

Faith and Recovery by [Andrea Hercha Schmoock](#)

We have all heard the phrase "you have to have faith". When I heard that, I didn't understand what it meant or how it applied to my desire to recover from a mental illness. Thus, began my search to understand "faith".

FAITH AND RECOVERY What does faith have to do with recovery? Webster's dictionary defines faith as "unquestioning belief; complete trust or confidence; loyalty."

Further, I found a definition of faith in scripture in Hebrews 11: 1 as follows: "NOW FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT SEEN."

This last definition is the one that is of particular interest. To begin the process of recovery -- while we are ill -- we must start to develop this kind of faith or belief, and that is a belief that we can recover. Recovery is not possible for anyone without first faith [belief] that recovery is possible. To even begin to recover, we must start "believing" that it is possible. The faith [belief] [in recovery] is the assurance of the thing [recovery] hoped for, the conviction of things [recovery] not seen.

In other words, we have to believe in recovery before we ever even see the results of recovery. The old cliché "seeing is believing," in this case must be turned around to "believing is seeing." We must believe in the thing hoped for first before we ever experience seeing the thing hoped for.

How do we develop faith or belief? Faith is achieved through repeating affirmations. The process of repeating affirmations to oneself is the principle of auto-suggestion. Through the repeated use of this principle, we will convince our subconscious mind that we believe we will experience the results of the affirmations [beliefs].

FAITH is a state of mind which we develop at WILL through the application of affirmations using the principle of auto-suggestion. The only way anyone can develop faith at will is through repeating affirmations.

We all have faith -- negative or positive. Everyday we act on or exercise our faith or beliefs.. negative or positive. Our behaviors, illnesses, poverty, prosperity, relationships, feelings, self. image, etc. are all a direct result of our faith or beliefs, whether they are conscious or subliminal.

To illustrate, we have all at one time or another said to ourselves, "I feel rotten. I just can't get myself going." Or, "I'm really afraid if I go to work I will make a mistake and get fired." Because we have repeatedly affirmed [told] ourselves that we feel rotten and can't get going, our behavior is influenced and we may choose to lie in bed all day. Or when we tell ourselves repeatedly that we are afraid to go to work because if we make a mistake we will get fired, we tend to choose not to go out and look for work.

Consequently, if we tell ourselves we feel rotten and just can't get going, but get out of bed and go shopping or to work, we may find ourselves dragging and complaining to everyone around us how rotten we feel. We may go out and find a job in spite of telling ourselves we are afraid to work because if we make a mistake we will be fired. More than likely, we will have feelings and thoughts of fear, experience anxiety and confusion and, as a result, we may make mistakes which further reinforce our negative belief. Quite frankly, we may even lose our jobs because our faith [belief] can will it to happen.

These examples illustrate "negative faith," disbelief, doubt, faithlessness, and denial in the good things in life that we are all entitled to. On the other hand, when we take the time to discover our negative faith or beliefs, and develop opposite, positive beliefs by repeating positive affirmations, we can change how we think, how we feel, how we eat, our self-image, self-esteem, or anything we choose to change about ourselves.

If you tend to say, "I feel rotten," try saying repeatedly, "I feel terrific and happy" and learn to ignore the rotten feelings that you have as a result of telling yourself "I feel rotten," and in time you will notice that you do feel terrific and happy

Consequently, our belief or disbelief in recovery does affect our mental health. If we do not believe we can achieve recovery, nothing that any doctor or treatment does will have any real, healing effect. If we choose to disbelieve that recovery is possible, all the medications, therapy, or assistance won't do any good because our belief system will prevent us from responding positively to treatment.

When I was diagnosed with a mental illness, I was told that I would be mentally ill the rest of my life and would have to take medication; that I would be in and out of mental hospitals; and that I had an incurable disease caused by a chemical imbalance in my brain. If I had repeated this to myself, it would have become a "self-fulfilling prophecy," as we always live up to our affirmations or faith [beliefs]. Instead, I set out on a course to discover how to heal and recover. This action brought about my recovery from mental illness.

As you continue to meet or read about your peers who have recovered and as you learn to develop skills and techniques used by your recovered peers, you too can live up to a new self-fulfilling prophecy of recovery.

Let's affirm together repeatedly: "I am recovering. I believe that what my peers have achieved, gives me the hope that I can too. Today I choose to recover." ©