



# straight from The Heart

## Relationship 101: Practicing the art of affirming others



The practice of affirming is the first ingredient to experiencing joy in any relationship - Philippians 1:3-5 *"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now."*

**If we want to experience joy in our relationships then we must begin by affirming the people that we are relating with.**

Paul tells the Philippians that he values them and they bring him joy. Paul counts them as partners in the important work of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. When Paul said that the Philippians were partners in the gospel, he was pointing out their valuable contribution in spreading God's message. They contributed through their practical help when Paul was in Philippi and through their financial support when he was in prison.

**You cannot enjoy those you criticise.** This is not to say that you overlook sin, or you do not correct those who are going to hurt themselves or others. Nevertheless, there is enough good in the worse of us to affirm. You can only enjoy those you affirm. Affirmation lubricates relationships.

**Affirmation comes in different ways!** You can affirm by verbally praising

what another does or is worth. However, when you take time to play with your child, you are affirming his/her importance.

When you are patient in teaching someone a new skill, you are affirming their potential to learn the skill. Husbands, when you fulfil your vow of fidelity and unconditional love to your wives, you are affirming your integrity and the value of your wives.

**How do I affirm people that are different to me?**

Most of us know how to affirm people who are like us or people from whom we want something. Unfortunately, we often do not affirm those who are different from us or who oppose us, because to do so we suggest they are right and we are wrong. Even worse, we sometimes do not affirm those who are closest to us, because we take them for granted.

**The good news is that we can intentionally affirm anyone and everyone.**

I have seen fathers who affirm their children but are careless with their wives or vice versa. I have seen church people who affirm one another at church and are careless with their family members at home. I have also seen church members who affirm other churches except their own. (The grass seem to always look greener on the

other side - forgetting the water bill might be high). The truth is God gives us enough time, resources and words to affirm our spouse, child and anybody else He brings into our lives.

Before you go to bed tonight, pray with (that means out loud and maybe holding hands) your spouse, your parents or your child, and include in your prayer what you are thankful to God regarding them. You will be amazed how affirming that is to them. If you live alone why not try it on the phone. Do unto others as you want them to do to you. Make your motto; *'Others first'* especially during this Easter season.

Jesus laid down his life to lift up ours. For some of us affirming others might mean us having to die to self to bring joy into the life of others.

**Yemi Adeleke**



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