

## **Beliefs-The Internal Rules We Live By**

**Beliefs/Values:** The structure of what we believe to be true and important; those mental maps that guide our perceptions of the external world and how we act in it.

Beliefs are the rules we live by. They are our best guesses at reality and form our mental models—the principles of how the world seems to work, based on our experience. Beliefs are not facts, although we often mistake them for facts. We have beliefs about other people, about ourselves and about our relationships, about what is possible and about what we are capable of. We have personal ‘ego’ investment in our beliefs. ‘I told you so’ is a satisfying phrase because it means our beliefs were proved right.

Some things are not influenced by our belief in them—the law of gravity, for example, will not change whether we believe in it or not. Sometimes we treat other beliefs—about our relationships, abilities, and possibilities—as if they were as fixed and as immutable as gravity, and they are not. Beliefs actively shape our social world.

Beliefs act as self-fulfilling prophecies. They act as permissions as well as blocks to what we can do. If you believe you are not very likable, it will make you act towards others in a way that may put them off and so confirm your belief, even though you do not want it to be true. If you believe you are likable, then you will approach people more openly and they are more likely to confirm your belief. In “Anger: How to Live With And Without It”; Albert Ellis says our response to a given event is conditioned by our irrational beliefs (e.g., "She should not...!" "I can't stand it that....!" "How awful that...!"). You can monitor your level of anger (mildly disappointed? enraged? something in between?), seek out your irrational belief, and counter it with a rational statement. This brings your implicit beliefs to the surface and makes them available for examination. It also levels out your emotional response to a level more appropriate to the actual situation.

**Imagine this:** waking up in the morning and beginning to see pictures of all the things you believe you need to do that day, then beginning to tell yourself how hard your day is, questioning how you will get it all done, (not so hard to imagine so far!)...at some point while you are seeing your day and talking to yourself, you begin to feel stress...**AS IF YOU WERE ACTUALLY IN THIS STRESSFUL, NOT ENOUGH TIME IN THE DAY PLACE...**and you haven’t even left your bed yet!

**Now imagine this:**

Waking up, opening your eyes, taking in a deep breath, looking around in your space, stretching and feeling the sheets or covers rubbing comfortably on your body. If you are sleeping with a partner, you roll toward them, look at their beautiful sleeping body, kiss

them gently, before getting up to sit in one of your favorite spots as you sit in comfort, contemplate and create great intentions for your day, knowing your are in charge of your schedule, you have already decided upon and planned your priorities, are excited about what you are going to create in your day.

OK folks, same day, different map...different perspective...different set of beliefs.

***NLP treats beliefs as presuppositions, not as truth or facts.***

Each morning when we start our day, we get to decide how we want to perceive it. The “how” we perceive it is limited by the beliefs we have: about our day, about our work, about our world and about who we are in the world.

***Here are a few questions to give you the opportunity to discover something about your own beliefs:***

- 1. What do you believe to be true in your life?*
- 2. What does it mean to trust?*
- 3. What does ‘work’ mean?*
- 4. What does ‘family’ mean?*
- 5. How do you know someone loves you?*
- 6. What do you mean by ‘being successful’ and ‘success’?*

*Now, share these questions with an intimate: partner, friend, close work associate. Ask them to answer the questions, and sit down and compare. These simple words: truth, trust, work, family, love and success...all have a wealth of meaning and hold inherent one’s beliefs, those guiding and often ‘unconscious rules’ that govern and direct our thoughts, our feelings and our behavior.*

Pretty powerful stuff, do you want to know more of yours? Do the exercises in this article and the next. If you like, contact me for a complimentary coaching sample, at [jim@trulyhumancoaching.com](mailto:jim@trulyhumancoaching.com), oh the places we will go!

In the interim, allow me to offer a few simple reframes for some common limiting beliefs, they them on and notice the possibilities!

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| 1. I can’t.                | 1. I won’t OR what if I could?             |
| 2. There’s not enough time | 2. There’s plenty of time! 168 hrs weekly! |
| 3. It’s hard               | 3. What if it were easy?                   |
| 4. It’s impossible         | 4. What if it were possible? (cuz it is!)  |