

Reason, Excuse, or Affirmation?

Creating powerful language that supports your life and health

You say your workout program is going to start tomorrow. When tomorrow becomes today, you either do or don't go to the gym. Later on, you describe your choice to yourself and those around you. Is your description a reason, an excuse, or an affirmation? Or could it even ... somehow ... be all three? How you describe your behavior has everything to do with the results that show up in your life. Let's explore how!

Reasons, excuses, and affirmations. We'll start by considering these three common types of statements that both source and explain what you do.

Reason: A reason is a statement that explains your behavior. At the most basic level, a reason is neutral. It neither builds you up nor cuts you down. It simply says what is. For example:

1. I ate lunch because I was hungry.
2. I stopped for gas because the tank was low.
3. We went to the movies because we thought the show sounded interesting.

Excuse: An excuse is a special kind of reason. You use it to explain to yourself or someone else why you acted in a way that conflicts with a stated intention or your values, or compromises your integrity. An excuse attempts to justify why you did something you believe you should not have done or why you didn't do something you think you should have. For example:

1. I ordered pancakes for lunch because I've had a really hard week. The diet can wait.
2. I'm late because I forgot the gas tank was low and there was a really long line at the station.
3. We went to the movies instead of my niece's piano recital because my sister never comes to my kids' stuff and anyway it sounded boring.

Affirmation: An affirmation is a firm statement or assertion. When you affirm that you are who you say you are (as in a court of law), you confirm the truth of your statement. Affirmation comes from the root word meaning "to make firm." In other words, affirmation is part of the process you use to create material change in the world through your language.

We tend to use the term "affirmation" to mean a positive statement intended to create something we desire. In truth, any firm statement, whether positive or not, creates the reality you describe as you speak it. Whether you consciously choose the statements or they just arise by default, the process is the same. Firm statements form the context of your life.

A firmly stated excuse (especially one you repeat frequently) may create results that don't match what you're consciously looking for. Imagine the difference you'd see in your life de-

pending on which of the following statements you choose to describe your circumstances to yourself and those around you.

1. I have no willpower when it comes to making healthy food choices. **OR** I feel great eating fresh healthy foods.
2. I'm so busy I just can't seem to get anywhere on time these days. **OR** There's always time for the most important things in my life.
3. My family is so dysfunctional! **OR** I come from a fun-loving and creative family.

It's not too hard to imagine that the experiences we read about a moment ago under the "excuse" section (pancakes for lunch, late for an appointment, and skipping a niece's piano recital) match up with the first set of affirmations. They might have been spoken aloud or else held silently in mind. Either way, the stage for action was set by the speaker's language.

Yet what results might have shown up in context of the alternate affirmations? Let's consider.

1. [I feel great eating fresh healthy foods.] I'm so thankful to have some free time coming tomorrow after this busy week. That salmon salad sounds great for lunch.
2. [There's always time for the most important things in my life.] Hey, I'd better get a move on. Gotta stop for gas on the way to that appointment.
3. [I come from a fun-loving and creative family.] Carol. Yeah, sometimes she overcommits herself, but I wouldn't miss little Jasmine's first piano recital for the world. She's such a cutie!

No excuses here. Positive affirmations, held clearly in mind, create the context from which resourceful choices are made. Whether it's appropriate self-care and a healthy lunch, consideration for other peoples' time, or being present for an important family event, these results maintain your integrity and values.

Positive affirmations can be the source for health, abundance, and satisfying relationships. That's a reason, not an excuse!

Elizabeth Eckert coaxes, cajoles, and gently guides the creation of healing intent. She's the founder of WordCures.com and author of the book "Word Cures: How to Keep Stupid Excuses From Sabotaging Your Health."

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