



## Cheers To Wednesday!

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### What I Know Wednesday

"You is Smart. You is Kind. You is Important." Aibileen (a black maid and nanny), the main character of the movie *The Help*, would say these words in this specific way to the little white girl she cared for, Mae Mobley. The movie indisputably has many moving and memorable scenes. For instance, when Mrs. Elizabeth Leefolt builds a bathroom for Aibileen or when Skeeter gets a job at the local newspaper, or when Aibileen agrees to give Skeeter insight into what it's like to be a black maid and nanny in Jackson, MS in the 1960s. The movie explored sensitive and unspoken norms that existed at that time. What caught my attention, among many of the notable moments mentioned, is Aibileen and Mae Mobley's

relationship.

This little girl loved her caregiver. I would say she loved her and felt loved by Aibileen even more than her own mother, Elizabeth Leefolt. Aibileen cared for Mae Mobley, as a nanny would. She also poured into her what her mother didn't. Aibileen was giving Mae Mobley a sense of empathy, self-regard, and self-awareness. The intangibles we now know are important to our overall Emotional Intelligence.

What if we all had someone in our lives at such a young age to pour those intangibles into us, particularly before anyone else had a chance to distort our sense of Self and pour self-doubt and unworthiness into us? What if we woke up each day from the age of two saying those words or other words of self-affirmation that were specifically our own and for our own growth as people—personally and professionally? What if as students, teachers poured into us those intangibles? Even when our grades reflected a lower Intelligence Quotient (IQ), we were foundationally solid in, and they helped reaffirm, our Emotional Quotient (EQ)? What if our leaders, peers and managers in our workplace did the same? Better yet, and most importantly, what if we did this for ourselves?

Keeping it real, I don't know what happens if we woke up each day from the age of two saying those words Aibileen lovingly and unwaveringly poured into Mae Mobley. What I do know is there is scientific evidence supporting the positive impact self-affirming statements have on the brain and performance. Research shows self-affirmation can improve your ability to solve problems under pressure and even boost creativity. Check out the research for yourself. **CMU Research on Self Affirmations**. Additionally, science suggests those that are self-affirmed are also more open to making mistakes and correcting them. They have less negativity associated with making mistakes, therefore are not plagued with replaying the mistake in their mind and remaining stuck on that mistake. You can read more about how self-affirmations [makes us more receptive to our mistakes. ] (<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/self-affirmation-enhances-performance-makes-us-receptive-to-our-mistakes.html>), which also suggests if your self-affirmed, you're more willing to make behavior changes.

As much as I'd like to think we can just speak it and it happens, I know this is not fully the case. The old saying, "You can't pour from an empty vessel" is quite appropriate here. It takes a strong foundation in your sense of Self, or high Emotional Intelligence (EI), for affirmations to make a measurable impact. Those subjects with low self-esteem and self-regard did not demonstrate the same brain and behavior indicators as those who had high self-esteem and self-regard. It takes confidence in who you are, being comfortable with your strengths and areas of growth opportunities, and ones emotions to be open to reaffirming what's

there already. You respect yourself and accept your strengths and weaknesses. You recognize and understand your own emotions and the emotions of others. You are able to express your thoughts and feelings in a socially acceptable way. You are able to develop and maintain mutually satisfying relationships built on trust and compassion. You are able to demonstrate empathy by understanding and appreciating the feelings of others. You remain hopeful and resilient, even in the face of setbacks and discord. These are just a few of the characteristics of an emotionally intelligent person. This is the person who has the most success with self-affirmations.

If you're not quite owning all of the characteristics I described above or know your emotional intelligence is not quite where it needs to be. That's OK! The great news is your EI is something you can develop. With the proper support and plan, you can make measurable improvements in this area. Your team in your workplace, church and organization can improve in this area. Your vessel can be filled with the right substance to ensure you are working from a foundation rich in EI and ready to create and successfully employ your own self-affirmations that will help you decrease stress, make better decisions, have better performance, be more creative, be more enthusiastic and even do better in sports and physical activities. If you're ready to work on your Emotional Intelligence, as an individual or team, I can help you with that. This is an investment you can measure the return and reap the rewards in a multitude of ways. I'll explain more about EI and it's benefits in an upcoming message soon.

If the above characteristics describe you and you know you are open to self-affirmations, that's GREAT!! You are almost there! The next step is designing those affirmations that are most appropriate for you and your goals. They should be your own and not those you read in a book or saw in a movie, unless they specifically speak to you and your goals. Create a routine of saying them that will be easy to remember and support regular affirmation. This is not something you do at the beginning of the quarter or week and forget. Again, we're talking about changing thinking and behavior. This takes commitment and repetition.

For example, I repeat my affirmations after my morning meditation and prayer. I may also repeat them during a particularly busy or challenging day/situation. I am reaffirming what I know to be true of myself. I am in essence pouring from my filled vessel into my day or situations I may face that day. I know I am intelligent. I know I am compassionate. I know I am resilient and stronger today than I was yesterday. I know I have overcome obstacles I didn't think I could. All of these are my own and specific to me. They could very well apply to you. However, the "why" behind them are unique to the individual. Therefore, they will evoke unique actions and behavior support for that person. There are many resources to walk you through the process of creating self-affirmations. If you need help or are

feeling a little stuck regarding creating your own self-affirmations, take a look at these resources for help [5 Habits of Purposeful People](#) to get you started.

Aibileen knew Elizabeth Leefolt did not think much of Mae Mobley's intelligence or outer beauty. She also knew Mae Mobley, just like any child, will believe what they are told most often. **We believe what we're told until we know better.** We're born with empty vessels. They are filled by family, friends, our communities, the workplace, social media, life experiences and most importantly, ourselves. Self-affirmations affirm what's there. Make sure your vessel and the one of those you love are filled with character and substance worth affirming.

Family, This is What I Know!

With love and purpose,  
Philecia

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