway, take my word for it: if success were food, positive thinking might get you a candy bar. With negative thinking, you’re in the realm of loaves and fishes.”

Be fun if Bausch would write a parody on “I’M OKAY, YOU’RE OKAY,” and call it, “I’M TERRIBLE, YOU’RE WORSE.”

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Last week I went to a graduation ceremony at the University at Santa Barbara. One of the speakers spoke on...you guessed it, ‘OPTIMISM’ He said, “Optimism is not saying, ‘everything is going to be all right.’ What optimism is, is being able to say, ‘Just one more lap,’ the heart and passion that keeps saying there’s still a chance.”

My mother, a “proper Bostonian,” had a succinct bit of philosophy for me when I bragged about doing great things when I grew up. She’d counsel, “Yes, you’ll do wonders and shit blunders.” and you know, she was right - I’ve done a little of both.

That’s not exactly a positive thinking statement, but it was her way of cautioning me keep my senses about me. You know, when your head is in the clouds and your feet are on the ground - pull yourself together. Both my parents were cautious people. They had just gone through the terrible depression and “Go for it, son,” was not in their ken. At a very early age I realized I’d have to look elsewhere for motivation. I can’t remember, but perhaps that story about the little train that said, “I think I can, I think I can,” was my first positive thinking influence.

We all know how much it means to us to have someone compliment us on some project we have completed, or effort we have made, or who encourages us when we undertake some project or when things aren’t going so good. We can do the same things for ourselves through the use of positive thinking materials and affirmations. As a matter of fact we can consciously guide those helps into the areas that need it most.

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One of the things I don’t buy in the Eastern teachings is the giving up of desire. I can understand how desire destroys a lot of lives, but desire can also be a positive thing that impels us to strive for perfection. We know that perfection is impossible, but if we can enter the path to perfection, we are more likely to lead a relatively constructive life. And, I might add, a happier life, that is, if we don’t let perfection become an obsession. Sure, you can be a perfection fanatic - but you can also be a do nothing fanatic. Anyway, the joy is not in perfection itself, but in the journey to perfection.

Actually, everyone has a goal, and each one turns up his rheostat to the intensity of his desires. I’ve probably told you about a fellow worker who didn’t draw much, nor did he go to night school. He was waiting for the “light” to come on. Well, if you want the light on you’re going to have to blunder across the dark room to the switch, bruising your shins and stubbing your toes on the furniture as you proceed. We are seekers of light. It’s a part of our makeup. To ignore it is to invite depression and ennui.

I’ve filled four pages and have just skimmed the surface. We all know how powerful the mind is and how much like an iceberg it is - nine-tenths of it is below the surface, that is, in the subconscious mind. And we know that whatever the conscious mind dwells on will be passed to the subconscious mind and becomes a part of us. Mind is therefore creative. Every single thought creates, and the wonderful thing is, we can guide that creativity into any channel we choose. Unfortunately many people are content to sit back and let outside influences determine what goes into their subconscious minds. Its often not a pretty picture. It’s like being under hypnosis and acting blindly on a suggestion planted by the hypnotizer.

Anyway, a lot of stuff (tons and tons of it) is going to find its way into the guts of your consciousness - just make sure a lot of it is life giving, constructive, and creative.

I’d like to end this portion of the handout with some witty stuff from some of Sark’s books. I have three of them: LIVING JUICY Creative Morsels for Your Soul, A CREATIVE COMPANION How To Free

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Your Creative Spirit, and INSPIRATION SANDWICH Stories To Inspire Our Creative Freedom. They're not exactly affirmations, but they are things that lead to a more creative style of thinking:

Eat inspiring foods	Take moon baths
Lie down a lot	Read every day
Let miracles find you	Bless yourself
Put food coloring in your bath water	Hug trees
Let the world heal you	Entertain your inner child
Buy a toy for yourself	Admire yourself
Be a dreamer	Drive away fear
Stay loose	Live your affirmations
Learn to watch snails	There are miracles everywhere
Plant impossible gardens	Make friends with freedom
Cultivate moods	Fill your heart with wonder
Believe in magic	Have an adventure
Celebrate every gorgeous moment	All your dreams are already coming

DRAWING IS ACTING

In order to act on paper, the artist has to know what is going on. If they were actors going on the stage to perform - they'd have had to mull it over in their minds thoroughly in order to act it out convincingly. We have to do the same thing in drawing. We have to ask all sorts of questions: What is the character doing?, How does he do it? Is this the way this particular character's body works (the way I am drawing it)?, Am I communicating the gesture?, Am I caricaturing it so there will be no doubts?, and, of course, Is my version entertaining?.

Here's a pose where the model utterly poured herself into the chair. It was a super slouch! I think the student got caught up in drawing things and missed the fantastic, theatrical, grossly exaggerated bit of body language. In my correction sketch I paid no attention to "things" and went for the gesture:



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Here's a pose where the model was slouched in the chair in a completely relaxed, or perhaps exhausted manner. The student missed this interpretation and proceeded to draw an upright figure. The model, being a rather elderly woman with a stooped back could not possibly have sat up that straight. In my suggestion sketch I used a minimum of lines and shapes to tell the story:



Part of the fun of drawing is looking for these idiosyncrasies, character traits, or mannerisms and working them into the gesture. It's like acting out a part. And aren't we all just "frustrated actors"?

Here again is that bowed character - straightened up - and not leaning on her cane. In my, perhaps, 5 second sketch, I tried to get just the essence of the character and the gesture:



Now for your viewing pleasure and as an example of all the points I've been making - acting, characterization, age, body language, caricature; leans, animation, relaxation, tilts, and entertainment, here are some drawings by John Webber. I'm tempted to elaborate on them, but they speak for themselves enjoy! See next page:



John Webber

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I In my humble opinion, you'll travel the world over visiting museums, and galleries, but you'll not see drawing of this caliber. And here for your further pleasure are some drawings from a session with model Clark Allen, the man with a hundred costumes, and a personality to fit them all:

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Joe Mosier





David Pimentel





Nicole Zamora

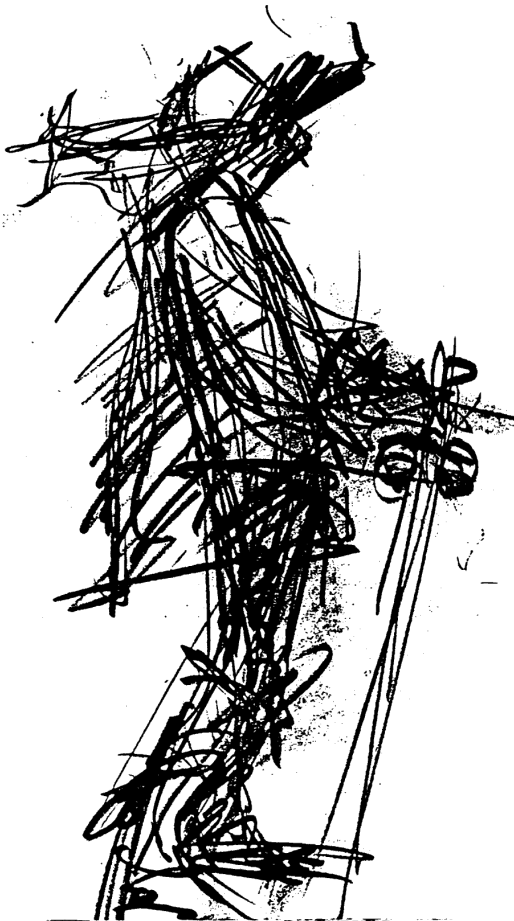




John Webber



Richard Bazley



Whitney Martin