

## **"Self-affirmation effects: the positive, the gloomy and the dark sides"**

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In this presentation, I shall outline some recent empirical findings (relating to health and environmental issues) that illustrate the beneficial consequences of self-affirmation manipulations (following Steele, 1988). However, I shall also counterbalance the recent optimism surrounding these kinds of effects with some misgivings about both their scope and the possible less welcome consequences of self-affirmation. For example, despite the apparently adaptive responses that can follow self-affirmation manipulations, there are some lines of research that point to the possibility of backfire effects, subsequent to self-affirmations. Backfire effects are where affirmations increase rather than decrease bias and resistance to change, (Sherman & Cohen, 2006, p. 218). Of course, some manipulations may elicit no effects! In a more speculative mode, I shall discuss some potentially more harmful effects concerning moral affirmation, with illustrations in relation to environment-related actions, a domain where we are developing research on this issue. Implications for theory and for applied research will be discussed.