BELIEFS

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you are right." Henry Ford

WHAT ARE BELIEFS?

A belief is an idea that a person holds as being true. It is a generalization, interpretation or assumption a person develops in reaction to a particularly emotionally laden event or a series of events.

A belief can come from different sources:

- a person's own experience
- the acceptance of cultural and societal norms (e.g., religion)
- what other people say (e.g., education, mentoring)
-

A potential belief sits with the person until they accept it as truth and adopt it as part of their individual belief system.
Each person evaluates and seeks sound reasons or evidence for these potential beliefs in their own way.
Since our beliefs were primarily formed when we were much younger, they are often limiting and need to be updated.

LIMITING BELIEFS

Limiting beliefs often fall into three major categories:

1. HOPELESSNESS: "My goal cannot be achieved under any circumstances."
2. HELPLESSNESS: "My goal can be achieved, but I lack the ability to achieve it."
3. WORTHLESSNESS: "I don't deserve to achieve this goal, because of something I am/I am not/have or have not done."

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SOMATIC BELIEFS

They are beliefs held in the physical body because they were taken on non-verbally at a very early or extremely vulnerable point in your life. They were formed without words. Somatic beliefs are in the muscle. We exercise and nourish them, without knowing them, by feeling, sensing and acting upon them without question, often because with are unaware.

WHY CHANGE LIMITING BELIEFS?

"Our beliefs are at the core of who we are."

Beliefs guide our decisions and behavior in all areas of life. They determine what we think is or is not possible. More often than not they prove to be self-fulfilling prophecies. Some of our beliefs are not fully our own, but rather blindly taken on from others. Once a belief is formed, we work overtime to prove it right, even if the belief is something negative like "Nobody likes me", "I am a failure" or "I will never get what I want."

To be successful, people need to shift these types of limiting beliefs to beliefs involving

Hope for the future,
A sense of self-efficacy and personal responsibility,
And a sense of self-worth and belonging.

Limiting beliefs sometimes operate like a 'thought virus' with a destructive capability similar to that of a computer virus or a biological virus. A 'thought virus' is a limiting belief that can become a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' and interfere with one's efforts and ability to heal or improve. Thought viruses contain unspoken assumptions and presuppositions which make them difficult to identify and challenge.

Limiting beliefs and thought viruses often arise as seemingly insurmountable standstills to the process of change. As such, a person will feel, **"I've tried everything to change this, and nothing works."** Dealing effectively with standstills involves finding and changing the limiting belief that is at their core.

Ultimately, we transform limiting beliefs and become 'immunized' to 'thought viruses' by expanding and enriching our models of the world and becoming clearer about our identities and mission. Limiting beliefs, for instance, are often

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developed in order to fulfill a positive purpose, such as protection, establishing boundaries, feeling a sense of personal power, etc. By acknowledging these deeper intentions and updating our mental maps to include other, more effective ways to fulfill those intentions, beliefs can often be changed quite easily.

THE POWER OF HOW

Many limiting beliefs arise as a result of unanswered 'how' questions.
If a person does not know how to change his or her behavior, it is easy for the person to build that belief, **"That behavior can't be changed."**
If a person does not know how to accomplish a particular task, the person may develop the belief, "I am incapable of successfully completing that task."
It is also important to provide the answers for a number of "how to" questions in order to help a person transform limiting beliefs. For example, in order to address a belief such as, "It is dangerous to show my emotions," answer the question, "How do I show my emotions and still stay safe."

EXAMPLES OF LIMITING BELIEFS

Do any of these beliefs look, sound, or feel familiar?

It will be difficult.

lt will take a long time.

I have to be certified to be a good coach.

I don't deserve it.

It's not in my nature to do that.

I can't afford it.

There's no one to help me.

Coaching is better than/not as good as therapy.

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I'm not smart enough.

I'm not strong enough.

I'm too old.

I'm not old enough.

Life is a struggle.

I have to do it all myself.

I can’t trust anybody.

If I charge more, I won't have any clients.

It's too big an idea.

I don't have the energy.

I'm too busy.

Discomfort is bad.

If I'm vulnerable, then I'm weak.

Relationships are hard.

People don't change.

I can't

ELICITING LIMITING BELIEFS
Complete the following sentences as a way to identify some of your limiting beliefs:

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1. Success is ...

2. In order to be successful I should ...

3. In order to be happy I need ...

4. Work is ...

5. I'd be happy in my work if ...

6. Good relationships are ...

7. If I was in a great relationship, I could ...

8. In order to have a great relationship I should ...

9. Children mean ...

10. If money didn't matter…

11. Healthy people are ...

12. My body is ...

13. Feelings are ...

14. Friends should ...

15. In order to relax I need ...

16. Joy is ...

17. Money is ...

18. To be a good parent I should ...

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19. Something I know for sure is ...

20. Another thing I know for sure is...

EXAMPLES OF EMPOWERING BELIEFS

These examples can help stimulate your thinking to create empowering beliefs that serve you or your client. This list includes several NLP presuppositions. One way you can think of the NLP presuppositions is as empowering beliefs!

The world is an abundant place.

I'm lovable just as I am.

There is no failure, only feedback.

I am worthy.

I have the courage to be vulnerable.

Vulnerability is strength, not weakness.

Life is a fun adventure!

It's safe to feel all my emotions.

Relationships are a rich learning environment.

Each person is unique.

I learn quickly and easily.

I have all the resources I need.

There is enough (love, money, time)

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I belong.

Behind every behavior is a positive intention.

People make the best choice available to them at the time.

I create my own reality.

I can handle whatever life brings.

I am creative.

I can achieve what I set my mind to do.

LIMITING BELIEF INVENTORY

Think about an area of your life where you feel unsatisfied (career, romantic relationship, family, financial, hobby, health, relationship to self, spirituality, Etc.).

MY OUTCOME IN THIS AREA IS

_____
_____
_____
_____

Now, take a few moments to complete the following statements:

1. I can't get what I want because

_____
_____
_____
_____

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2. Getting what I want would mean

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. The situation will never change because

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.I am not supposed to get what I want because

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. I am not capable of getting what I want because

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. It is wrong to want something else because

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. If I try to change my situation, then

_____
_____
_____

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_____

8. I'll always have this problem because

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. It is wrong to want to be different because

_____
_____
_____
_____

10. I don't deserve to get what I want because

_____
_____
_____
_____

(What have you done, or not done, that makes you unworthy of getting what you want?)

Practice turning the following limiting beliefs into how questions:

1. It is dangerous to try something new.
   (e.g., "How can one try something new and stay safe?"

2. If l get what I want, something bad will happen later on.

3. I am not creative enough to be successful.

4. I am too old to really learn anything new.

5. I am too young to have anything important to contribute.

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Summary:
Limiting beliefs can be updated and transformed by:

- Identifying and acknowledging the underlying positive intention.
- Identifying any unspoken or unconscious presupposition or assumptions at the base of the belief.
- Providing 'how to' information with respect to alternatives for fulfilling the positive intention or purpose of the limiting belief.
- Clarifying or updating key relationships, which shape one's sense of mission and purpose.

From Conversational Magic: Words to Awaken New Visions for our World by Robert Dilts

Beliefs are convictions or acceptances that certain things are true or real. Beliefs are generalizations. Beliefs are the things we presuppose to be true.

Some examples of beliefs:

- **Pollen causes allergies.**
- **Allergic responses are the result of a mistake by the immune system.**
- **Shifts in the earth's crust causes earthquakes.**
- **God's wrath causes earthquakes.**
- **It's not possible for a person to run a mile in less than 4 minutes.**
- **I will never be successful because I am a slow learner.**
- **Behind every behavior is a positive intention.**

Beliefs either create or deny personal power for us!

Beliefs are the ON/OFF switches for our ability to do anything in the world,

If you don't believe you can do something, you probably won't have the opportunity to find out.

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In modeling, find out what the person believes that enables them to do what they do.

Disabling or limiting beliefs: beliefs that stop you from doing what you want.

The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams.

"We must be willing to let go of the life we planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us." ~ Joseph Campbell
For those who don't believe, no proof is possible ~ "I believe in the sun, even when it is cloudy."

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