

New Year's affirmations

TRY A TWIST ON RESOLUTIONS

THE FRESH SLATE OF A NEW YEAR OFFERS THE CHANCE TO REFLECT ON THE RECENT PAST and set goals for the year to come. We call these goals New Year's resolutions, and they tend to entail a firm decision to *do* or *not do* something different for the next 365 days.

Despite the good intentions behind these annual goals, most New Year's resolutions are notorious for being broken. This year, consider crafting a less-rigid roadmap for the year to come, using affirmations rather than resolutions.

"Affirmations can actually change our beliefs and bring a greater awareness to what we are creating in our lives," says Kim Brewer, who has taught classes on affirmative prayer and meditation at the Center for Spiritual Living in Reno. "Affirmations focus on the *experience* we desire, whereas resolutions tend to be focused on an outer goal and are often abandoned at some point during the year."

To compose your own affirmations for the new year, Brewer suggests first taking time to figure out which areas of your life you wish to alter or improve. Then, write one or two positive statements to support the desired change in that area.

For instance, if you hope to have improved health in 2012, an affirmation might be "I experience radiant health." If your aim is to create more loving relationships, you could affirm "I express love easily."

According to Brewer, the most effective affirmations are personal, positive, present, and powerful. Each statement should be written in the first-person present tense — *I am, I express, I experience* — using words and phrases that resonate with you.

Be sure to use positive language, affirming what you do want to happen, not what you hope to prevent. For example, you would affirm "I experience divine order in every area of my life," rather than "I will not allow my desk and closet to get messy."

Speak your new year's affirmations daily, with confidence and authority. Another option is to write them down each day, or place the positive statements on notes around your home or office.

"The purpose of creating and using affirmations is to train our thoughts in a conscious, positive direction and to dissolve beliefs we hold about ourselves and our lives that no longer serve us," Brewer says. "Use your affirmations until they become your experience."



AFFIRMATION EXERCISE

Explore your beliefs

Take a piece of paper, draw a line down the center, and write your affirmation on the left. On the right, begin writing down whatever comes to mind. Often, these thoughts may reveal your own resistance to the affirmation. Continue the process of writing the affirmation and response until there is no longer any resistance on the right side of the page. ■



Homemade beauty

Recipes for natural skin care

FROM SALT AND SUGAR TO PLAIN YOGURT AND CANNED PINEAPPLE, there are plenty of inexpensive, all-natural items that can take your skin-care regime to a whole new level. In *Earthly Essentials: A Face and Body Recipe Guide Book*, local author and veteran esthetician Marcia Fialdini shares her formulas for the best homemade beauty products.



“When I was a young girl, my mom used to put oatmeal on her face as a mask, and I always found it so fascinating,” Fialdini says. “Ever since then, I’ve been exploring the use of natural items for skin care.”

Today, Fialdini counts more than two decades as a professional in the spa and beauty industry. Currently, she works as a spa consultant and also teaches classes at a local beauty school.

With the release of *Earthly Essentials*, readers have access to her all-natural recipes for an at-home spa experience. The book explains how to select and concoct a broad spectrum of beauty goods, from cleansers and moisturizers for the face to scrubs and creams for the body, along with bath soaks, lip scrubs, sachets, gift tips, and even men’s aftershave.

Here, Fialdini shares a few facial favorites from her book. She

suggests weaving these recipes into your existing skin-care routine for an extra beauty boost.

Fresh face

Once or twice a week, use plain yogurt mixed with a bit of citrus juice — either after or instead of your regular face wash — and avoid getting it in your eyes.

“Your skin will look brighter and feel squeaky clean,” Fialdini

says, “thanks to the lactic acid in the yogurt.”

Tone up

Following your morning or evening face wash, place a few drops of this homemade toner on a cotton ball. Mix one ounce of unsweetened organic apple juice or apple cider vinegar with three ounces of alcohol-free witch hazel.

“Apple juice and apple cider vinegar both contain malic acid, which is a natural exfoliant that really brightens the skin,” Fialdini says. “The witch hazel is great for toning and refreshing.”

Tropical scrub

The author of *Earthly Essentials* advises most women to exfoliate their facial skin no more than two or three times a week. Try this recipe for Pineapple Upside Down Cake — on your face, not in the oven.

Mix one ounce finely ground raw organic sugar with four tablespoons of unsweetened, crushed canned pineapple. Add one tablespoon of organic

brown sugar, and stir to a medium consistency — if it’s too runny, add more brown sugar.

“You just want to rub it on lightly,” Fialdini says. “The pineapple is actually an enzyme that digests the dead skin cells, so between the pineapple and the gentle rubbing, you’re going to get an excellent exfoliation.”

Mask and glow

For skin that glows, apply a soothing mask to your face two or three times a week, after you exfoliate. Here is a recipe for the Banana Smoothie, straight from *Earthly Essentials*: Mix one-half smashed banana with one ounce of sweet almond oil, and add two tablespoons of dry milk powder.

Stay hydrated

To give your face an extra dose of moisture, Fialdini

suggests switching out your store-bought lotion for homemade hydration a couple times a week. Blend one ounce of shea-butter lotion with two to four drops of lavender essential oil, and use this face cream morning or night.

For those with dry, mature skin, Fialdini recommends mixing sweet almond oil or grapeseed oil with a few drops of lavender essential oil — used only at night.

Earthly Essentials: A Face and Body Recipe Guide Book by Marcia Fialdini is available on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. ■