Written by Lama Chuck Stanford (Lama Changchup Konchok Dorje) Re-printed from the Kansas City Star newspaper
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Question: "Can positive affirmations change anything?"
Answer: From the Buddhist perspective all we can work on is our own mind. So, a positive attitude will definitely help us deal with the world in more effective and compassionate ways. 2,500 years ago the Buddha said, "The thought manifests as the word; the word manifests as the deed. The deed develops into habit; and habit hardens into character. So watch the thought and its ways with care, let it spring from love. Born out of concern for all beings....The shadow follows the body and never leaves it. In the same way, as we think, so we become."

If we examine our mind we can see that all of our actions by body, speech and mind, begin first as a thought. And where do thoughts come from? They don't arise from nothing. Thoughts manifest as a result of past causes and conditions. Therefore, in Buddhism we often recite supplications or aspirations to remind us of the positive or virtuous mind states that we hope to actualize.

As part of our daily practice we recite a type of positive affirmation known as the Four Immeasurables, which are, "May all beings be endowed with happiness; May all beings be free from suffering; May all beings never be separated from happiness; May all beings abide in equanimity, undisturbed by the eight worldly concerns." So, positive affirmations are powerful ways of reminding ourselves of our how we want to live our lives.

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