

Greetings CB,

Happy Wellness Wednesday! Welcome to all new and returning Falcons!

For those who do not know me, I'm Ms. McDougall, your Wellness Counselor. My role is to be of support to all of you regarding the many social and/or emotional challenges that may come your way. We are fortunate to have an additional Wellness Counselor on campus this year, Mrs. Juanita Patterson. If you're ever feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or not quite yourself – come on over to the Counseling Department. We're here to help.

Every Wednesday you will receive a message like this to offer you a bit of information regarding supporting your mental health or general self-care. I hope that you will take the time to read it, and please feel free to reach out to Ms. Patterson or me if you wish to discuss the topic or gain further information.

This year our Wellness Wednesday posts will include a weekly affirmation. Affirmations are positive statements that can help you to challenge and overcome self-sabotaging and negative thoughts, which we are all vulnerable to from time to time. When you repeat an affirmation often, and believe in it, you quiet the negative thoughts and give yourself greater opportunity for peace and success.

[Neuroplasticity](#), or your brain's ability to change and adapt to different circumstances throughout your life, offers a clue to help understand not only what makes affirmations work, but how to make them more effective.

Our brains sometime get a little mixed up on the difference between reality and imagination, which can be surprisingly useful.

Creating a mental image of yourself doing something — like acing a nerve-wracking interview or conquering your fear of heights by bungee jumping — activates many of the same brain areas that *actually* experiencing these situations would.

Regular repetition of affirming statements about yourself can encourage your brain to take accept positive affirmations as fact. When you truly believe you can do something, your actions often follow.

To get the most benefit from affirmations, you'll want to start a regular practice and make it a habit:

- **Start with 3 to 5 minutes at least twice a day.** Try saying affirmations upon waking up and getting into bed, for example.
- **Repeat each affirmation about 10 times.** Listen to yourself saying it, focusing on the words as they leave your mouth. As you say them, believe them to be true.
- **Ask a trusted loved one to help.** Listening to someone else repeat your affirmations may help reinforce your belief in them.
- **Make your routine consistent.** Try not to skip any days. If you meditate, affirmations can be a great addition to your [daily practice](#).
- **Be patient.** It may take some time before you notice any changes, so stick with your practice!

As we return to the excitement and challenges of school, our affirmation for this week is:

*I am confident and courageous.*

Take care and be well, CB,

Ms. McDougall