

Identifying and challenging limiting beliefs

By Chris Dudley , Life Coach and Founder of The Coach Collective.

At moments throughout our life, and for many almost daily, we experience the feeling that we can't achieve something we're aiming to achieve. Whether that be a long-term goal we're maintaining, a difficult conversation we need to have but are putting off, or a piece of work that we need to start but keep seeming to procrastinate. These examples and many others are all the result of limiting beliefs.

A limiting belief is a belief we have about ourselves that holds us back from doing something, the sad thing is, these beliefs are often, if not always, untrue. You need to be conscious of your own limiting beliefs and work to remove these to free yourself for personal and business success.

Limiting beliefs are without doubt the most frequent cause of negativity or setback in our lives and they need to be questioned and challenged. A lot of this is how we talk about them to ourselves. For example:

- Everyone's out to get me
- I can't do it
- I'm too old now
- I'm not good enough
- It's easy for them
- Nobody rates me
- I can't be successful
- I'm not loveable
- If I will be myself I will get hurt

Beliefs create stress, sadness, isolation and fear. We are often not aware of limiting beliefs; we have all been taught to believe that our reality is real ... what we don't realise is that many of our perceptions and beliefs were created early on in life and were created through assumption not fact. Once limiting beliefs are removed, we are free to achieve what we dream of.

Belief Busting

Let's first remember limiting beliefs aren't there to hurt you, the human brain is complex and creates limiting beliefs to protect you from doing something the brain has registered as you not wanting to do. That's the reason limiting beliefs are usually formed after a specific memory.

Limiting beliefs usually come from one of three areas:

1. Possibility – You don't think it's possible

2. Ability – You don't think you can do it
3. Worthiness – You don't think you deserve it

You undo limiting beliefs by asking yourself questions and breaking them down, gaining a greater understanding of why they exist and what purpose they serve. Ask the question specific to whichever of the three categories the limiting belief most likely falls into.

Activity

Now you understand what a limiting belief is and how through solid questioning you can begin the process of removing limiting beliefs, take an opportunity to work on some of your own limiting beliefs. Focus on identifying three limiting beliefs, one in each category, that will hold you back from achieving success. Document the responses to questions below.

Possibility - You don't think it's possible

What is your limiting belief?

- What would make it possible?
- What would I need to do to make it possible?
- Who else has managed to do it and how?

Ability - You don't think you can do it

What is your limiting belief?

- What would I need to be able to do to do this?
- What knowledge, skill, quality or behaviour do I need? How will I get it?
- What do I need to learn, the learning of which will free me to change and achieve?

Worthiness - You don't think you deserve it

What is your limiting belief?

- Why don't I deserve this?
- What might I need to let go of to move forward?
- Is the voice in my head my voice or does it belong to someone else I know? If someone else, what reason are they telling me I don't deserve this?

Belief Building

Once you have successfully completed removing limiting beliefs you can now install the opposite, positive belief. For example, if you have stated 'I am unfit' you would need to begin to affirm and believe 'I am fit'. Often this new belief is best installed as many limiting beliefs are, by experiencing an event and creating a positive memory. In our example, this might mean you complete an activity which solidifies their new belief of being fit, for example, you might visit the gym three times a week, complete an event, or run a marathon.

This process of experiencing an event in order to create a new positive belief works for anyone wanting to install a brand new belief, for which you never held an opposing limiting belief.

Activity

Using the 3 limiting beliefs you identified in the previous activity, take an opportunity to list one potential activity you could complete which would evidence you having overcome the belief. Also, list one or more positive affirmations you could use in order to create a belief opposite to your limiting belief.

Possibility - You don't think it's possible

What was your limiting belief?

What activity could you complete and what memory would you create which would evidence your limiting belief no longer exists?

What affirmation/s could you create in order to build a new empowering belief?

Ability - You don't think you can do it

What was your limiting belief?

What activity could you complete and what memory would you create which would evidence your limiting belief no longer exists?

What affirmation/s could you create in order to build a new empowering belief?

Worthiness - You don't think you deserve it

What was your limiting belief?

What activity could you complete and what memory would you create which would evidence your limiting belief no longer exists?

What affirmation/s could you create in order to build a new empowering belief?
