

-§§- For Professional Counselors and Coaches -§§-

Please first read the free client material on "Focusing on Your Presence of Mind with Mindful Affirmations." This client material may be freely re-distributed "as is." Available at <http://www.realpsychsolutions.com/uploads/Focusing-Presence-Mind-Mindful-Affirmations-rps.pdf>

This article contains additional background material for counselors/coaches plus information/suggestions on how to effectively use POM-MA in your practice.

note: if you are reading this on a computer, underlined items are hotlinks

**How To Use
"Presence of Mind - Mindful Affirmations"
In Your Practice**

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SUMMARY

"Mindful Affirmations" (a term coined in my book "[*Presence of Mind - Mindful Affirmations*](#)", or 'POM-MA') support the theories of modern day psychotherapies and can serve as an adjunct to:

- **ACT- Acceptance Commitment Therapy:** Embracing one's reality can lead to healthier life choices. Mindful Affirmations help the reader accept and tolerate their past mistakes without criticism and self-imposed judgments. They also aid in the self-forgiveness process.
- **CBT - Cognitive Behavior Therapy:** Identifying faulty thinking can lead to healthy thought restructuring and more adaptive behaviors. Mindful Affirmations encourages the reader to step back and look at their mental blocks, resistance and maladaptive behaviors.
- **DBT - Dialectical Behavior Therapy:** Being aware and accepting the totality of one's experience can bring about the motivation to change. Mindful Affirmations support conscious living, self-validation and gradual change.

RATIONALE/FORMAT

The POM-MA book was intentionally made into a convenient 4x6" pocket size, with minimal words, intriguing photos and (in the print form) lots of room for journaling.

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[Direct link to POM-MA book in the RealPsychSolutionsStore.](#)

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Most people are visual, auditory or tactile learners and, yet, today, few people have the time or inclination to read an in-depth article. Some capture the symbol, others need to hear their own voice and still others get meaning through writing. The book supports all three ways of learning. Pictures can evoke thoughts; words can be read out loud to validate what we already know but don't want to face; and the journal pages in the print version ("My Ideas") can release the reader's inside wisdom, quiet their entrapped feelings and help identify his/her mental blocks to achieving life balance.

When my clients have been encouraged to read a self-help book of their choosing, they rarely complete the task and, if they do read it, they lose its message by the time the next session rolls around. In addition, it has been my experience that people want immediate validation, verification, and empowerment. Life is full of paradoxes making problems into opportunities and vice versa. POM-MA was written with the intent to give the reader a chance to step outside the paradoxes they create and discover, without judgment, what is not working. Awareness leads to acknowledgment which leads to change.

The inspirational thoughts and photographs in POM-MA were carefully selected to not only intrigue but, empower the reader to find his/her own truth. The concept of validation, balance and change are important to stress to the reader.

The photos are intentionally **non**-photographic, or even **un**-realistic, which means they are they are designed to **provoke** thought and **not** to direct or focus thought.

POM-MA has 31 Affirmations and images so the book could act as a calendar/diary (but need not be). An inner thought and piece of personal wisdom for each day offer the reader a chance to examine and let go of what might be hanging them up or "hijacking" them from living in the moment.

The book is also organized into three sections: thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The first 11 Affirmations are dedicated to witnessing *one's misperceptions and illogical thinking*; the next 10 are devoted to *examining one's feelings and emotions*; and the last 10 are focused on *observing one's self-defeating behaviors*. No single section has to be read in its entirety, or even sequentially. You can begin or end up anywhere in the book and walk away being moved in some intuitive way.

HOW TO USE POM-MA AS AN ADJUNCT TO YOUR PRACTICE

POM-MA was written with several uses in mind:

Inspirational Guide

Although not specifically "spiritual" in intent, the reader can use the book as an inspirational calendar... a cherished source of wisdom and symbol of hope for each day. It can be left on one's bedside and easily taken in one's luggage or purse for momentary reinforcement. It can also be used as a precursor for a meditative, yoga or even coaching/counseling experience. Some readers have spontaneously remarked to me that its simple language helps them see how convoluted their own thinking and emotions can get at times. My clients' have reported that after reading a Mindful Affirmation, they are able to see with fresh eyes and no self-condemnation what past choices/behaviors haven't worked for them. With an "open mind" they ready to begin to commit to a new path which could even mean getting help from outside sources.

Interactive Journal

The reader can use the book as a daily/monthly journal, writing something about their genuine thoughts and unique way of being in the world. Without any pressure, the reader may elect to write about a similar experience they had using the Mindful Affirmation as a metaphor for self-empathy. They also may write in the "idea" something unrelated to the Mindful Affirmation but, more related to the corresponding photo which were selected to evoke one's intuitive mind. Regardless, of what they choose to write, the reader should be encourage to go back and review what they have written and make a note of validation, i.e. finding something in their original message that still makes sense to them.

Workbook

The reader can use POM-MA to not only identify certain blocks to awareness, acceptance, or being present, but ways they can overcome their resistance to change. Fear of being assertive or just speaking up can be noted in "My Ideas" along with ways to troubleshoot that confidence problem. When the client sees their counselor or coach they can work more concretely on what they want to change and their commitment toward that desired change. Together they can begin to encourage or review the client's behavioral rehearsal and practice. Written self-

observations along with journaling about insights before, during, and after new behavioral sequence can reinforce the reader's commitment to behavioral change.

The counselor/coach can set up conditions for the client to observe or try on new behaviors and report about them in their next session. This works to validate and empower the client to take more healthy risks and go further in their self-exploration. Also, using the "My Idea" pages to write about observations about their effectiveness, emotional control, self-empowerment and personal self-management can reinforce their commitment toward healthy change. This can be noted in the statement *"I noticed in the meeting that I didn't speak but, I was less worried about being called on."*

A few of my clients have been able to hear what is deep inside themselves by rewriting the Affirmation in their own words.

Clinical and Coaching Tool

Counselors can use the book to point out that no one is immune to pain or misery, but it is how we approach it that can make all the difference. The counselor is in a pivotal place to help the obsessed, borderline, depressed or anxious client accept what no longer works in their life and find that life is still very manageable.

The *auditory* client can be directed to read the passage out loud and then asked to say it in their own words with the book closed. Having the client next write down their own reformulation of the Affirmation can support greater awareness and memory retention.

For instance, on the page "Getting Enough Rest" (p 21) the client might say and write, *"I used to take my body's need for sleep for granted but, now I know I can't be efficient at work unless I put myself to sleep so I can wake up feeling ready to meet the demands of my day."*

The *visual* client can be directed to the photo and then asked to close his/her eyes and imagine the last sentence of the Affirmation as it relates to themselves. For instance on the page "Enjoy Life" (p 16) the last sentence is *"Today I will take concrete steps toward enjoying the life I have at this moment."* The client would be instructed to imagine taking (actual) steps toward a physical object they enjoy and asked to visualize what those steps might look like if s/he would start taking them. If they can't see anything, the counselor can ask the client to just imagine the blocks

or what is in their way of getting to enjoyment and write about it in “My Idea” section. The counselor can also suggest that the client imagine a destination or door labeled “enjoyment” to help in the visualization process. The counselor keeps helping the client to focus on their breathing during the visualization to remain focused on the present. Regardless, of what the client sees, the counselor gently encourages the client to draw or write about what that was.

There is no one right or wrong way to complete any of these exercises so the client should not feel that it is a test but, rather a unfolding of their true and genuine nature.

The *tactile* client may be encouraged to acknowledge the texture and the physical attributes of each Affirmation and corresponding photo. They can be encouraged to draw in the “My Idea” section how that experience would appear to them.

Another way of using the book therapeutically is for the counselor to encourage the client to look more deeply at one aspect of the passage by asking them to close their eyes and visualize “*What can they see come out of this passage for themselves?*” The counselor grounds the client in this visualization by establishing steady breath flow and saying “*let the image of what you can see just come to you, if you meet resistance, distractions or blocks just notice them and let them come in and out of your mind without judgment.*” In this way the client can’t fail. The counselor then encourages the client to talk about the image(s) and write in the “My Ideas” section what interfered or supported the image they visualized and what they need to acquire or let go of in their life to make that image become a true part of their reality.

The counselor can devote a few sessions to each page of the book to help the client face more of what might be getting in their way of being positive, balanced, moderate or calm.

Coaches can use the book both diagnostically and for goal setting purposes. It can help the coach see where in the cycle of change the client is at any moment. If the client for instance is at a meditative level of change, the coach might engage the client in a discussion about what could help him/her get into a more active phase of change. Also, the coach can have the client relate their priorities or goals to the appropriate affirmation. The client can be encouraged to use the book to keep track of their progress. The coach in turn can help the client discuss the step to help them get to next level of their desired lifestyle change. For instance the coach can have the client look at the “Resting” page (p21) and ask them to write down a behavioral goal

for getting more rest in their day. The coach and client agree that the goal is measurable and can be attained. Then in the next session, the coach and client can re-examine how s/he did in achieving or sabotaging the goal to get more rest. They may elect to revise the goal so the client has more confidence in their ability to meet their goal. This can be done with every page of the book or just the resistance areas the client is currently focusing on in the coaching session. The life or wellness coach can also work on “appreciative inquiry” using this book. Appreciative inquiry is They can be encouraged in a nonjudgmental way to see how they have overcome hurdles in their life and can in the future. Also, the coach can help the client work more creatively with resistance using the book by assigning pages to work on that dovetail with the client’s challenges. For instance, if the client has difficulty staying motivated, the coach can ask the client to find a mindful affirmation that may lead to a solution they may be seeking for living a healthy life. Repeating this in every session can support the sustainable behavioral change. Using the “my idea” section the coach can encourage the client to write about their unique needs and way they are staying focused on their physical, mental and emotional health. Such writing can help the client become proactive in removing unhealthy behaviors and making wellness a priority.

Thanks very much for your interest! Please [email me](#) with your comments.

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