

Lesson Name:

What is My True Beauty?

Student Objectives:

- Define self-image, self-esteem, ideal self, affirmations.
- Connect ideal self to affirmations.
- Create affirmations from self-identity statements.

Educator Preparation:

- Familiarize yourself with the lesson outline and the story.
- Read "[Self](#)" by Saul McLeod.
- Be ready to share an example of your own affirmations.
- Prepare a graphic [organizer worksheet](#) for students.

Introduction:

Hello! Today I am sharing with you a lesson about how you can use affirmations to focus on a positive self-image in order to develop into your idealized self.

Instruction:

How many times do you see a photo of yourself and only see the negatives? Maybe you wish your teeth were whiter or your nose smaller. Or maybe other things stick out to you when you see a photo of yourself. How many times do you re-take a selfie because the person in the photo doesn't show your best self? These voices of self-doubt don't just end with our appearance. All day long it seems there is a voice in our heads telling us we aren't good enough. What if we could turn that voice around and create a new voice in our head reminding us of our beauty instead of reminding us of our shortcomings?

Before we get to our article today, I want to watch a video of an advertisement that was created by the company Dove. Now, my point is not to advertise Dove products—I don't even personally use their brand. But, I love this advertisement they created several years ago

because it powerfully shows that the way we view ourselves is not the way that others may view us. It also shows the power of thinking more positively about ourselves.

Show [video](#).

Interaction:

To me, this advertisement really emphasizes that the voice inside our head, filled with self-doubt, isn't really the way other people see us. This isn't just something women experience—regardless of our gender, we often hear those voices of self-doubt. It is so easy to be self-critical, but it is powerful to view ourselves in a positive way. Next, we are going to read an article together that explains the connection between how we view ourselves and the power of positive thinking.

Go over "[Self-concept](#)" by Saul McLeod.

**Teacher note: Depending on the ability/maturity level, you might read the article to students or summarize the following key points:*

- In the article, the author defines self-concept as a general term for how we view ourselves. He claims that there are three different ways in which to understand self-concept: our self-image (how we view ourselves), how much we value ourselves (self esteem), and what we want to be (our idealized self).
- First, the author talks about our self-image—how we view ourselves. He says we tend to view ourselves in different categories: physical description (I have green eyes), social roles (I am a teacher and a daughter), person traits (I worry a lot), and existential statements (I am a human being). Our self-image is not always accurate though—it is shaped by the media, our family, and our friends.
- Second, the author discusses self-esteem—how much we value ourselves. If we have high self-esteem, we have confidence in ourselves and we experience greater happiness. If we have low self-esteem, we tend to feel insecure and worry about what others think. Our self-esteem can fluctuate depending on the situation. It is shaped by our relationships, our social roles, how others respond to us, and how we feel we compared to others. Our goal is to grow in our self-esteem so that we can feel more confident and happy with who we are.
- Third, the author introduces the idea of the idealized self—this is who we would like to be. The author interestingly notes that sometimes there is a huge gap between our

self-image and our idealized self. The author calls this incongruence. There will always be a difference between our self-image and our idealized self, but when the gap is large, it is very easy to become frustrated with ourselves.

Closure:

In the article, the author mentions that oftentimes, there is a mismatch between the way we view ourselves and the way we want to be, which leads to negativity.

There's a connection here to the example of the Dove beauty advertisement from earlier. The women all wanted to be super beautiful. That was their idealized self. But, their self-image did not match up with that—they did not think they were beautiful and so they emphasized all their imperfections. Because of this mismatch between their idealized self and their self-image, the women often felt negative about their appearance. But, through this experiment, they discovered that their self-image did not match how other people saw them at all.

What is a way that we can help our self-image and our idealized image to match up more closely? One way is through affirmations. Affirmations are a type of positive thinking. They are positive phrases about yourself and your world that you repeat to yourself daily as a way of helping you see yourself as your idealized self instead of only focusing on the negatives. Rather than listening to the negative voice inside our head, we create a new voice—a positive voice—to speak to us instead. Research has shown that when we use affirmations to develop a more positive self-image, the affirmations have the power to shift the way we think about ourselves, bringing more connections between our self-image and our idealized self. To go back to the Dove advertisement, by repeating positive affirmations, we can begin to see ourselves as a beautiful image instead of one that is filled with all our imperfections.

Activity:

Today, we are going to focus on developing affirmations that reflect our more idealized self by responding to the article that we read today. I am going to provide a modeled example of how you are going to respond to the article and fill in the graphic organizer.

**Teacher goes over the graphic organizer with the modeled examples.*

As you work through this worksheet, think about how you can use these affirmations in your daily thought life to grow in your ability to think of yourself as an idealized self. It is through this process you can focus on your true beauty!

Additional Resources:

- [Reading comprehension questions on “Self-concept” article.](#)
- [Ted Talk: How to Make Positivity Stick](#)
- [Ted Talk: Promoting Confidence in Teen Girls](#)
- [Teen Therapist on Positive Affirmations](#)