



A G Cox Middle School Counseling Department Newsletter

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I CAN..., I WILL..., , I'M MY OWN SUPERHERO, I'M IN CHARGE OF HOW I FEEL AND TODAY I CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY

by **Mrs. Demetrise Cobb** May 2020

Notice the heading this month begins with "I". The best **affirmations** are made by someone about themselves. Looking in the mirror will give you a clearer view of you and no one else. Self love is not overrated it is highly important!

Using positive **affirmations** can draw positive energy towards you and cause a circle of positive energy to surround you. What is a positive affirmation? It's a creative way to dispel any negative myths you've said about yourself or something that someone else has said that you don't have to accept as your truth.

How to create your own affirmation: **First**, identify a negative belief. What negative words has someone said to you that you began to believe so much so when you hear the words you've repeated them? **Second**, challenge those words by writing them down and looking at ways to remove them or change them. This is the first layer of your affirmation. **Thirdly**, write in present tense, not as it was but as it is and use "I" for first person, meaning you're saying it out loud to yourself. **Fourth**, you have an affirmation change, keep the statement short. **Fifth** and last but not least, make it count, use an explanation point in your mind of determination about a powerful positive word that inspires you!

LIKE: I CAN . . . ; I WILL . . . ; I'M MY OWN SUPERHERO BECAUSE I . . . ; I CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY TODAY AND I WILL . . .



That's it. Keep in mind just like negative self-talk can last and cause negative effects you are able to build your esteem by using what is really true about you through positive self-talk! Repeat your affirmations daily and they become your belief system about who? yourself - no one should be able to tell you who you are unless they positively share in your affirmation!



YOU're Not Quite Done with Us.....

- Students are encouraged to continue on line learning.
- Set aside a place in your home or on a sunny day, a place outside where you have less distractions
 - Check your school email
- Daily, schedule time to work hard even with your most challenging subjects, then take a break, start with the next subject until you're finished for the day.
- Change your thoughts of a grade since school is different now, a difference is you're challenging Y.O.U not A. B. & Cs

PARENT CONVERSATION
STARTER

Let's read what the experts have to say about using technology too much.... If interested go to screenagersmovie.com.

Digital Binging — Is It A Problem?



Understandably most young people are on screens a ton right now. Thank goodness there are all sorts of great things made possible via screen time. But, what are the potential costs of loads of certain screen time activities on their brain health and mood? Are there ways to do changes in tech time that might help them feel better — even while keeping the same total amount of screen time? Clifford Sussman, MD, is a psychiatrist for children and adolescents in Washington, DC, and he is well known for his work in treating those with problematic internet and video game use. He and I have presented together at the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Conference and have shared ideas over the years. Sussman and I were talking last week and I realized now would be a good time to share with you the brain model and action steps that he often teaches his clients. No matter if you put his suggestions into practice, this is a great science topic to discuss with youth in your life. Sussman talks about “digital binging” — many hours on end, without any real breaks doing things such as video games, social media, youtube, shows, etc. This leads to what he calls the “residual effect” on the brain with prolonged use of such activities. The residual effect of the brain is caused by changes in the physiology of the brain. The brain has a reward center called the Nucleus Accumbens, where dopamine is the

chemical released by one neuron to signal the adjacent neuron. We can call the first neuron “Neuron A” and the second one, “Neuron B.” Neuron A will secrete dopamine in the small space between itself and Neuron B. Neuron B has specific receptors for dopamine. When dopamine attaches to the receptors, it causes feelings of pleasure and reward. Dopamine is what causes chocolate to taste good, etc.

In instant gratification activities, such as social media, TV shows, and video games, dopamine is secreted non-stop. With ongoing dopamine release, the receiving neuron will eventually decrease its number of receptors for dopamine. This is because the body is always working to stay in homeostasis (balance). If your brain gets bombarded continuously by dopamine, you start to develop a tolerance to it — meaning the intensity of good feelings decreases. The dopamine receptors have lessened, so even though there is dopamine present, the receiving neuron doesn’t fire off much of a signal because the receptors to the dopamine are less. Sussman says that this can lead to a higher sense of boredom. Boredom is not a pleasant state.

When the person stops doing social media or playing video games after several hours, they may feel cranky or just not very happy. They may think it is only because they want to be on screens more, but part of these lower feelings can be due to having fewer dopamine receptors. Non-screen activities may just not be that appealing because the receptors are less (downgraded) so things, like reading a book or being with family, might not be as enjoyable as could be. The person may not be consciously aware of any lower feelings from normal daily activities, but they are experiencing this state.

Solutions Dr. Sussman Suggests: Know this key point With time off of screens the dopamine receptors start to regenerate themselves. This is why Sussman does a lot of work with his clients to get them to take many breaks between engaging screen time activities to let the brain receptors get back to equilibrium.

Change the conversation Rather than parents talking about activities as “work vs. play,” consider talking about activities as high dopamine and low dopamine activities. High dopamine activities are ones where there is a constant, high flow of dopamine, such as video games, web surfing, and watching shows. Low dopamine activities are ones with delayed gratification — they can be enjoyable, or can lead to a sense of well being by eventually achieving things like completing a homework assignment. Some examples include exercising or playing board games,

which are still fun but have a slower pace. Another good example is baking, which is enjoyable, and then there is a short high from the reward of eating the baked good.

Alternate high and low dopamine activities Dr. Sussman says that the issue is not so much the total number of hours of high dopamine activities on screens, but instead, there need to be many breaks from those high dopamine activities so that dopamine receptors can return to more normal levels.

He suggests that for teens, only about one hour at a time of a high dopamine screen activity be done before taking a break. And for younger kids, it should be more like 30 minutes. And then whatever the time spent on a high dopamine activity should be followed by that same amount of time for low dopamine activity (on or off-screens — but ideally many times off screens). So if a teen girl played an hour of Fortnite, she would do a low dopamine activity for an hour before going back to do high dopamine screen activities. If a teen spends two hours on social media, they should then be off of high dopamine screen activities for two hours.

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Important Resources:
<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/>

IFS Crisis Chat:
www.integratedfamilyservices.net Wednesday- Friday
10AM - 2PM

Teen Crisis Text Line: text
START to 741-741
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Safe Place: text
SAFE and your current
location to 69866

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>