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The Art of Positive Affirmations, Coloring, and Journaling for a Mindfulness State

The Art of Positive Affirmations, Coloring,

&

Journaling for a Mindfulness State

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Lesson Ideas Inspired by the book
The Miracle Morning: The Art of Affirmation
by Brianna Greenspan and Hal Elrod.

This idea was inspired by the book The Miracle Morning: The Art of Affirmation by Brianna Greenspan and Hal Elrod. Brianna has been using the power of affirmations and powerful mindset shifts techniques to overcome the inherent obstacles of her chronic illness. Positive affirmations helped Brianna overcome difficult situations and change how she showed up in her life.

Goals and Objectives

- Discover the science behind positive affirmation
- Use positive affirmations to create a circle of positive energy and express appreciation for good things in life.
- Understand the meaning of being grateful and its connection to Mindfulness and happiness
- Improve emotional well-being by using daily affirmations.
- Empower children to create feelings of self-worth through positive thinking
- Discover the health benefits of gratitude journaling
- Explore social and emotional themes and awareness
- Explore breathwork and body awareness to reduce stress and anxiety
- Strategies to foster concentration, visualization, sensory clarity, and equanimity
- Use positive affirmations to focus on their students' social-emotional well-being
- Integrate reading and writing strategies and social-emotional learning
- Creative ways to use journaling to promote Mindfulness while enhancing writing skills
- Engage students in meaningful conversations and improve students' communication and vocabulary skills.

Florida Standards

LAFS.68. WHST.4 Range of Writing: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

LAFS.8.SL.1.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify, or justify their own views considering the evidence presented.

LAFS.8. L.2.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listen

LAFS.8. W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

LAFS.8. L.3.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

SP.PK12.US.19.3 Express a range of personal emotions and feelings in a socially acceptable manner.

SP.PK12.US.19.5a Use a systematic approach for making decisions about personal needs, including identifying need, choosing the best option, and accepting consequences.

Course Outline/Overview

This approach uses positive affirmation to spark a purposeful strategic conversation in the classroom from students' perspectives.
This teaching idea promotes conversations in the classroom to increase students' language use and develop academic vocabulary.

"Journaling for a Mindfulness State" combines coloring and Mindfulness. When coloring the affirmation page and repeating the affirmation, the students' emotions are involved—what they hear, see, and feel. Then, by repeating the process again and again, the whole experience will become Mindfulness, a style of meditation. When integrating positive affirmation with language arts content areas, students are given opportunities to use language to motivate themselves and create new neural pathways.

Journaling prompts based on positive affirmation. Putting the affirmation in writing allows students to draw attention to their thoughts, improve visualization skills, and move towards a healthier mindset of "I can." Combining positive affirmations and the art of journaling allow students to grow and create art as a true expression of themselves.

Research Behind Journal for Mindfulness and Coloring

Numerous studies have shown that how we talk to ourselves can impact our health, happiness, success, and overall perception of ourselves. Positive affirmations such as "I am proud of myself" have helped students, especially special needs, and English learners, to advance academically and develop their self-esteem and well-being. Positive affirmations and repetitions, when done correctly, have the power to reprogram our thinking patterns so that using more positive self-talk and reasoning can build self-esteem and reduce stress levels.

Positive affirmation has been linked with greater happiness, hopefulness, and health benefits (Emmanuel et al., 2018). Students are constantly developing neural networks when they learn something new. Their brains connect new information to prior knowledge, and more and more synapses are created within the human brain (Whitaker, 2022).

Studies have agreed that mindfully saying phrases repeatedly create neural pathways which are the basis of the habits of thinking, feeling, and acting. Indeed, it takes repeating a phrase 10,000 before believing it and generating authentic emotions. Certainly, positive thinking and neuroplasticity—brain ability to new neural connections—empowers students to change their thinking to develop metacognition and a positive mindset.

Research on the therapeutic benefits of coloring has shown that it reduces anxiety and improves mindfulness (Eaton and Tieber, 2017). Positive consequences of coloring include one's ability to focus attention and improve well-being and performance. Indeed, selective attention and mindfulness activities enhance creativity and concentration and reduce anxiety (Jha et al., 2007). Studies suggest that coloring practices are beneficial in reducing high levels of stress and improving mood and behaviors. Besides the therapeutical benefits of coloring, students develop sensory clarity, equanimity, and concentration power when combined with positive affirmation.

Sensory clarity is a crucial component of meditation and mindfulness. By developing sensory clarity, students will be conscious of the present moment experience (Zen, 2020). For example, sensory clarity is achieved when one's starts noticing understated details as they are saying the positive affirmation. Equanimity, in simple terms, means being present in the moment, centered in the here and now. Cultivating equanimity will empower students to stay present with what is happening and clear about how to act or not to, especially when under stress or adverse events. Furthermore, studies have shown that coloring for 20 minutes carries affective consequences. For example, reducing anxiety levels and improving attitudes and behaviors—and cognitive consequence—the ability to focus attention and emotional health (Holt et al., 2019).

Lesson Plans: Turning a Coloring Experience into a Journal for Mindfulness

Lesson 1:
In this lesson, adaptable for grades 3- 8th, students explore *the Miracle Morning* Life S.A.V.E.R.S.—Silence, Affirmations, Visualizations, Exercise, Reading, and Scribing (journaling).

Students will:

1. engage in meaningful conversations
2. improve communication and vocabulary skills.
3. create feelings of self-worth through positive thinking
4. use journaling to promote mindfulness while enhancing writing skills.

Materials:

- Interactive whiteboard
- The Miracle Morning: The Art of Affirmation by Brianna Greenspan and Hal Elrod—page 35
- Physical or Digital notebook
- Sticky notes, pen, pencils, colored pencils, markers, and glue sticks.

Lesson Procedure:

Step 1

- Ask the student to think about a goal they would like to achieve. This goal can be a personal or school-related goal (e.g., get along with my siblings or get straight A's). The most important is that accomplishing this goal is meaningful to them.

Step 2 - Silence

- Show students how to breathe mindfully. Inhale through their nose and exhale through their mouth in four-count or six-count breathing (inhale for a count of 4 or 6, exhale for a count of 4 or 6).
- Play one-minute guided meditation YouTube: https://youtu.be/OfcdvOkFVMs or allow them to experience the moment in silence.

Step 3 - Affirmations

- Introduce the students to I am statements. For example, I am unique; I am brave, I am excellent.
- Then, give students 5 minutes to create an affirmation based on their goal. For example, if the goal is to get an "A" in math, the affirmation could be that I am a superb student and committed to getting an "A" in math.
- The affirmations could be done internally or out loud and can be recorded on a piece of paper or sticky note.

Step 4 - Visualizations

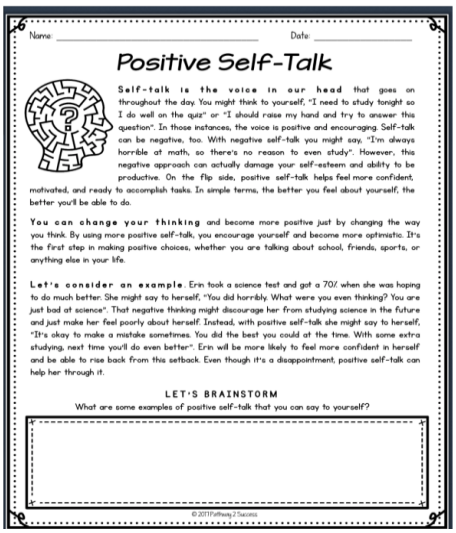
- For one minute, ask the students to close their eyes and visualize their goal (1) what it will feel like to achieve their goal, (2) see the face of the first person they want to tell when they have achieved the goals, and (3) doing the activities needed to achieve the goal.

*Step 4 – **E**xercise*

- For one minute, invite the students to stretch themselves or guide them through chair yoga type of exercise You tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZGYbfGrBUg

*Step 5 – **R**eading*

- Print a positive article, affirmations, or poem depending on students' reading levels.
  Example:



Name: _____ Date: _____

Positive Self-Talk

Self-talk is the voice in our head that goes on throughout the day. You might think to yourself, "I need to study tonight so I do well on the quiz" or "I should raise my hand and try to answer this question". In those instances, the voice is positive and encouraging. Self-talk can be negative, too. With negative self-talk you might say, "I'm always horrible at math, so there's no reason to even study". However, this negative approach can actually damage your self-esteem and ability to be productive. On the flip side, positive self-talk helps feel more confident, motivated, and ready to accomplish tasks. In simple terms, the better you feel about yourself, the better you'll be able to do.

You can change your thinking and become more positive just by changing the way you think. By using more positive self-talk, you encourage yourself and become more optimistic. It's the first step in making positive choices, whether you are talking about school, friends, sports, or anything else in your life.

Let's consider an example. Erin took a science test and got a 70% when she was hoping to do much better. She might say to herself, "You did horribly. What were you even thinking? You are just bad at science". That negative thinking might discourage her from studying science in the future and just make her feel poorly about herself. Instead, with positive self-talk she might say to herself, "It's okay to make a mistake sometimes. You did the best you could at the time. With some extra studying, next time you'll do even better". Erin will be more likely to feel more confident in herself and be able to rise back from this setback. Even though it's a disappointment, positive self-talk can help her through it.

LET'S BRAINSTORM

What are some examples of positive self-talk that you can say to yourself?

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*Step 6 – **S**cribing or journaling*

- Give students about 5 minutes to read; then, allow them to summarize what they've read in their journals (**S**cribing or journaling).
- Some suggestions will include:
  1. Write about what they've just read
  2. Write about a situation when you can apply what you just read
  3. Write about your goal (s) What is the plan to accomplish this goal?
  4. ELL Level 1: Students can use a photo or image that represents the goal, their affirmation, and even some stickers and other images.

Assessment Idea

- Students will be able to describe and analyze practical ways to attain their goals and create a digital or physical **Journal for Mindfulness.**
- It could be decorated with pictures, stickers, or drawings.

Lesson Idea 2: Experiencing G.R.A.T.I.T.U.D.E

In this lesson, adaptable for grades 3- 8th, students explore *the Miracle Morning: Art of Affirmation* book to identify and analyze positive affirmations from their own experiences.

Students will:

1. engage in meaningful conversations
2. improve communication and vocabulary skills.
3. create feelings of self-worth through positive thinking
4. use journaling to promote Mindfulness while enhancing writing skills.
5. develop sensory clarity, equanimity, and concentration skills.

Materials:

- Interactive whiteboard
- The Miracle Morning: The Art of Affirmation by Brianna Greenspan and Hal Elrod—page 51
- Physical or Digital notebook
- Sticky Notes, pen, pencils, colored pencils, markers, and glue sticks.

Lesson Procedure:

Step 1

- Ask the students what 'Gratitude" means. Let them answer, then make sure that they understand it means appreciating what is good in our lives and being thankful for those things.
- Engage students in a meaningful conversation about being grateful.
- Students will brainstorm about things they are grateful for.

Step 2 - Silence

- Show students how to breathe mindfully. Inhale through their nose and exhale through their mouth in four-count or six-count breathing (inhale for a count of 4 or 6, exhale for a count of 4 or 6).

Step 3 - Affirmations

- Using the book, the *Miracle Morning: Art of Affirmation*, the students will read page 51. Then, collaboratively, they will interpret the poem and share examples of how to experience gratitude at a deeper level.

Step 4 - Visualizations

For one minute, ask the students to close their eyes and visualize:

1. What it will feel like to be grateful.
2. See the faces of the people you are grateful for.
3. Do the activities needed to show gratitude and kindness to others.

Step 5 - Reading

- Students will color page 51. While coloring the page, ask the students to think about how to answer or complete each statement presented on page 51.
- Then, give the students about 15 minutes to work on their journals.
- Ask the students to answer or complete each statement presented on page 51.

Assessment Idea

- Students will answer or complete each statement presented on page 51. This assignment must be completed in their digital or physical **Journal for Mindfulness.**

Lesson Idea 3: Create a Positive Affirmation Collage

In this lesson, adaptable for grades 3- 8th, students explore *the Miracle Morning: Art of Affirmation* book to identify and analyze positive affirmations from their own experiences.

Students will:

1. engage in meaningful conversations
2. improve communication and vocabulary skills.
3. create feelings of self-worth through positive thinking
4. use journaling to promote Mindfulness while enhancing writing skills.
5. develop sensory clarity, equanimity, and concentration skills.

Materials:

- Interactive whiteboard
- The Miracle Morning: The Art of Affirmation by Brianna Greenspan and Hal Elrod
- Physical or Digital notebook
- Sticky Notes, pen, pencils, colored pencils, markers, and glue sticks.

Lesson Procedure:

Step 1

- Introduce the word affirmation. Have students investigate the meaning in the dictionary, Latin root, and affix.
- Engage students in a meaningful conversation about the word affirmations.
- Explain to students how positive affirmations help people to feel empowered to face situations.
- Provide students with examples:
    - ✓ I am strong
    - ✓ I got this!
    - ✓ I can do it!

Step 2 - Silence

- Show students how to breathe mindfully. Inhale through their nose and exhale through their mouth in four-count or six-count breathing (inhale for a count of 4 or 6, exhale for a count of 4 or 6).

Step 4 - Visualizations

- For one minute, ask the students to close their eyes and visualize situations when they need to hear a positive affirmation to motivate and empower themselves.
-

Step 3 - Affirmations

- Ask the students to create their own positive affirmation to empower themselves whenever they need it.

Step 5 –

- Then, the students will create a digital collage about themselves or a collage using cutouts, stickers, pictures, and words from a magazine.
- They need to include images and statements to focus on positive affirmations.

Assessment Idea

- Once finished, the students will place their college as a cover page for their digital or physical **Journal for Mindfulness.**

Resource List

- A class set of The Miracle Morning Art of Affirmation book by Hal Elrod and Brianna Greenspan
- Smartboard/projector
- Computers/ Laptops (optional)
- Composition notebooks, art supplies such as pencils, pens, and markers.

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