

VALUES

Values provide us with the unconscious **why** of all of our actions. They are the reasons we do things and the way we evaluate what we have done. They are most often single words or short phrases that stand for abstract concepts we are expressing in our lives. Our values come from our environment. We acquire our values haphazardly, without a coherent purpose. Some of the sources of our values are our families, our friends, our church or religion, our schools, our geography (regional), our economic standing and of course, the mass media.

We acquire values in different periods.

- From age 0 to about age 7 we are in the **imprint period**. This is similar to the imprint period of animals and birds when they take on the behaviours of those around them. For people we take on the values of those around us whether they later serve us or not.
- From about age 7 to about age 14 we are in a **modelling period** when we act like or emulate others. This is the period when children often have heroes.
- From about age 14 to about age 21 we are in a **socialisation period** when the opinions of the society around us are very important to us.
- We also acquire values during times of stress, trauma or significant emotional events (SEE's). The values acquired in these times are most often away from values or things we **do not** want in our lives.

Because our values are unconscious, we often do not know what they are specifically.

Most people have never examined their values to see if the values they acquired as a child are still supportive of who they want to be as an adult. Often the values we acquired as a child are appropriate, sometimes they are not. It is the inappropriate and outgrown values we are working with, so that more appropriate and empowering values become the norm.

One of the commonest sources of self sabotage or of failing to attain our desired goals is values conflicts. Two basic forms of value conflicts might be:

- The first of these is away from values. Since the unconscious mind does not process negatives, if we state a value as not X, the message that our unconscious mind keeps getting is X. So, for example if you had somewhere acquired a value of “not poor” what your unconscious mind would keep hearing and proving for you is “poor” the result would be a lot of work and being always on the edge of poverty; or you might make money and have it not be satisfying. One of the tasks in the values process is to identify all “away from” values and remove the limiting decisions and held emotions that generate this conflict.

- The second type of values conflict that we often find is incompatible values. These might be towards-towards values that are inconsistent or some other pattern. An example of this might be someone who had values of security and excitement. Once pointed out, these kinds of conflicts are typically very easy to resolve.

BELIEFS

Our beliefs are a very powerful force on our behaviour. It is common wisdom that if someone really believes they can do something they will do it, and if they believe something is impossible no amount of effort will convince them that it can be accomplished. Beliefs like “It’s too late now,” “There’s nothing I can do anyway,” can often limit a person from taking full advantages of their natural resources and unconscious competence. Beliefs, which we hold about ourselves and what is possible in the world, greatly impact our day to day effectiveness. All of us have beliefs that serve us, as resources as well as beliefs that limit us.

What beliefs do:

- **Beliefs act as a filter.** You learn to pay attention to what is important and delete what is not. It tells you what you can’t do in the present, and what you can do in the future.
- **Beliefs determine your response** at any given time.
- **Beliefs structure your experience** and tell you what to pay attention to.
- **Beliefs predispose you to act in certain ways – we act as is our beliefs are true.**
- **Beliefs help us make sense of our experience** – when we’re not sure our beliefs make connections.
- **Beliefs give purpose to our lives**, set outcomes, and help us know what to do and how to be.
- **Beliefs define the map of reality we act out of.**

Even the beliefs that others have about us can affect us. This was demonstrated in an enlightening study in which a group of children who were tested to have average intelligence was divided at random into two equal groups. One of the groups was assigned a teacher who was told that the children were “gifted”. The other group was given a teacher who was told that the children were “slow learners”. A year later the two groups were re-tested for intelligence. Not surprisingly, the majority of the group that was arbitrarily identified as “gifted” scored higher than they had previously, while the majority of the group that was labelled “slow” scored lower! The teacher’s beliefs about the students affected their ability to learn.

Our beliefs can shape, effect or even determine our degree of intelligence, health, relationships, creativity, even our degree of happiness and personal success. Yet, if indeed our beliefs are so powerful a force in our lives, how do we get control of them so they do not control us. Many of our beliefs were installed in us as children by parents, teachers, social upbringing and the media before we were aware of their impact or able to have a choice about them. It is possible to restructure, unlearn or change old beliefs that may be limiting us and imprint new ones that can expand our potential beyond what we currently imagine?

One of the interesting things about beliefs is that because they are on a different level than behaviour and capabilities, they do not change according to the same rules.

The thing to realise about beliefs is that they are not intended to match existing reality. They are intended to provide a motivation and a vision so that your actual behaviour can begin to develop and rise to meet them.

A belief is not a strategy; it is not a “how to”; it is not a behaviour. **A belief is a generalisation about a relationship between experiences.** Beliefs are views about yourself, others and the world that determine the decisions you take and the way you behave in everyday situations.

Beliefs installed early by parental influence might be:

- “When she is good she is very very good but when she is bad she is wicked”
- “He is like Jackyl and Hyde”
- “She always had to work hard to pass her exams whereas her brother always found it so easy!”
- “What you want and what you get are two different things!”
- “What you give out comes back in abundance”
- “You’ll never get what you want in this world unless you work hard for it!”
- “You’re stupid” “You’re so clever”
- “Forgive and forget”
- “Honesty is the best policy”
- He who asks, doesn’t get.

You can change your beliefs so that you build your own set of beliefs to support the way you want to be. You need not carry around redundant or even limiting belief systems that belong to someone else or a younger you. You can choose to create your own empowering set of beliefs instead.

Beliefs are emotionally held thoughts about ourselves, others and situations. They are not based on fact but on our perception of events at the time they were formed. Some useful beliefs to presuppose to be true are:

- Every person is unique
 - Every person makes the best choice available to them at the time.
 - There is no such thing as failure, only the opportunity to learn and receive feedback.
- Behind every interaction there is a positive intention
- The meaning of my communication is its effect
 - There is a solution to every problem
 - The person with the most flexibility in the way they think and behave has the best chance of succeeding
 - Presuppose the life you want – choose!

Our beliefs and our values are a part of the fabric that makes us who we are. What we hold to be true about ourselves and what is deep down important to us are at the heart of who we are as people.

We tend to live our lives in a way that is designed to prove our beliefs to ourselves. One thing is sure – **whatever you believe, you are right (in your world)** and you will do whatever you can, consciously and unconsciously, to prove this is the case.

Your beliefs determine your capabilities, which in turn drive your behaviour, which leads to the results that you get, and which influence events and people around you.

‘I can’t believe you said that!’ said Alice.

‘Can’t you?’ the Queen said in a pitying tone. ‘Try again: draw a long deep breath, and shut your eyes.’

Alice laughed. ‘There’s no use trying,’ she said: ‘one *can’t* believe impossible things.’

‘I dare say you haven’t had much practice,’ said the Queen. ‘When I was your age I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.’

Lewis Carroll “Through the Looking Glass” CH.5

IT’S ALL IN THE STATE OF THE MIND

If you think you are beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don’t.
If you think you’d like to win, but can’t
It’s almost a clinch you won’t.

If you think you’ll lose, you’ve lost
For out in the world you’ll find
Success begins with a fellow’s will,
It’s all in the state of the mind.

For many a race is lost
Ere even a race is run,
And many a fellow fails
Ere even his work’s begun.

Think big and your deeds will grow.
Think small you’ll fall behind.
Think that you can and you will.
It’s all in the state of the mind.

If you think you’re outclassed, you are,

You've got to think hard to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself
Before you can win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But sooner or later the man who wins
Is the fellow who thinks he can

Poem taken from Professor Barnard