

# How Not to Affirm Yourself

MASHIYAT NAYEEM

You are minding your own business scrolling through Instagram and all you see is motivational quotes in colorful and flowery calligraphy. Or you're tapping into your inner white girl and delving into Tumblr-esque posts depicting long-haired, skinny first world girls who don't even relate to the nature of the quote.

You become attracted by #relatable under these posts and try to relate to those quotes because everything in the internet these days is supposed to be relatable for your generation. But alas, you end up failing in epic proportions because chances are, the only ways you can affirm yourself is having emotionally draining and often toxic thoughts as illustrated below.

Disclaimer: Examples used are purely for easy understanding. Life in general is harder than that.

#### "I'll be happy when..."

We all have goals we're aiming for to achieve a desirable life and in turn, happiness. Sometimes we only see the end picture, us sitting on a fluffy beanbag in our future mansion, eating pizza, happiness dripping into our souls with each ounce of oozing mozzarella. Maybe you're just dreaming of having your dream prince/princess/career/most coveted red stilettos at the moment. Whatever the case, you are setting boundaries to your ability to be happy. Allow yourself to be content with the present till the point you get what

you want. Of course it's not possible to acquire everything you desire so don't limit your happiness to something specific.

#### "It could be worse"

In contrast, you're allowed to feel sadness too. Just because someone beat you to the last slice of pizza and you're aware of the harsh reality of it doesn't mean you should suppress your emotions. Saying "it could be worse" won't solve anything. There's always someone worse off than you (e.g. That person who arrived after the pizza party was over) so you should be grateful for your current situation.

#### "I should have done... instead of..."

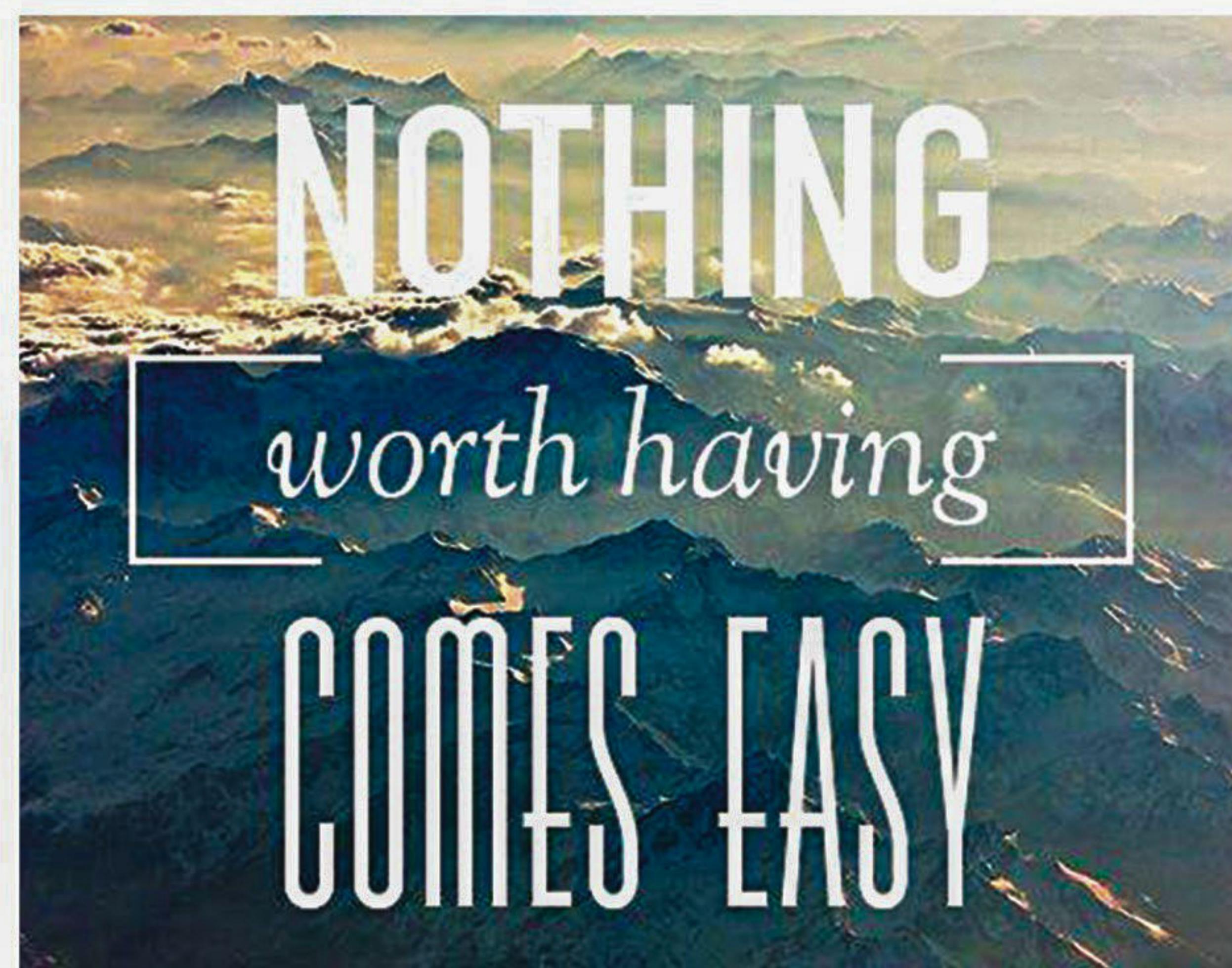
Truth to be told, there's no right or wrong decision when faced with difficult choices. Each choice brings about its own set of consequences so unless you choose something you'll never know which is right. It's not worth pondering over what you could have done because thanks to your incompetence you can never know the consequences of grabbing that pizza.

#### "Everything happens for a reason"

Things just happen whether you like it or not. When certain things lead to something positive, we think it has happened for a reason. But to say it for a negative incident is basically saying you deserve the awful fate.

#### "I haven't done this good enough"

It's easier to put ourselves down than appreciate. A lot of us don't know how to handle appreciation, we are quick to dismiss it as politeness or sarcasm thus hav-



ing ourselves believe that our effort is not good enough. We are afraid of being termed as arrogant but affirming ourselves like that diminishes any sense of pride or accomplishment we have. Instead we should give ourselves a pat on the back for coming this far and also keep room for improvement.

These thoughts are inevitable at times

but with a little mindfulness we can stop them from emotionally draining us. Yes, you don't have to be dead inside like everyone else these days.

*Mashiyat Nayeem has a genuine phobia of onions and has mastered the art of scavenging for beresta in her biryani. Learn more at [mashiyat.nayeem@gmail.com](mailto:mashiyat.nayeem@gmail.com)*

# Bonding beyond Words

MAYABEE ARANNYA

If you take away all the inside jokes, deep conversations, and basically any kind of talking from your current friendships, can you still be friends?

Imagine you are part of an international exchange programme or youth camp, or you've settled in a country where you don't speak the native language, or you've met new people with whom you don't share a common language. Becoming friends with people with a language barrier separating you can be daunting, but it isn't impossible.

#### Translators to the rescue

This is the most obvious way to communicate when you don't share the same language. Online translators, such as Google Translate, have changed the game when it comes to language barriers. Even though most of the translated sentences are borderline nonsense, the native speaker of the language will probably understand what you're trying to say no matter how funny the translations are.

#### A big game of charades

Charades is a great example of how you can convey a lot of your thoughts without having to speak a single word. We can point at objects, break down words and find things that sound similar, and basically use as many gestures as we can when we're trying to have a conversation. It might seem exhausting at



first but once you get used to it, it's quite fun. You'll feel triumphant every time you can successfully make the person understand what you're trying to say.

#### Singing and dancing

Music and dancing are universal. If you can bring about the topic of music, you'll find that there will be at least one

song you both have listened to and a great way to bond would be to sing it together and then help each other discover new songs of your respective languages or in general. Don't worry if you sound like a walrus when you sing. The main objective is to enjoy. You might also find that you're fans of the same

internationally acclaimed singer or band. There's no better feeling than finding people of the same fandom in your own country, let alone from different ones. Dancing together is also a fun activity that brings people together without the need for any verbal communication.

#### Sports and Games

Even if you're not athletic, playing games with each other is important when it comes to these kinds of friendships. A friendly game of table tennis, football, volleyball, anything that both parties can play, is one of the best ways to bond. You don't need to utter any words, and still understand each other and share your enjoyment. If you're both sports fans, it makes things even easier since sports are international and watching a match together will bring you a lot closer.

#### Exploring cultures

If you don't speak the same languages, you surely don't share the same culture, either. This becomes one of the most interesting aspects of the friendship. You can show the other person videos that showcase your cultural music and dance. You can cook traditional dishes for each other. You can use translators to try to share your country's history. While doing this, you might even end up finding common ground, which would lead to exciting topics you can continue to talk about.