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JANUARY 2022

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5 Daily affirmations for a more ethical new year

Ethics expert, seasoned university professor, international speaker and author of the award-winning book *The Noble Edge*, [Dr. Christopher Gilbert](#)

Truth be told, making New Year's resolutions doesn't work. Research shows that while 50 percent of us make New Year's resolutions every year, less than 10 percent of them are kept. The decision to lose weight (the most common New Year's resolution) or to start exercising sounds perfectly reasonable and logical. The problem is we don't fuel our actions solely through reason and logic. Economics research proves that humans make decisions emotionally first, rationally second. It is our intuition, imagination and emotion that mainly fuel our behaviors.

Instead of resolutions – decisions solely from our left brain – let's make New Year's AFFIRMATIONS – positive statements that affirm the truth *and* fuel our emotions to live an ethical life.

Given the rather toxic moral era in which we find ourselves, I am going to suggest five daily affirmations that approach the holidays and 2022 with an ethical lens.

1. "I rely on the Guardrails"

Believe it or not, people who have been educated in ethics can make worse moral choices than those who have had no formal training. Why? Ethics training can actually fog up the right choices making ethics seem even greyer. We lose sight of our internal and external boundaries.

Ethics tell us right from wrong. There's no such thing as being 'sort of' ethical. The situation may make right and wrong hard to see, but like the guardrails on a high bridge, ethics keep us safe and if we look carefully enough, they show us the right and wrong directions along our journeys. Believe your ethics are those guardrails and you'll stay in the 'right' lane.

2. "I am climbing the Ladder"

Think of your ethical choices like the steps of a ladder. The first and lowest step is about ME. The decisions I make will reflect what is best for me, what I like and what I want regardless of the effect on others. Here someone might fudge on their taxes or lie to get out of a speeding ticket. Never mind the financial impact or danger imposed on someone else.

The second step on the ladder is about SOME Of US - the people I care about, my family, my company. If they gain something or avoid losing something by my choice, from that second step, I will justify that choice as ethical. I can justify keeping \$20 extra from a bank teller's miscount or a store clerk's mistake if I use it to benefit my family or a friend or even the homeless to whom I might donate it. The ethics in this situation are weighed solely on what some people in my chosen circle gain and ignore what others outside that group lose. The bank or store owns the money I'm using my way.



On the top step, the highest moral level of the ladder, ethics are about ALL OF US - not just some of us and not just me. This is the place we understand that all things ethical show care and concern for everyone we can affect.

Every ethical decision you've made or ever will make during your lifetime is at one of the steps of this moral ladder. Make the affirmation every day to climb higher with every choice you make.

3. "Being my own Guru will support my Progress"

It would be nice to have a sage or shaman next to us when making difficult decisions. But *you* have the wisdom to know right from wrong. Your decisions are yours. Every step up the moral ladder is yours. In truth, you are the only "guru" you need.

Make your choices wisely knowing that every moral step-up is well-supported. Try linking your views about right and wrong with your own personal progress. Exercise your best virtues. Know with absolute certainty that your climb comes with the assurance of every great spiritual and moral tradition in human history. Rest assured that you cannot fail; you can only progress with every choice.

4. "I am Trustworthy"

Your actions should always be worthy of the trust of others. Concentrate on the question, "Is this action going to create more trust with others or erode it?" Your choices either enrich or impoverish your trustworthiness. A lifetime of building trust can be shattered in moments. On the other hand, opportunities from building trust are limitless and the climb toward better ethical decision-making is part of the purpose of our lives. Transformation is a challenging process, but it is filled with life-changing possibilities. What goal in life doesn't require personal commitment? So, commit!

5. "I am committed to Responding, not Reacting"

Ethical actions result from utilizing your Knowledge, Judgment and Will. It's easier to make an enlightened ethical choice after some contemplation time. That also allows for those intangible "aha" moments that bring new patterns. Allow time for each of these capacities to coalesce when you are choosing so that instead of reacting automatically, you can respond thoughtfully. Start with what you know. Utilize judgment to ensure you're doing the right thing with what you know. Examine which step of the ladder you're using to make the choice. Then, once satisfied, act!

What you think about ethics becomes your ethic. If you believe ethics are grey, then you will find yourself in greyer and greyer situations where the choices get blurrier and blurrier. Where you see, know and act with the assurance that ethics are there to tell us right from wrong, so too will you be put into more and more situations where the answer is obvious despite the complexity of the circumstances. It takes work and the top rung of the moral ladder can sometimes appear impossible to achieve, but it's always there to ponder, and to inspire.

Remember...there's no right way to do the wrong thing. We *can* reclaim an ethical world one choice at a time. Now there's an empowering New year!