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INTRODUCTION

The world is made of beliefs. Everything you see, hear, touch, taste, and feel is created *from* or interpreted *by* beliefs. Some of them are unique to you, but the majority originate from your environment. You were born into a world full of beliefs, and as you grew up, you were socialized into accepting those beliefs as true. Basically, we all live in a world of other people's ideas, and somewhere along the way, we've taken them as our own. We've agreed to the beliefs and take them as 'the truth.'

As we grow up, it's very common to forget that we've accepted these belief systems as the 'right' answer. We forget that they are subjective and malleable. Then, at some point in our lives, for whatever reason, we decide to change something about ourselves—lose weight, earn more money, find a partner, leave a partner, have more compassion, become more intelligent, get more work done, remember our dreams, etc. This motivation to improve is a fundamental characteristic of consciousness. We work hard at making these changes, struggling against ourselves, hoping to surmount a lifetime of conditioning and habit. Sometimes, we are successful, but most times after a few hours, days, or weeks, we revert back to our old familiar patterns.

But what is it that prevents us from transforming into the people we wish to become? Why is it that Jeff can't stop eating Twinkies, and, therefore, can't lose that extra 108lbs? Why is it that despite her best intentions, Emily can't find a way to be nice to anyone, even to herself? Why is it that Rich fails to become rich, despite all his talent and intelligence?

The answer to each of these is belief. Deep down, the person has a belief that conflicts with the change they want make in their lives. It's very much like the Titanic.

Even though there is much concern over global warming and shrinking polar caps, the frigid waters of the poles are still littered with icebergs. But in 1912, when the Titanic set sail from Southampton, England bound for New York City, there were even more of these frozen behemoths. The Titanic was the pinnacle of its day, the highest standard in luxury and extravagance. It was a testament to the beauty that mankind could create, the collaboration of so many lives, so much human effort, into the construction of a floating wonderland. After setting sail, Captain Edward John Smith received warning of icebergs further south than predicted. Being careful, he deviated his course into warmer water, believing that was enough to avoid these dangerous ice-cubes. But he was wrong, and the luxury liner—the *crème de la crème* of haute-couture—barreled straight into one of these floating mountains of ice. Suddenly, the hopes and dreams of so many, the futures, the lives of these people, all of that was dashed away into oblivion because of an iceberg, only one-ninth of which was visible to human eyes. The rest of it, the part that did the most damage, lay silently underwater, hidden from sight.



B
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only conscious of a tiny fraction of their influence in our lives. The rest lays submerged in the subconscious, purveyors of unimaginable power, driving our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. And sometimes our futures, our lives, the opulence, the abundance that we've created or wish to create slams up against that lurking danger, sinking us and our dreams. And just like the passengers on the Titanic, our intentions sink.

Basically, people fail to change, fail to create their desires because one, some, or all of their beliefs contradict with what it is they wish to obtain or to become.

But, everything's not lost.. What we often forget in our world of boxes, labels, and classifications is that we are incredible creatures, that human beings have an enormous creative potential. And that's what this book is about. If you read this guide, follow through with the instruction, and persevere in your desire to change, soon, you will be amazed and abundantly rewarded for your efforts. Make no mistake, there is no magic pill. There is no one technique that is going to immediately transform you into the ideal version of yourself. What this book suggests is entirely possible for you, but it will entail your discipline and commitment. Reading this guide, though insightful, will be of minimal benefit. It is crucial to your success that you take action. Nothing less will accomplish your goals.

And that's what separates those who fail from those who succeed—consistent action.

RAISON D'ETRE

The purpose of this guide is to offer you techniques, ideas, and beliefs that will enable you to live your life in whatever way you decide. The point is to put you back into a control position, rather than continuing to allow your habits and routines to dictate how you feel, think, and behave. This guide is better digested slowly and thoroughly. It might be easy to rush through it in one or two sittings, but you will derive the most benefit if you read a small section, then stop for a few hours or a day. Come back, and read it again. You're intending to change your beliefs, and it's a good idea to be prepared for such a worthy task. So without further ado, let's begin.

For the information in this guide to be of any use to you, you must commit to the following:

3 TENATS TO ENACT CHANGE:

1. *Put yourself at the top* – Unless you put yourself at the top of your priority list there will always be a reason or excuse for you not to change. This may feel uncomfortable because the media has bombarded you with the notion that you have to put everyone else before yourself, and *sometimes* that is a gracious, healthy thing to do. But other times it can turn you into a doormat. It's kinda like being on a plane. You know how they do the safety check, and they tell everyone that in case of a sudden drop in cabin pressure, oxygen masks will drop down from the compartments? And they tell everyone: **Please put your own mask on before helping others.** That's good advice, even outside of a plane, because the most well-intentioned, powerful person won't be able to help as well or as much until they've taken care of themselves first. So take a deep breath and put yourself at the top of your priority list.
2. *The only thing you have to do in this world is die. Everything else is a choice.* Although it may be uncomfortable to admit, we're surrounded by choices. But we often place ourselves in the victim-role (i.e. not having a choice) because it's easier than making a difficult decision—like asking someone out or finding a more fulfilling job or doing what it takes to create wealth. Always remember that you have a choice. You always have a choice, and if you really want to change, you'll exercise it.
3. *You're capable of much more than you give yourself credit for.* I'm not sure if that's reassuring or not, but it's true. Human beings are creatures of comfort and routine, and this means we often sell ourselves short, because growing, achieving more requires that we broaden our horizons, that we forsake, if only for a moment, that comfort and those routines. We take the easy or

known route, because taking the hard way or walking into the unknown is usually frightening. But take heart, you are capable of many amazing things of which you've never dreamed.

Those are the big three. Of course, we're going to cover more, but those are the three fundamentals to enable change. They are a source of empowerment, and to succeed, you'll need to swallow them.

Although most of us go through our day-to-day life, convinced the voice inside chattering away is the real 'us', the majority of who we are lies beneath the surface. The subconscious mind determines most of our behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. We're programed—socialized—to act, think, and believe in a certain way. As we grow up, we take this socialization to be the objective truth, instead of its real place as a subjective reality. Associating boys with blue and girls with pink is not essential to the healthy development of any gender, but we forget that it's subjective, that the only thing holding us back from associating boys with green and girls with red is our socialized expectations...our beliefs.

Most of these associations reside in the subconscious mind. Talking about, believing differently with the conscious mind will do little to change the motivating beliefs that lie buried under the years of your life. That's why so many people fail to change—they hit the iceberg. The point of this course is to familiarize you with your subconscious mind. Not only with how it works, but how you can develop a relationship with that often-neglected other you. Basically, we want to increase the level of access we have to our unconscious minds so that we may remove, add, or change existing beliefs. You're going to re-shape the majority of the iceberg that's hidden beneath the water.

The human brain is an amazing creation, a processor of incalculable speeds and an index capable of arranging the enormous amount of information it gets through the five senses into meaningful patterns. What we experience of this information in our daily lives is just the tip of the iceberg. The subconscious filters most of the information, effectively making it invisible to us, beyond the scope of our conscious minds, which is a totally normal thing. If our conscious minds were aware of every bit of information that the subconscious was processing, we'd be overwhelmed and, probably, very soon to be insane. It's just too much.

But it wasn't always like this...

A baby's brain is like a sponge, absorbing everything around it with absolutely no value judgment at all. There is no filter to accept or reject the sensory information, to say that this is 'good,' that is 'bad.' Everything is accepted, and this is where the oldest beliefs are formed. During the first two years of life, the human brain emits electrical impulses, brainwaves, at a certain rhythm called *delta*. This state could also be called unconscious awareness, where all information received is accepted. The doors are wide open. If we imagine the human mind as a garden, then a baby's brain would be the freshly tilled, ultra-fertile field of the Amazon basin. And in these first 2 years, most *belief-seeds* are planted. This period in everyone's life is very influential in determining the composition of the personality.

99% of human beings spend a significant part of their sleep time in this *delta* state, during

which, we have the most access to the subconscious, making it a great time to change beliefs but, usually, we're completely unconscious during this period!

From around 2 years to 6 years, the dominate brain waves change from *delta* to *theta*. And here, the *belief-seeds* begin to sprout. The child's speech and behavior reflects the early experiences she was exposed to. This change of states mirrors the continued development of the personality. The children begin to understand that they are separate consciousness in a world full of other separate consciousnesses, and we can see this in their, sometimes, obsession with saying 'no.'

Most adults pass through the *theta* state on their way to sleep, or if they are able to meditate deeply. During this state, the person is capable of accelerated learning, profound healing, and other seemingly miraculous acts. It's in this *theta* state that we have the most opportunity to make changes in the subconscious.

From 6 – 12 years old, the child's mind enters the *alpha* state. Now, the garden is full of life, some of it healthy—beautiful flowers, nurturing fruit—but there are also some weeds—behaviors, and beliefs that have already begun to choke the spontaneity and joy out of the child. We can see that the core personality is almost fully developed. Adults experience the *alpha* state in moments of deep relaxation, concentrated focus, and light meditation. It's also space of accelerated learning, often referred to as 'the zone.'

After 12 years of life, the average human brain spends most of its waking time in the *beta* state. Usually, by now, the garden is wild and overgrown. Some of the flowers blossom in bright colors, but a lot of the healthy plants are choked out by resilient weeds—habits of self-doubt, of defensiveness, of sabotage. It's these weeds that we'll learn how to identify and pluck from our gardens. In *beta*, we're awake, concentrated, and have minimal contact with the subconscious mind. To mix metaphors, most of us have forgotten there's an iceberg exerting its influence. The *beta* state is associated with analysis, focus, or even just thinking about your external environment.

Each night and, to a limited level, during the day, we all cycle through these different brainwaves. At a delta level, the subconscious is much more malleable because the conscious mind is either turned off or so minimized as to be unable to filter sensory information. But *delta* is also the most difficult to reach. To get there and to do change work requires the help of a competent hypnotherapist.

As humans age and this progression through brainwaves occurs, the mind is constructing its map of the world. It's answering fundamental questions and building the rest of its learning based on those answers.

- Is the world safe or dangerous?
- How do I avoid pain and increase pleasure?
- Is this my territory?
- Am I at the top of the pack or the bottom?

Usually, these questions aren't so clear or concise in our minds, but, if you reduce enough, you'll find the mind has answered them in its own language, personal to you, at sometime during its development. These answers, along with a myriad of others, are what the mind believes about the world. But most of that is long forgotten. Once chosen, the mind doesn't need to keep the beliefs conscious. Slowly, then quickly, they drift down into the cold waters of the subconscious, forgotten in our everyday

Brainwave	Characteristics
Beta 12 years +	Concentration, alertness, arousal. Higher levels of this brainwave are associated with panic, anxiety, and the fight or flight reflex.
Alpha 6-12 years	Relaxation, accelerated learning, relaxed focus, light trance. The alpha state is the doorway to the unconscious mind. In a child, the garden has flourished, either with weeds or with fruit.
Theta 2-6 years	REM sleep, increased creativity, increased retention of learned material. Wider access to the unconscious mind and increased possibility to alter beliefs. In a child, continued sowing of seeds and also the first sprouts of belief can be seen.
Delta 0-2 years	Dreamless sleep, deep trance, loss of body awareness, and dissolution of the conscious mind. As children, this is where the seeds of our beliefs are planted.

lives. All we have left to show for them is an inferiority complex, a weight problem, or a constant looking over the shoulder in search of some expected danger.

At the heart of most beliefs lies the fundamental ingredient for life as we know it—language. In fact, for all human intents and purposes, language is reality. Sure, maybe there's something objective outside your experience of it, but the fact remains that you can only know *your interpretation* of that supposed thing. You can't know the world without your senses or your mind interpreting that experience. Your mind filters sensory information to create a construct of reality, and most of those experiences are filtered through language. We describe, narrate, and judge all that happens around us. The few instances of experience that preclude language are usually relegated to the insane, the mystics, or our dreams. It's a very common phenomenon for the 'I' to mistake itself for the entirety of the mind, leaving the vast subconscious neglected.

Throughout this book, I'm including various exercises that will help you go through the process of belief change. Some are fun, some are insightful, all of them are important. They will help you to gain a bit of perspective, and, sometimes, to loosen the grip on your beliefs, and it's a good idea to complete them all. If you really want to change, then you really have to do something about it. How much action will determine the level of your success. To make the most of this course, which could help you to make the most of your life, it will be very helpful if you write about your experience in a notebook dedicated to belief changes. Sometimes, you might write the actual exercises down in your notebook (which I will refer to as a change-book), and other times you might write your observations, feelings, and thoughts about the exercises or larger process as we go through it.

Let's begin with something easy.

Breathe in, breathe out:

One of the most effective avenues of altering your state-of-mind and approaching that point where it's possible to change your beliefs is often overlooked, because it's so commonplace. The breath. It's not just your brain waves that change as you grow up. Your breathing changes from a deep, diaphragmatic breath, to a shallow, upper-chest breath. In many systems of thought and many cultures, the breath is the first place to begin when exploring the inner world. So take a few moments to get to know your breath. If you've already done this, please participate and do it again. This will only further your success.

First, get to know your 'natural' breath. How do you breathe? Where does it start, and where does it stop? Is it long or short? Deep or shallow? Relaxed or tense? Avoid judgments. Throughout this guide, we want to put our judgment on the shelf, replace it with observation and acceptance, two key qualities to effective change-work.

Second, play with your breath. Observe what happens as you incorporate your diaphragm. To do this, sit straight and comfortable. Place a hand just below your navel and one on your chest. Every time you inhale, intend for your lower hand and the stomach below it to push outwards, while your upper hand stays still. As you exhale, intend for your lower hand and stomach to pull inwards, while your upper hand again stays motionless. This is diaphragmatic breathing. Continue breathing this way for a few minutes. How does it make you feel? Observe how you change. The more you do it, the better you will feel and the more influence you'll have over your inner world. If you took any one thing from this book, this is numero uno, the big tamale. It's simple and easy to blow off, but you can use diaphragmatic breathing to calm down, center yourself, or just relax at any time, in any situation.

Third, for comparison, sit tall and breathe in-and-out through your nose as quickly as you can, pumping the air with your diaphragm, like a bellows. Only do this if you're of sound mind and body, and only do it for half a minute or so. How do you feel? Again, observe what and how you change. This breath can be used for a quick jolt of energy or to sharpen your attention in the present moment.

Take another few minutes to yourself and write about this in your change-book.

Top Tip:

**DON'T BELIEVE
EVERYTHING THAT
YOU THINK.**

Even if you didn't notice any real differences from your 'normal' awareness, you've just changed your mental state. And altering your state is the critical key to effective belief change. Effectively, you want to learn how to put yourself into a trance. I'm not talking about stage hypnotists or the circus sideshow. Believe it or not, trance is a normal part of everyday life. Simply, trance is a highly focused state-of-mind. Sure, that can include the gentleman on stage acting like a chicken at the local comedy club, and it does include David Blaine freezing himself. But it also includes watching a movie or the television, reading a good book, making love to your partner, going for a jog. Trance states occur frequently on monotonous drives, i.e., a road trip, as well as on the dance floor. They also occur when you're working out, whether it's doing your morning yoga routine, swinging kettlebells, or the elliptical machine. People also enter into trances when they're cooking, eating, as they fall asleep, or just sitting quietly on the beach, listening to the waves.

As you may understand, trance covers a wide range of experience. Each trance is different than the others, but the one thing they have in common is that the person is so highly focused as to be unaware of other phenomenon outside that focus.

While driving have you ever failed to recall the previous 50 miles? Were you ever surprised that the sun was already setting on your beach vacation? Did you ever wonder how you managed to run for 13 miles? Or even just 2?

Unless you're brainwashed or physically or mentally disabled as to make it impossible, you have gone and continue to go into trance every day. So what happens during a trance? It's simple really. You focus on something, say your breathing, and if you do it long enough, the brain waves in your mind slow down. They drift through the range of *beta* to *alpha*, and if you practice enough, they'll eventually make it to *theta*. This movement from *beta* to a different brain wave is a trance, and in a trance, you are more receptive to sensory information as well as internal thoughts. It's a great place to make changes.

Remembering previous trance states:

We've all gone into trance. Now, let's remember one. I've just listed plenty of examples, and any memory of those will do. The more vivid the memory the better. Spend a few minutes with this, find the deepest trance. Can you remember a time when you were daydreaming, completely lost in your own internal experience? Usually, the most shocking moments when you 'come back' to collective reality indicate that, previously, you were in a particular deep trance.

Once you've picked one memory, spend some time with it. Sit quietly in a safe place, close your eyes, and remember it. Remember as many details, as much of the experience as you can. Play it over in your head again and again. When the memory is as intense as you can muster, congratulate yourself. You've just put yourself back into a trance!

How? By recalling any vivid memory, your mind puts itself, to a degree, back into the same state it experienced in the memory. That's the only way it can remember anything, by re-experiencing it in some way. This is the easiest way to go into a trance, and it can be very powerful, indeed.

When you've narrowed your long list (if your list isn't long, you're neglecting some experiences), to your one experience. Write about it in your change-book, and periodically, come back to it and remember it. Notice what changes take place in your experience as you go into a trance. The more attention you pay to this, the more you'll be able to do it at will.

GETTING TO KNOW THE OTHER YOU:

The mind generalizes and that's a helpful thing. Otherwise, you'd have to re-learn how to use a toilet every time you needed it, but only after re-learning where the bathroom was and what it was for. Generalizing can also cause problems. A small boy has a scary experience at the top of the slide, and his mind generalizes that experience across every other situation when he is on high—a fear of heights. It's not that big of a deal until he needs to fly somewhere or get up on his roof to fix a wayward shingle. He believes that heights are scary, that they are dangerous. As a result of his belief, when faced with such a situation, his stress and anxiety increase until he is nearly incapacitated by fear, and the situation can truly become dangerous. His generalizations have made him less effective.

Like I said before, the subconscious mind is taking in an incredible amount of information at one time. Literally everything the senses sense is filtered through the brain. Most of it doesn't make it to the conscious mind because of our generalizations, our belief systems. After the mind has learned enough, it begins to screen the information we receive. It accepts the familiar, whether it's healthy or harmful, and rejects the unfamiliar, whether it's beneficial or malevolent. In the world of thought, belief, and feeling, like attracts like. This is how people get into routines, into ruts. This is how we, sometimes, end up chasing our tails, wanting desperately to change, but completely ignorant of how to do it. The mind does not believe only things that are good for you. In fact, it's completely neutral, the mind will believe whatever it's exposed to—good, bad, or ugly.

Obviously, as a newborn we're incapable of deciding for ourselves what the world is like, and because of this, we're seeded with the beliefs of those around us, first and foremost, our parents, which presents a host of issues. I'm sure most of you have witnessed your parent's beliefs and ideals working inside of you. Some times they are very helpful and other times they're a real a pain in the neck. It's this looking at the beliefs we've inherited—deciding for ourselves which ones are healthy and useful, then releasing the rest—that benefits human societies. Belief change is a mechanism of cultural evolution.

Growing up is something we do to ourselves, not something that happens to us. Sure, our bodies age every day, but it's possible for a 99 year old to die with the mental and emotional development of a 12 year old. If you're reading this, then you've been gifted a set of beliefs, some of which are very valuable, that blossom and enable you to do and be many beautiful things. But others are like tenacious weeds, choking out possibility and condemning you to someone else's idea about life. The next step along the path to changing your beliefs is to take responsibility for them. Someone else may have given them to you, but they are in your head. You believe them, and no matter where you got them, they are yours, making it your responsibility to cultivate the healthy ones and pluck out the harmful ones.

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routines, it's essential to become aware of these ruts so that we can get out of them. This is crucial to change, and although easy, it's often the most difficult part of creating a conscious change. We're comfortable in these ruts and routines, and sometimes that's a very good thing. They provide us with security and stability. But if we ever want to change, then we've got to change or even leave these comfortable patterns. In essence, we have to choose to make ourselves uncomfortable. Now, this can either seem like a very terrible idea...or maybe it's just another useful experience in life, one that could help you to grow in some healthy way. It only depends on how you look at it. But we do know that if we keep on doing the same thing, we can always expect to have the same results.

I'm going to recommend an exercise, something you do once a week for the next month or so. Ideally, this would become a life-long practice because it will keep you growing and learning about this vast world we live in. It will keep you at the edge of your comfort zone, and this is where you have the greatest access to your potential. It's when we're comfortable and in a rut that we forget what it is we're capable of.

Broadening your horizons:

How do we actually broaden our horizons? This may seem difficult and before you actually do it, it may seem preposterous, but it's quite feasible, and with the smallest of practice it can even be fun. The trouble is that you'll have to momentarily relinquish your comfort zone. Why would anyone ever want to leave their comfort zone? Well, most people wouldn't, but that doesn't mean it's a bad idea. Leaving your comfort zone will allow you to push the limits of what you know, and by pushing the limits of what you know and are familiar with, you'll become more flexible, better able to make changes, better able to handle life. Focus on the pleasures that await you if you decide to follow this exercise. Downplay the pain involved as you overcome your own inertia and move. Remember how I said that the socialization process makes us think that our belief system is the objective truth? Well, moving beyond your comfort zone is a great way for you to experience that first hand. And knowing for yourself is an invaluable lesson.

This exercise is simple.

Broaden your horizons.

Which could also be translated to: Get out of your comfort zone.

It may not seem simple, because everywhere you look, everything you see is probably inside your comfort zone. So you've got to move away from the familiar towards the unknown. Again, remember to focus on the pleasures of exploration, the advantages of undertaking a challenge. The absolute best way to remove yourself from your self-created comfort zone is to sell everything you own and go live in a country where you don't speak the language...but I know that's a bit extreme, and the same effects can be accomplished on a smaller scale.

The process of getting out of your comfort zone is easy. Just go somewhere, do something that you normally would not do. If you live in a big city, go to a part of town that you never visit. Or go to a small village 30 miles away. Hang out there and talk to the people. Introduce yourself in a way that you normally wouldn't. If you're a greeting card writer, but it's your life-long dream to be an architect, introduce yourself as the latter. While you're outside your comfort zone, find those dusty dreams that you once wanted so much, and see which ones are still relevant. Pretend that they are true.

Here are some examples for getting out of your comfort zone:

- *Go to an unknown part of town.*
 - *We feel good in places we know, and while there's nothing wrong with this, it does have some disadvantages. Being in familiar surroundings almost always means we assume the familiar roles, behaviors, and thoughts that we're conditioned to be, do, and think in that particular location. By changing the scenery radically, you'll allow yourself more options.*

- *Talk to someone you wouldn't normally talk to.*
 - *This is a good exercise, because it will present to you, your own stereotypes about people. And that's a great way to deconstruct them.*
- *Stand on a street corner. Decide on an exact time to start, e.g. 10:23. At exactly 10:23 approach the absolute first person you see, and introduce yourself. "Hello my name is ____." And then listen to their response. When the exchange ends naturally, introduce yourself to the very next person you see. Do this with a total of 6 people.*
 - *The point of this exercise is to ignore the dialogue in your head that will insist you do say 'hello' to this person, but you don't say 'hello' to that person. Pick a time to start, and then introduce yourself to the FIRST person you see, no matter how awkward your mind insists it will be.*
- *Create an alternate history and pretend it's true for an hour or an afternoon.*
 - *Some may claim this is lying, but I see it as playing. This allows you to try on new beliefs, new roles, a new identity to see who they fit. It's good practice for the upcoming shift.*
- *Go to a movie you don't want to see.*
 - *Likes and dislikes are arbitrary. They aren't anything more than a representation of our personal history. By choosing to do or see something you normally wouldn't, you'll increase your scope of possibilities, as well as loosen the grip the past has on you.*
- *Watch or listen to a political show of opposing view points and do your best to support whatever it is they say.*
 - *More tolerance. By trying on opposing view points, we can better empathize with other human beings. Although it may feel threatening, there's no real harm in putting yourself in the other person's shoes. At worst, it will lead you to developing a healthy capacity for compassion.*
- *Go to a restaurant that you've never been to and order something you think you won't like. Then do your best to like it.*
 - *This is another exercise in stretching possibilities, in widening our concepts of what is 'good' or 'bad.'*
- *Arrive early or late, whatever it is you don't do.*
 - *Most of us are either obsessed with being punctual or passive-aggressive in our perpetual tardiness. By practicing the other strategy, you'll gain insight into your own automatic strategies and have more options on how you do things.*
- *Sleep on the other side of the bed.*
 - *Nearly everything we do is habitual, by changing our habits, we'll literally force ourselves out of the ruts and begin to gain more freedom, more choices in how we do things.*
- *Brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand.*
 - *More habit altering practice.*

- *Analyze how you get dressed every morning, and rearrange the order.*
 - *More habit altering practice.*
- *Take the bus.*
 - *In our modern world, it's easy for human beings to wake up one morning and find themselves living in a bubble with little or no authentic contact with the real world. Part of this is due to our tendency towards extreme individualism. Taking the bus will simultaneously burst your bubble, put you into the public, and work on changing your habits.*
- *Find another route to wherever it is you choose to go.*
 - *More habit altering practice.*

By persistently pushing the limits of your known world, you're already working on belief change. Once you become proficient in being in the Unknown, you'll have an easier time at changing your beliefs...so practice. Then practice more. Once you're comfortable being uncomfortable, you'll have gained an enormous amount of personal freedom, as well as a more adaptable, well-rounded character. Get out of your comfort zone for as long as you can manage. Set aside an afternoon a week and really go for it. Despite what your conscious mind will tell you, you will survive, and you'll be a better person for it. This is a continual practice, ideally, something you incorporate for the rest of your life. Throughout the rest of this guide, I'll periodically remind you to broaden your horizons.

RELATIVITY IS THE WAY FORWARD

In the world of belief, there are no right answers. Everything you experience is subject to your perspective, background, and personal history. Everything you experience is relative, but it's common for human beings to forget this, to 'know' their beliefs hold some divine or otherwise objective truth. This is the cause of most wars, violence, and suffering in the world. When people believe they are 'right,' they will go to astounding lengths to persecute those who disagree, who are 'wrong.' Looking around at the current state of affairs, it's easy to see the push-and-pull mentality that collective humanity is engaged in. The Democrats are pushing against the Republicans. Religions argue with science and with each other. The poor struggle to be rich. The world is locked in this battle between opposites, all because each person engaged in the fight believes their truth to be truer than everyone else's.

We all want to be right.

There's a flaw in righteousness. When one idea is right, everything else is wrong. If Christianity is the only true path to God, then every person who believes different is cursed to eternal damnation. If Democrats are right, then every Republican is wrong. If being rich is good, then being poor is bad. And the result is a divided population, a schizophrenic society that will tear itself into increasingly smaller bits until it completely falls apart. But we cannot know that Christianity is the one true religion. And sometimes Democrats are right, and other times, they are wrong. They're people after all. Being rich is good for some, but not for everyone. Some people live fulfilling, productive lives even though they are considered poor. Mother Teresa did a pretty good job of it. In essence, these beliefs cannot be proven objectively true or false, even though we act as if they can be. That's the flaw that keeps the world from living in peace.

That's the macrocosm.

Inside the mind of almost every person on the planet, the same struggle takes place. This part of you believes the Universe works on the principles of scarcity, while another you believes in abundance. One part believes that looks aren't important, but another can't stop grooming and primming, hoping to catch everyone's eye. Within such a relationship, where each part strives very much to be right, conflict is inevitable. The resulting chaos will, at best, seriously minimize a person's potential, or, at worst, drive someone insane.

So how do we get out of the bi-polar see-saw act? It's simple. Any reasonable research into your own mind will conclude the same thing—that we're constantly shifting between one extreme and another on a variety of levels, because we've grown up in a society hell-bent on righteousness. This creates a complex hierarchy, condescension, and self-abuse. If we look close enough, we'll see that this right/wrong duality is not particularly useful, nor is it a requirement of the human nervous system. In fact, we can even take some space from it. Once we gain a bit of detachment from that ideal, we can

replace it with something more useful. That's what it's all about—believing concepts that are healthier and/or more useful than our current models. It's not about being right or wrong; it's about being more effective in the world, creating the results we want in life.



If you accept that everything you believe is relative, that it's not objectively true or THE absolute truth, then it's possible for you to believe anything you wish to believe. To put it another way, if nothing you believe is true, that makes nothing you believe false, and that makes everything possible in the sense that the entire range of beliefs are valid. You've just opted-out of the polarity. Then it's just a matter of you choosing which beliefs are the most empowering to you. A fortunate side-effect is a growing sense of tolerance and compassion for the rest of the world, because suddenly, you've given up righteousness. Does that make sense? If not, read this paragraph again.

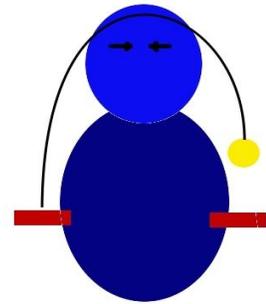
I know, I know. It's hard to accept, but please realize, if it's hard to accept, it's only because you're invested in your own righteousness. If that hurts, take a deep breath and sit with it for a moment.

It's a near universal trait that people want their beliefs to be true. Usually, Christians don't want to consider that Hinduism may be just as valid as Jesus' model, Republicans don't want to hear that never-ending wars might bankrupt the country, and the rich won't regard wealth as sometimes harmful. But remember, the belief that 'nothing is true', once assimilated, unlocks a new freedom, previously inaccessible in a right-wrong dichotomy. Working with this belief, Christianity may co-exist with Hinduism and Islam and every other belief. Republicans and Democrats can meet in the middle to do what's right for the country, instead of butting heads pursuing partisan agendas. It's important to note that although most beliefs are subjective conclusions and not objective facts, it's very common for people to act as if their beliefs are true.

Mind Juggling:

The point of this exercise is to balance the hemispheres of your brain. In our rational world, it's common that we neglect the right side of our brains—the hemisphere connected to intuition, gestalts, art, and the big picture. In studies, exercises that increase communication between the two hemispheres help to restore a calm, alert state-of-mind. This exercise, developed by Nelson Zink, consists of throwing a ball from one hand to the other with the eyes closed.

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold your hands, palm up, in front of you, with your elbows bent and at your side, as if you were carrying a tray. Have the ball in one hand. With your eyes open, to get the feel of the motion, throw the ball, in an arc at least as high as your chin, from one hand to the other. After a few tosses, slowly tilt your head up to look at the ceiling. Then, after a few more successful throws, close your eyes and slowly bring your head to center, all the while continuing to throw the ball. Of course, you're going to drop the ball. That's normal. I mean, you're playing catch with your eyes closed! It's to be expected. Keep practicing and quicker than you may imagine, you'll have success, and then you'll experience the benefits of this great mind balancing tool.



WHAT MAKES A BELIEF?

Although it's hard to be precise when talking in such broad generalizations, most beliefs share some common elements, and it can be useful to know more about how mind and belief work so that you may be more successful as you make changes in your own mind. It's important to know the components of belief so that we can later alter them to something more useful.

At the most fundamental, the most animal level of human beings, we do operate on a dichotomy. I know that I've just spent the last pages explaining how such a structure only causes problems at the level of belief, but the dichotomy that I'm talking about is much deeper than that. It's hardwired into the human brain, whereas righteousness is not. This polarity exists before thought, and it's probably one of the earliest mechanisms that enabled human beings to survive as long as we have.

Pleasure and pain.

On a primitive level, our brains are structured so that we move away from pain and towards pleasure. Upon touching a hot stove, you move your hand away as quick as you can. After the first candy, a small child reaches for more. But as we get older, we stop moving towards objective pain and objective pleasure, because, most times, these ideas are actually subjective. True, most of the population would agree that being hit with a whip isn't pleasurable, but masochists are a well-known exception. After we reach a certain age, it is again our perception that determines how we define pleasure and pain. In most areas of our lives, we move away from what we *perceive* as painful and move towards what we *perceive* as pleasurable. Knowing this, we'll be able to utilize the brain's natural function to enable change.

Other modalities are stacked upon this polarity, this binary switch. Being very visual animals, it's no surprise that most beliefs have some imagery related to them. For example, the child who likes candy may see an image of it in his mind, feel a surge of pleasure, and move toward it to continue feeling good. The man who is afraid of heights can see the ground far below at his feet. The feeling of discomfort (pain) urges him to retreat to safer ground. Even when he's only a few feet off the ground, he remembers an image of being very high and triggers the same reaction. Sounds may also accompany these beliefs. Loud noises, soft whispers of care, a barking dog all add to the impact of the belief. If we hear our mother's voice nagging us every time we want to stop working and relax, it may not be surprising if we become workaholics.

Then, there is language. Pleasure and pain is the base; images, sounds, and other feelings next; then language. And for the purposes of this guide, we're going to spend a lot of time with language, because it is a powerful aspect of beliefs and even small shifts in how we speak to ourselves can have far-reaching effects.

- Life's a bitch, then you die.
- Life's a joy that only gets better with age.
- Rich people are selfish and mean.
- The wealthy are generous and helpful.
- The world is out to get me.
- The world is out to help me.

Which, if any, are true? None of them or all of them. We can find objective situations where all these may be true.

Have you escaped from your comfort zone recently?

**YOUR BELIEFS SYSTEM IS LIKE WEARING A PAIR OF GLASSES,
INFLUENCING THE WAY YOU SEE THE WORLD.**

**CHANGING YOUR BELIEFS, WILL CHANGE THE
WAY YOU SEE THE WORLD.**

Brainst

orming Beliefs:

For this exercise you'll need a pen and your change-book. If you'd like more space, take a few sheets of large paper.

As a preliminary warm-up, put the pen in your hand, put your hand on the paper, and begin to move it as erratically as you can, exactly like you did as a child. Make scribbles, lines, dark blotches of concentric circles. Whatever feels good or appropriate, do it. The only rules are these: 1) keep your hand moving all the time, 2) keep the pen on the paper at all times. Ideally, what you create will be one continuous line, albeit really convoluted. There are no rules for the content of your scribbling except that it should be spontaneous. Keep the intellect away! Continue this for five minutes, and repeat it as often as you can. Overtime, this will become an incredible method to access your subconscious mind.

Next, we're going to try this with coherent words. The goal of this exercise is to penetrate the surface of your mind and find out what you really believe. To do that, it's essential that you keep writing. If you don't know what to put down next, actually write 'I don't know what to put down next.' By keeping your hand moving ALL THE TIME, you'll move from your beta brain wave state, closer to an alpha state and a greater access to the subconscious mind.

So take a few minutes and write down what you think about the following categories.

Note: *read all the categories first and write about them together, during the same session, allowing your mind to skip around to the different topics as it sees fit. The best thing that you can do is to do as little as possible. Allow a deeper part of your personality to guide your hand, and trust that you'll get what you need to get when you need to get it. All you have to do is keep that hand moving. The questions are intended to spark ideas. Please refrain from intellectualizing them. Just read and understand them, then allow your hand to write continuously. The point is to keep your conscious mind out of the equation as much as possible so the subconscious mind can break through the ubiquitous noise of our everyday thoughts. This may be easy for some of you, but if it's not, please trust that, with practice, this is a skill anyone can develop.*

Beliefs about yourself:

What makes you, you?

How do you feel about yourself?

What are you good at?

What do you like/dislike?

What is the purpose of your life?

Beliefs about the world:

What is the world like?

What is good/bad in the world?

What is the current state of human civilization?

Beliefs about money:

Where does money come from?

What does it mean to be rich/poor?

How much wealth do you deserve?

Beliefs about love/relationships:

What is love?

What is a healthy relationship?

How much love do you deserve?

How much love can you give?

What kind of relationship do you want?

The resulting hodge-podge will give you an idea of some of your deeper beliefs. Of course, some of what you've written will be nonsense, but it's easy to tell which are true and which are mere prattle. If you read a statement, or fragment, or phrase, and you feel something deep down inside, it probably holds some emotional charge, and you believe it to an extent. If you read something, and you could care less about it, it's probably OK to consider that one illegitimate. Cross out the ones you decide aren't true beliefs, but BE CAREFUL: your mind is tricky and will do what it can to keep the sensitive beliefs safe. Take this part of the process slow. Keep this list somewhere safe and refer back to it from time to time. Also, it may be helpful to repeat this exercise every so often. With practice, you'll get better at this automatic writing and you'll gain greater access to your subconscious belief system.

THE ORIGIN OF YOUR BELIEFS

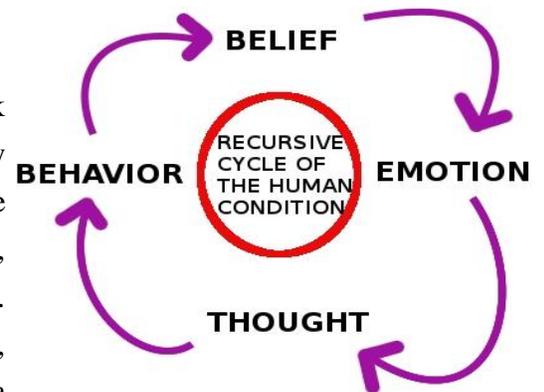
As I said earlier, our parents, usually unknowingly, give us our most fundamental beliefs. I'm not saying that so we can blame them for the hardships in our life, but rather so we can empower ourselves to change the things we want to change. Responsibility is key. Personally, I am thankful for everything my parents gave me—good, bad, or ugly. Even if some of the beliefs were ineffective and even harmful, learning to believe different things has been an invaluable lesson, one that has helped me to increase my own personal freedom. It's a good idea to take stock of your beliefs.

Of course family isn't the only source of your beliefs. The school system, friends, television, movies, radio, music...your entire culture all add varying degrees of influence to your core beliefs. Again, it's not to blame, only to acknowledge so that we can gain more influence in deciding what it is we actually want to believe. Looking at societal beliefs is also the beginning point for changing cultures. What does your culture believe? Chances are you hold similar beliefs, because it requires an enormous amount of energy to believe differently from the majority of the world around you. Looking around, here are some of the beliefs that I see motivating the American way of life.

- Individual freedom is very important to us.
- We want the best for ourselves and our families.
- There is an absolute system of right and wrong.
- A person's privacy is to be respected at all times.
- Increased security is more important than individual liberty.
- Hard work is essential for the attainment of wealth.
- Violence is a pleasurable form of entertainment.
- We believe in God.
- America is the greatest country in the world.
- We all have the opportunity to succeed.
- Sex is dirty and to be hidden away.
- Americans don't like the French.
- We are careless with our resources.
- We feel entitled to exploit other countries and peoples if it's in our benefit.
- We are on a tight time schedule and hurry to finish many tasks.
- Competition brings out the best in everybody.
- Communications are better when direct, open, and honest.

- Americans are materialistic.
- The world is a dangerous place.

Of course, these beliefs don't apply to everyone, but I think they apply to a large percentage of the population, though they may be *unconscious* to those who believe them. Now, each of these beliefs stimulate particular emotions, which lead to certain thoughts, that generate specific behaviors, that reinforce the original belief. This is a recursive cycle, a spiral, and it can go either way, downwards or upwards. Let's look at the belief, 'the world is a dangerous place.' Many would agree with this statement without considering it. After all, most of us are invested in believing that the world is a dangerous place. We've seen on the news about all the horrible things happening right in our backyards. We've heard stories about atrocity and sorrow. We've felt it in the eyes of the depraved as we walk by them.



People go around believing the world to be a dangerous place, and that stimulates painful emotions, most likely fear. From there, they go on thinking about how dangerous the world is. Maybe they imagine gruesome scenes or a myriad of worst-case-scenarios as they walk down the street. These thoughts generate certain behaviors—a cautious look over the shoulder, a hesitation, a panicked shout, or a hasty decision. These behaviors reinforce the original belief, and the whole process starts over again. In essence, you get more of whatever it is you focus on, of whatever it is you believe. If you believe the world is a dangerous place, your brain is going to stimulate emotions, supply thoughts, generate behaviors, and interpret information so it reinforces that belief. Your brain only does what it's been told to do.



I know that some people may be

saying to themselves, 'but the world *is* a dangerous place.' And my response to that is *maybe*. For every shred of evidence pointing out that the world is dangerous, we can find just as much (if not more) that the world is a safe place, and the vast majority of people want to help rather than hinder. Of course, we have to dig to find it. We have to go out of our way. Why? Because the popular, the societal belief is that *the world is dangerous*, and human beings will always find, promote, and create evidence to support their beliefs. Can you see the cycle? Believing the world is a dangerous place prompts society to prove its belief right, but that doesn't make it true. The world is more flexible than that. Want proof?

Looking for clues:

This exercise will take you a couple of days or even weeks. Consider it a continuous exercise. Remember that your belief system has evolved over a lifetime, starting even before you were born. So be patient with this one and you may be surprised with what you discover.

Think of something that you don't see everyday, some image that would be out of your personal range of normal. For example, if you live in the mid-West, seeing a big wave might be very unusual indeed. Similarly, if you live in Manhattan, seeing a bundle of corn might be strange. The image is arbitrary, but the less emotional attachment you have to it, the better.

a Teddy bear

a mohawk

a tattoo

a nose piercing

a rainbow

a frog

a VW bug

a hybrid car

a pistol

an eagle

a cactus

a raincloud

The image can be anything, but like I said, the less emotional attachment you have to it the better. This is the beginning of the shift, and if you follow this technique, you may spend the rest of your life looking for (and finding) whatever it is you want to create in this world. And start small. Don't begin by looking for that briefcase full of money. Remind yourself each morning and a few times throughout the day of what it is that you're looking for. Even better, write it down on a piece of paper, and keep it next to your bed. Look at it every morning and every evening, carry it in your pocket. Be open for the form your image may take. That frog may begin as a sticker on a child's lunch-box before it manifests as a flesh-and-blood animal. That mohawk may appear on an interesting bird before the leather-jacket-wearing teenager. Take note of your observations, write down the most shocking so that you may remember them when the clouds of doubt begin to plague you. If you engage this exercise with an open heart and mind, you will sow the seeds of belief change.

BELIEF AS SPIRAL GENERATOR

Now, let's go back to the example: the world is a dangerous place. I've illustrated how this belief could, potentially, propagate a downward spiral, leaving the believer in an increasingly dangerous world, tormented by darker and darker thoughts, and acting both more defensive and more aggressive to protect himself from this danger. I mean, isn't that what the world-at-large is experiencing now? What would happen if we reversed the polarity? What would happen if the belief was: the world is a helpful place? That belief would create positive thoughts about the self and the world, which would stimulate pleasurable feelings about most everything, that would generate life-affirming behaviors—a spontaneous smile, a friendly gesture. These actions would reinforce the belief that the world is a helpful place, and you'd find yourself in the middle of an upward spiral.

Note: I'm not denying that disruptive, chaotic events happen in the course of the life, but I do insist that it's the interpretation of these events that create the reality

If neither one is objectively 'true,' making neither one of them objectively 'false,' which do you find more effective for living a healthy, happy life?



*Have you
gotten out
of your
comfort
zone*

recently?

Our beliefs determine our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. They are the basis for the construction of our personal realities, and they take enormous energy and effort to violate. This is key. Your beliefs are so fundamental to you that your subconscious mind will do everything in its vast power to make sure your beliefs are honored, followed, and obeyed. So if you believe beautiful things, you'll have a beautiful life. Of course, life happens and everybody will experience some disasters, heartbreaks, and disappointment throughout their years on the planet, but it is also beliefs that will determine how people handle the ups and downs of life. If you hold self-defeating beliefs, your subconscious mind will be sure to provide you with exactly the right experiences to validate those beliefs. If you hold self-empowering beliefs, your subconscious mind will be sure to provide you with exactly the right experiences to validate those beliefs. Remember, your mind is

neutral, and it will only follow the instructions (beliefs) it has been provided with.

As I've illustrated, most beliefs are neither true nor false. They are absorbed from the world around arbitrarily, before the conscious mind has formed and can decide if it's a healthy or harmful to believe something. For a moment, I'm going to talk about common beliefs that keep people from realizing their goals, dreams, or potential.

Failure, most times, is not due to some external factor, but rather, a conflict of interest. For example, if Jason wants to lose 30lbs, but fails, it's not because he's incapable of losing weight. At the heart of the matter, his beliefs prevent him from doing what it is he wants to do. His identity and personality are invested in being overweight. Maybe he believes something like this:

- *Eating makes me feel safe.*

If that's the case, you can be sure that Jason is going to eat a lot, because human beings want to move towards pleasure and away from pain. Feeling safe is pleasurable, and feeling threatened is a type of pain, isn't it?

One time when I was traveling in India, I fell smitten with this beautiful Spanish woman. We were in the town of Rishikesh together. We knew each other for a few days, bumping into each other on the small streets or finding each other on a roof-top terrace. Knowing what I know now, it was obvious that there was some chemistry, but at the time, I couldn't believe it. I rationalized the lingering gazes and 'accidental' encounters as random occurrences, because one of my beliefs could not define my experience with this woman any other way. I believed that I was unattractive to the opposite sex, far out of her league, and my subconscious mind was courteous enough to filter all the information it was receiving in such a way as to validate that belief. A few days later, I left Rishikesh with a different platonic female friend. On the bus, she asked why I didn't further along the romance with the Spanish woman. When I told her it was because she wasn't interested in me, she just laughed. It was obvious to her and, supposedly, to everyone else as well, that there was romantic energy between us.

COMMONLY HELD BELIEFS THAT HINDER MORE THAN THEY HELP:

- *Eating more than I need makes me safe.*
 - *A thought such as this can easily lead to weight problems.*
- *Rich people are 'bad.'*
 - *Believing this will ensure that the believer will never be wealthy.*
- *I have to work hard to earn money.*
 - *This presents a dilemma—either work hard or live in poverty.*
- *I don't deserve more than I have.*
 - *This will keep whoever believes it at the same stage in their life, probably mediocrity.*

- *I'm not good enough for ...*
 - *If someone believe they aren't good enough for something, it's nearly sure they will never get it.*
- *People don't like me.*
 - *This shapes the mentality and attitude of the behavior in social situations, making the believer awkward and, generally, less accepted by the group.*
- *I'll never be happy.*
 - *Then no matter what happens in life, this person never will be.*
- *If something can go wrong, it will, i.e. Murphy's Law*
 - *What this creates is a rigorous attention for every detail that does not fall within the believers definition of 'right.'*

Up to this point, I hope I've made two very important points:

- Most beliefs are neither true nor false. They are subjective conclusions, not objective facts.
- The mind will go to incredible lengths to validate beliefs so they stay 'true' in your mind.

We've talked about negative beliefs and how they can adversely affect your life, and then I listed common beliefs that people hold about themselves or the world. Now, let's take a look at how we can change those beliefs to be more helpful in our daily lives.

- *I have all I need inside of me to feel safe.*
 - *Safety is an internal state generated by my thoughts, rather than an outside source such as food, people's opinions of me, or material wealth.*
- *It's a person's actions that determine their value.*
 - *Money is neutral and it's how a person uses their money that helps determine their value.*
- *Money flows easily to me.*
 - *Over time, this will create a string of amazing opportunities.*
- *I deserve more healthy things than I can imagine.*
 - *This creates a positive expectancy.*
- *People like me.*
 - *This shapes the attitudes and behaviors in such a way as to promote social success.*
- *If something can go right, it will.*
 - *This belief creates a positive feedback loop of unexpected positive surprises.*

One of the most effective beliefs to nurture is one of *pronoia*. In our world of darkening skies and gloomy predictions, it's no surprise that paranoia is on the rise. I mean, a survey of the media and messages we're exposed to reveals paranoia to be a core belief. Someone or something is out to get us—terrorists, gangs, the economy. They even personify weather patterns, as if that hurricane is actually *attacking* the Gulf coast. We see it in movies, television, and the news. These days, we are constantly told we are under attack. Of course, all evidence to the contrary is neglected, and paranoia breeds like crazy.

Pronoia is the belief that everyone is out to help you, and it's such a stealth operation that most have no conscious awareness of their intentions, and if they do, they'll take it to their graves. This goes for your neighbors, your co-workers, the government, even the Divine. Everything that happens to you is part of some hidden plan to aid you on this path in life. If pushed about this, your neighbors would probably deny it, because this positive conspiracy requires the utmost secrecy.

Remember that most beliefs are neither objectively true or false, but we act as if they are. How would things change if you lived this belief as if it were true? Try it on for a day. It might be fun!

LANGUAGE

Human beings are linguistic creatures. The ability to communicate about our internal and external worlds in sophisticated ways is one of the major differences separating us from the animal kingdom. We're constantly engaged with language. It's a big component on how we communicate with others as well as ourselves. In the process of belief change, it's important to acknowledge the role of language in our lives. Granted, there are some beliefs that originated before language, but, by far, the majority of beliefs have some linguistic component. Therefore, if you are to create healthy beliefs, it's important to be able to recognize and implement a healthy conversation with yourself.



The way we speak is a very accurate reflection

of how we think. Most people have some form of internal dialogue, a continuous conversation with themselves about their experience in any given moment. Sometimes this conversation is a description of what's happening, a judgment, an observation, or the memory sparked by an event. Sometimes it's helpful, other times, it's completely banal, and nearly useless, and sometimes it's very harmful and self-abusive. As we discussed, human beings are creatures of habit and routine, and that includes our linguistic patterns. In fact, how we speak is mostly a subconscious act. It's the rare person who speaks slowly and uses words exactly as they wish them to mean. Speaking consciously, saying what you mean to say requires an enormous amount of attention, and we've been trained through years of television and movies to be lazy with our words, to resort to catch phrases and hip one-liners. Although it may require some practice, language is a great way to gain access to the subconscious mind.

Your 3 most common phrases:

This exercise will require you to pay attention to something that is happening all the time, but you probably give it little notice: how you speak. Over the next day, decide what the three most common things you say are. They don't even have to be fully formed words. Literally, the three most common sounds that escape from your mouth. Here are some examples:

- *Uh-huh*
- *Ummm...*
- *I don't know.*
- *'like'*
- *'actually'*
- *do you know what I mean?*
- *What?*
- *Oh my God!*
- *Swear words*

You're looking for those automatic phrases that slip from your mouth before you notice. More than likely, there will be more than three so do your best to find the most pervasive. If you're having trouble finding them, listen to those people who you spend the most time with. Chances are they speak in a very similar way to you.

The next part of this exercise is simple, but complex in its simplicity. Once you've got your three words or phrases, write them down. And then...stop saying them. At first, you'll probably have a lot of trouble with this, because you're bringing something from the subconscious into the realm of the conscious. As you may see, it becomes easier with time, and as it does, you'll be rewarded with greater choice in how you speak, and therefore, how you think.

Be patient with this exercise. If you're actually doing it, congratulations! You're taking responsibility for your speech, which is a rare thing in our days of catch-phrases, one-liners, and marketing jingles. Now, as we go forward, it's time to pay attention to even more about your language. Get comfortable inside your head because you're going to be spending a lot of time with words, both in the external and internal worlds.

There's more to look at in our everyday speech. As we've talked about, we pick up an enormous amount of behaviors and cognitive habits from our environment, and some of them can be more harmful than helpful. Because you're on this path to change, you've chosen the path of empowerment, which is also the path of responsibility. And if you're on a path of responsibility, then you have to let go of any lingering notions of victim-hood. That may seem easy, but this tendency to blame the world can be hidden in a very common verbal pattern. People often complain or vent or describe things they 'have to' do.

- I have to go to work today.
- I have to mow the grass.
- I have to cook dinner.
- I have to go to the doctor.
- I have to...



Seems harmless enough, right? But it's not.

Whoever uses such language is putting themselves into the role of victim. The language suggests that the speaker has no choice. And if we have no choice then we are, in fact, victims. In reality, you and everyone else has a choice in every moment of their lives. Granted, there might be the extreme case of torture or imprisonment, but for most of us, we have choices...they just may not be easy ones and the consequences could be disastrous. You don't have to pay your taxes, but you may go to jail if you don't. Like most rules, there's a small exception. If you preface a 'have to' statement, with an 'if' phrase, you've qualified the 'have to' and it's more feasible to say or think it.

- If I want to keep my current job, then I have to go to work.
 - Because the 'have to' has been qualified, it's not harmful. The preceding 'if' phrase assumes the choice. If the person goes to work, they've chosen to keep their job. If they don't, they've chosen not to.

- If I want the house to look nice, then I have to mow the grass.
- If I want have my head examined by a qualified professional, then I have to go to the doctor.
 - This last example seems a bit overboard just to assert the need to see a doctor. But if the speaker were to say, 'If I want to feel better, then I have to go to the doctor,' or something equally vague, the implication is that the ONLY way to feel better is to see a doctor. This is just as dangerous as an unqualified 'have to' because it completely neglects the body's capacity to heal and places the power outside the self.

It's essential that we qualify the few 'have tos' that we do choose to use, or we risk falling into victim-hood and out of empowerment. The preceding 'if' phrase is critical in maintaining your capacity to change.

The next word to watch out for is 'should.' This one is a nasty bugger because it falls so easily from our lips. In a linguistic sense, 'should' implies an authoritarian hierarchy. That is, it's connected to this longing for righteousness. Its effects are obvious in the external world when someone tells us that we 'should' do this or that, and then the seemingly benign comment may trigger feelings of hostility. Why is it that we often get our feathers ruffled when some well-meaning person tells us we 'should' do this or that? More than likely, it's probably your self-respect that's heating you up. Almost nobody likes being told what to do, and most of us will resist it no matter who's doing the telling, even if it's in our best interest. Human beings are pack animals, making us naturally prone to see the world in terms of pack dynamics—leaders and followers. And most of us want to be on the top.

Now it may seem that internalizing a word like should wouldn't cause any problems. After-all we're just talking to ourselves, trying to get ourselves to act in better ways, right? How could a one-sided conversation create any kind of internal conflict? Although we are singular entities, the human mind is more complex. It's a multi-faceted entity with many different aspects, and the fact is that there is probably more than one hierarchy in your own mind. Perhaps it's an image of your parents telling you how to live your life. Or your husband's voice demanding more from you, or your wife's incessant nagging. Or your old friends pressuring you to be 'cool.' Although these 'personalities' begin in the external world, if we hear them or identify with them enough, we will internalize them and make them a part of our internal conversation. Regardless of where they come from, it's quite common that people create these conflicting power structures in their minds. But don't worry, most of the time, they are created unconsciously, and it may very well be a genetic pre-disposition, because we are social creatures.

Learning to be more aware of language will allow you to defuse this hierarchy. How do you know if you've got one? Pretty much if you use the word should when you're talking to yourself more than once or twice a day, you can be sure that a lot of the stress you feel comes from this hierarchy in

conflict with itself. In Gestalt therapy, this is commonly known as a top dog/bottom dog dynamic. The top dog (some subconscious authority) tells the bottom dogs (other parts of the self) what to do and how to do it. Anytime you catch yourself telling yourself that you should do something or act some way, beware, because it's only reinforcing the conflict in your head and keeping you from being as effective as you could be. In a moment, we'll find useful ways to rephrase these statements.

We are the creators of the stress we experience in our lives. Sure, you may have a boss who is a real jerk, but nobody makes you react to him the way you do. What I mean is that, outside extreme moments, you don't have to feel any particular way in any particular situation. You are free to feel how you choose. If your boss is a jerk, then let him be a jerk. Do your job, and if he still isn't happy, then remember that you are making the choice to be there. Sure, you may have some responsibilities in the world and it's important to honor those, but your first responsibility is to yourself. If you're in a situation that is generating more stress than you can or want to handle, it's your responsibility to either change the situation or change how you interpret the situation so that you can act differently. Learning to use your language in a more precise way can help you to do that.

Have you escaped from your comfort zone lately?

Hunting Harmful Language:

So now that you've begun to gain greater control to your subconscious mind and the language you use, maybe you've begun to notice that you've also gained a little space, a little room to decide how and when you want to respond to your environment. If you haven't done a few days of deleting the 3 most common words/phrase you say, make sure you do that before you continue with this exercise.

Now it's time to stop using language that hurts you. So from now on, you may notice more and more how you speak to yourself. And as you notice more and more of your unconscious language patterns, you may gain more volition in how you speak to yourself. You're able to stop saying things that are harmful and to start saying things that are helpful.

- *'Have to' – The only thing you have to do in this world is die. Everything else is a choice. True, it may be a hard choice, but you still possess your free will. So take more responsibility for yourself and stop giving the external world power over you. Remove 'have to' and 'must' from your internal and external conversations.*
 - *Replacing 'have to' and 'must' with 'I choose to...' signifies your choice to act in a certain way. Not only does this increase your personal responsibility, over time, it will snowball into an enormous potential to change the aspects of your life that do not serve or please you. It's one way to accumulate personal power.*
 - ***I have to go to work. → I choose to go to work.***
 - ***I have to mow the lawn. → I choose to mow the lawn.***
 - ***I have to make dinner. → I choose to make dinner.***
 - *Because you now formulate your language in a way that reflects your choice, you'll have a greater ability to choose. If you speak to yourself this way, you can no longer go through life being made to do anything. It is another step on the path to real freedom.*
- *'Should' – Should creates an unnecessary pressure, a stress to conform to someone else's ideas about the world and yourself, even if that 'someone else' is another facet of your personality. There are plenty of ways to accomplish the tasks in your life. Remove 'should' from your internal and external conversations.*

- *Replacing 'should' with 'could' further reflects your choice. 'It might be a good idea' is also a good substitute. Suddenly, your language is no longer commanded from some greater authority on high, but rather, it has more potential. You 'could' do this or that, but you don't have to. You have the choice*

- ***I should do the dishes. → I could do the dishes.***
- ***I shouldn't watch TV. → I could stop watching TV.***
- ***I should wash the car. → It might be a good idea to wash the car.***
- ***I shouldn't spend too much money. → It might be a good idea to keep my expenses down.***

The further you go into your mind on your path to changing your beliefs, the more you may realize that language is responsible for most of your experience. As such, it's a huge factor in how we feel, think, and behave. So continuing on our path to precision in speech, and therefore, thought, let's talk about how we talk about ourselves.

No matter who you are, how you speak to yourself affects every aspect of your life. Perhaps you tell yourself that you're unworthy, that you're hopeless, that you're incredible, that you're amazing. Whatever the case may be, your language affects you. Why? Because your mind will give you what you ask for. So pay attention. Watch what you say to yourself. How do you speak to yourself? Are you reluctant to receive praise? Do you berate yourself when something goes wrong? Do you take more credit than you're responsible for? Whatever the case may be, if you're speaking to yourself in a harmful manner, it's important that you stop it. For you to be successful, it's very helpful for you to talk to yourself in a loving, respectful way. And, it's true that you can't really respect anyone or anything before you respect yourself first. So what are the finer points of you? What do you do well? How are you?

Welcome to the rabbit hole. Once you decide to go down it, to become conscious of your language and how you use it, it's a long, interesting relationship. Everything comes under inspection, reviewed, and, if deemed unhealthy, altered, replaced, or deleted. So far, you understand why it's less than a good idea to speak about 'have to' and 'should'. Basically, enough 'have to's will turn you into a victim, constantly forced against your will to do things you'd rather not. Enough 'shoulds' will put you into further conflict with yourself, and that's not a battle you want to engage in, because you'll always lose. But next, and just as important is to beware of 'negative' statements. Although I am an advocate for a positive perspective, as in looking on the bright-side, that's not what I'm talking about at all. When I say 'negative statement,' I'm referring to a particular sentence pattern, rather than a value judgment. A negative pattern is any one that incorporates 'no, not, never, nowhere, or nobody.' In this linguistic pattern, the subject or object of the statement is the thing the speaker does not wish to experience.

There are many instances where this is a useful pattern, and I don't mean to suggest that you can *never* use them. But in the world of self-evolution and healthy change, it's very important that you talk to yourself and to the world about what it is you want to move towards (pleasure), as opposed to what it is that you wish to avoid (pain). This is a very common obstacle. If you want to change, and I can reasonably assume because you're reading this, you do, then chances are, you're highly focused on something you don't want. And, as I've illustrated earlier, you get more of what it is you focus on.

So, quickly, what's the focus, the subject matter, of each of these sentences? Reduce it to one word.

1. I don't want to smoke.
2. I don't want to forget anymore.
3. I don't want to eat so much.
4. I don't want to procrastinate.
5. I don't want to waste so much time.

All of these statements focus the language, and therefore the mind, on exactly what it is the speaker no longer wants. It may seem harmless or even beneficial to assert what it is you don't want so you'll know it when you see it, but that's counter-productive when it comes to the mind. The subconscious mind thinks primarily in symbols, and then we connect conscious language to these symbols so that we can express ourselves in meaningful ways. The subconscious mind has no symbol for negation. In fact, it may be impossible for anyone to create a symbol that means nothing, because if there's a symbol, then it's referencing *something*.

For example, it's easy to think of a symbol for smoking—a cigarette, a pack of them, an ashtray—but what symbol exists for not-smoking?



Did you think of something like that? Of course the meaning of this symbol is clear enough: smoking is prohibited. But do you see cognitive problem? This symbol focuses on the subject it wants to avoid. And we get exactly what it is we focus on. For example, imagine sitting in a room for a few hours, surrounded by these signs. Big ones, small ones, upside-down ones. All manner of them. As you sat in this room, what do you think would be a common focus of your mind?

Cigarettes.

And I bet if you spent long enough in that room, eventually, you'd want a cigarette,

It might seem minor, ineffectual, and perhaps a single instance of using negation to express something doesn't have far-reaching effects. But a lifetime of focusing on what it is you don't want is sure to give you more of it. That is a fundamental law in a world of entangled consciousness. For example, imagine a scene in a movie. The hero is inching along a precarious edge. Far below, a tiny river rages through jagged rocks and heavy boulders. As the hero inches closer to safety, his waiting companion calls out in fear (and supposedly to help), "Don't look down!" Nine times out of ten, what does the hero do? He looks down and, because of it, he almost falls.

This happens all the time. Well-meaning parents want to keep their kids safe so they tell them again and again, 'don't go into the street!' Of course it's a great idea for children to stay out of the street, but by telling their children NOT to do something, the parents force the very image that they wish to avoid into their child's mind. And after enough thoughts, the children will build up a curiosity, an unconscious motivation to actually do what they've been told not to. Instead, the parents might instill a greater sense of safety by telling their children to do what they want them to do. "Stay in the yard."

“Stay on the sidewalk.” “Stay safe.” Of course, parenting is a complex relationship, and I don't mean to downplay the commitment or subtleties, but by emphasizing healthy behavior, rather than avoiding harmful behavior, parents can help their children develop more useful models of the world.

So now, think of another symbol that would not allow for smoking, but without incorporating any smoking imagery.

Difficult? Once we get the hang of it, once we get out of our cognitive ruts, it's very easy to think and talk and create based on what we want, rather than what we wish to avoid. There is no imagery for non-smoking that avoids all imagery of smoking. So we don't talk about *non-smoking*, we talk about what we want. We talk about having healthy lungs, being able to breathe deeply, being fit. We may not reference smoking, but to have healthy lungs, don't you think that eliminates smoking by definition?

So if Billy-Bob, a long-time alcoholic, claims, “I don't want to drink anymore,” he's only bringing the image and memories of drinking to his mind. Sure, he's asserting that he doesn't want to do it anymore, but his mind has to access the memories and images of him doing it before it can process *not doing* it. So Billy-Bob stops drinking on Sunday and he talks all day and the next about how he stopped drinking. Slowly, then quickly, the urge to drink grows stronger and stronger, but he can't figure it out. He's been telling everyone how he's stopped drinking, and he's really meant it. By Wednesday, he's dying for a drink despite the fact that he's told everyone, including himself, that he stopped drinking. And on Thursday, he's wasted.

Of course, this is a simplification, but it is also a very accurate example of what happens in people's head. Now, how could Billy-Bob have helped himself. Sure, he's got years of alcoholism to get over, and there's no magic word that will make that go away, but he can speak to himself and the world in a way that will slowly change the programming in his subconscious mind. He can talk about sobriety. Instead of bragging about how he's stopped drinking, Billy-Bob will better serve himself by saying, “I'm sober,” or “I'm going to stay sober.” Sure enough, he'll still have some cravings. I mean, we're talking about a life-long habit here. But his language will work to erode those feelings. If he's got the awareness to stay sober for a few days, then a week, then two, he'll be able to make a great change in his life. But as soon as he starts talking and thinking about drinking, he'll only rush himself to his next relapse.

Negating the Negatives:

So take notice of how you use your negation. Are you unintentionally focusing on exactly the thing you no longer want in your life? Although it may seem awkward at first, removing unnecessary negation is a pretty easy thing to do. If you find yourself speaking about not wanting this or not wanting that, gently remind yourself that you'll find it more useful if you focus your energy on the things you want. Maybe you're not sure what it is you want, but you do know, without a doubt, that you want to avoid some pain. So instead try to find some pleasure you can move towards. This will require a shift in perspective, but making it is just another step along the way to change. Instead of seeing what you don't want, to speak in more positive terms will require you to see more the things you do want.

Before we get into the meat and potatoes of the actual belief change, there's one last language pattern you need to be aware of. Absolutes. In our age of dramatic explosions and ultimatums, most of us have fallen into the habit of speaking in absolutes.

- I'll never do that again.
- I always arrive on time.
- Everyone will like this.
- Nobody likes me.
- All the news channels are covering the story.
- None of my friends are good listeners.

All of these examples illustrate the use of absolutes. Sometimes, it's useful and accurate to use absolutes, but these times are rare. The thing about absolutes is that they are mostly not true. It's hard to find a case where *always* or *never* is true all or none of the times. Most often, we speak in absolutes to add drama, relative importance to what it is we want to say. Now, maybe you're saying that this is silly, that of course, we know that when someone says "I *always* arrive on time," that they really mean, they *usually* arrive on time. For sure, some of us do know that, but some of us don't. More importantly, your subconscious mind interprets what you tell it literally so if you speak in absolutes, and these absolutes are not true 100% of the time, you are only creating more conflict inside yourself. (On a side note, there is also an inherent danger in assuming that you know what someone else means if their words or body language hasn't explicitly expressed your concluded meaning.)

Because absolutes are rarely true for every situation, they will, eventually, create more conflict in the mind. For example, if Betty-Sue says "I always arrive on time," she's creating an expectation within herself to always arrive on time. So what happens the one time she is late? Her subconscious mind will generate a lot of tension and stress to rush her forward to try to be on time or to teach her not to be late again. She's very likely to feel bad about herself, or even guilty, for being late. Absolutes don't allow humans to make mistakes or for the spontaneous events that are a natural part of life. But if she says, "I'm usually on time," she allows herself room for error, and if she ever is late, her subconscious mind won't react as strongly because she hasn't violated any of her own internal regulations.

Like I said, the mind will do just about anything to see its beliefs confirmed, even warping reality.

Finding exceptions in a world of absolutes:

Now that you know the risks involved in speaking, thinking, and believing in absolutes, it's time to find exceptions to your absolutes. So throughout your day, your life, notice when you're speaking, thinking, and believing in absolutes. When you find one, stop and hold it in your mind. When you've got it, take that absolute and prove it wrong. Find the exception, then re-word the belief so that it's more realistic.

- *I always make bad decisions.*
 - *Find at least one time when you made a good decision.*
 - *I sometimes make bad decisions. OR, even better, I sometimes make good decisions.*
 - *This statement more accurately describes reality, not to mention that it's more respectful to the self and allows for the development of even more helpful behavior.*
- *I always drive carefully.*
 - *Remember one time when you drove carelessly.*
 - *Most times, I drive carefully.*
 - *It's important to recognize accurately the times we've done less-than-perfect things as well. Believing that you're always 'something positive' can be just as harmful as believing you're always 'something negative'. Human beings are dynamic creatures, possible of much more flexibility than we admit.*
- *People never find my stories interesting.*
 - *Remember when someone was captivated by a story you told.*
 - *Usually, people find my stories boring.*
 - *Again, the latter statement is more descriptive of reality and more respectful of the self.*

As you can see, finding the exception works for both 'positive' and 'negative' statements. It's just as harmful to say something 'positive' in absolutes as it is to say something 'negative.' By re-wording your statements, you've allowed yourself space to make a change. Absolutes are rigid, black/white representations of the world, and, as such, they hinder the natural changes that occur as a human being lives life. But if we incorporate words of relativism, we offer ourselves more opportunity to be flexible. Here's a list of words to replace the absolutes with:

- *sometimes*
- *usually*
- *few*
- *some*
- *most*
- *often*
- *many*
- *seldom*
- *rarely*

The realm of absolutes, as I intend it here, is meant to include value judgments such as *best* and *worst*. Usually, these terms set people up for more conflict, and more stress. Sure, they may feel good to say them (because we all want to be at the top of the pack, we all want to be 'right'), but abandoning these concepts as much as you can will smooth out even more of the wrinkles in your life.

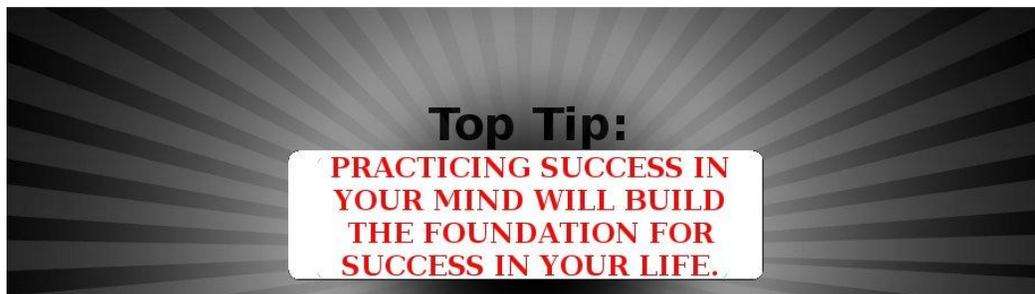
I've just gone over some language patterns with you and explained how they are often more harmful than helpful, that is they hold you back rather than propel you towards your goals. And then I illustrated how you can take those patterns and change them into a more beneficial structure. This altering to language and the subsequent rephrasing to provide a different outcome is a type of *re-framing*, which is just a high-faluting way of saying 'to express an idea differently.' Re-framing is an art, and the better a person is at it, the more flexible their mind. The more flexible the mind, usually, the more successful. So when you change a thought from "I have to have dessert," to "I choose to have desert," you're re-framing the thought from one of enslavement to one of ownership, of empowerment.

Observing the language you use may help you become more aware of what is happening inside your head, and understanding how those happenings are directly linked to how you create your reality. I haven't said it explicitly, but to this point, the conclusion of the coursework is that there is more than one way to interpret reality. In fact, each person lives within their own conclusions about reality. By taking notice of your language, you're going to gain awareness, and always remember that awareness is key. The more aware you are of what you're doing and the effects of your actions, both in the internal and external worlds, the more successful you will be in every area of your life. So now, let's deepen the contact with your subconscious mind. If you've done the exercises, then you've already taken the

necessary steps to bring the subconscious closer to the surface. And maybe you've already changed some beliefs. The previous exercises, although seemingly benign, have a lot of potential to change your belief system.

REACHING INTO THE SUBCONSCIOUS

Making contact with the subconscious mind can be a slippery fish, because it's hard to know what's real and what's imaginary, but a way around that is to re-frame. In the world of the subconscious mind the difference between reality and imagination is minimal. For years, scientists and researchers have illustrated that the brain reacts the same way when imagining an activity as when the body is actually doing it. This can be an effective way to boost your level of success almost instantly. Take time to visualize, to imagine in ever greater detail the activities and abilities you want to achieve in your life. As you practice success in your mind, you'll be more successful in collective reality.



Remember, in the beginning, when I spoke

about brain waves and how, as they changed, we have greater or less access to the subconscious mind and the beliefs planted there? Well, there are many ways to change your brainwaves. If you did the Mind Juggling exercise, you both changed your brainwaves and you helped balance the hemispheres of your brain. Deepening and lengthening your breathing pattern for a few minutes can alter your state-of-mind as well. Every night when you go to sleep, you progress through the different brain waves many times. When you watch television, you drop from a beta state to an alpha. When you're driving, you change state. These are all examples of trances. Nearly every human being experiences trance. It's only the extremely rare people that don't. When you're watching television, making love, playing soccer, drawing a picture, reading a book. These are all examples of different states-of-mind, or trances. And they all offer a wider access to the subconscious mind. That is, it's easier to manage and care for your garden of beliefs.

Hypnosis by a trained professional is probably the most conclusive way to go into a trance. The nature of the mind and consciousness makes it easy for us to dismiss our daily trance experiences as illegitimate, because they are so commonplace. So we feel more comfortable with an outside authority telling us that we've gone into a real trance. But trust me, going into a trance is something you've done before, something you do multiple times a day, and something you can use very easily to learn how to act, think, feel, and believe differently, if you so choose.

Practicing Success:

Take time to yourself. Find a place to be alone, where you can either sit comfortably, free of distraction. You'll want to avoid lying down, especially on a bed, because most of us associate bed with sleep, and it'll be very easy for you to drift off. So find a comfortable chair and have a seat. Think of some task, or some skill that you have to do or that you would like to learn. Perhaps you have a presentation at work, an exam for school, a woman you'd like to ask out, a language you'd like to learn. It can be anything new or even anything old, something that you'd like to improve. If you really want to amp up the effectiveness of this guide, use 'entering into a trance and affecting healthy change' for this exercise.

Take a few moments to relax. breathe deeply. Scan your body and flood it with relaxation. When you feel ready, imagine the scene in which your desired skill or task will happen. What does it look like? What are the colors? What sounds are present? Make it as vivid as possible, but do not obsess here. You're subconscious mind is naturally intelligent and the best thing you can do is trust it to fill in the gaps.

See yourself in the scene. How do you move? How do you hold yourself? How do you interact with others? Watch your self be confident and sure in your success. Make sure this is a successful visualization and run it again and again until it is successful. Then do it again, but this time, watch your success from your own eyes. See and feel the success happening. And that's it. When you're done, open your eyes and go about your business. Repeat as often as you can, because the more often you do this, the more successful you'll be.

If you watch yourself making the changes you want in your life, you'll become even more effective at making the changes you want in your life. This is a sort of meta-programming.

Circular or recursive language is particularly affective for initiating a spiral. Most often, they push the believer downwards. "The more I fail, the worse I feel. The worse I feel, the less likely I am to succeed." This is a very dangerous situation, and the believer will have a lot of trouble being successful.

Upward spirals are very effective in driving the believer towards their particular goal. For example, if someone wants to relax, here's a great way to do it:

- The deeper I breathe, the more I relax, and the more I relax, the deeper I breathe.

Or if someone wants to be happier:

- The more I smile, the happier I feel, and the happier I feel, the more I smile.

Or if someone wants to be get more done:

- The more I focus, the more I get done, and the more I get done, the more motivated I am to focus.

Recursive language is the best way to be sure that however you choose to create your beliefs, they will continue to motivate you in that direction.

Remembering previous belief changes:

99.999% of us have experienced belief change at some point in our lives. Think back to when you were 16. Do you believe now the things you believed then? Some of them are surely the same, but many of them are probably different. Consider your political affiliation, religious beliefs, relationship to the opposite sex, money-management skills. I'm fairly confident that many beliefs have shifted in one or more of these areas. If you don't recognize that 'a-ha!' moment of the actual shift, what may have happened is that your beliefs changed slowly so that you didn't notice the change as it happened, or you've forgotten the 'aha!' moment. Regardless, they've changed. How about Santa Claus? Can you remember when and how you found out that Santa Claus didn't exist in the way your parents had told you?

Take a few moments in a quiet comfortable space and remember when some of your beliefs changed. Maybe it was how you felt about the opposite sex? Maybe it was how you viewed your role in life? Maybe it was what 'success' meant to you? Maybe it was what you wanted to pursue as a career. Any answer is valid so spend some time here and remember as many as you can. This will make the conscious change we'll perform later that much easier. Then, pick at least one that feels especially interesting to you and write it down in your change-book. Keep it in a safe place, and look at it from time to time.

Dreaming gateways:

Every night when you fall asleep, you have an opportunity to communicate with your subconscious mind. Most of us fall asleep without realizing it. We lay down in our bed, and sometime later, we wake up in the morning, hopefully well-rested. Dreams are powerful things, and they deserve much of our attention. The role of dreams in our life is beyond the scope of this book, but that moment before you go to sleep is a great time to talk to your subconscious mind. You see, if you know how to formulate language appropriately, you can ask your mind questions, offer suggestions, and set goals, and you'll find that your mind responds. Your mind-body wants to help you. The only reason that it sometimes feels as if your working against yourself is because, along the way, your mind has gotten the message that you want it to perform whatever behavior is holding you back. In other words, your mind is doing what you've told it is best for you!

After lying down, getting ready for sleep is the perfect time to communicate with your subconscious mind, because you know that in the few minutes after that, you'll fall asleep and, essentially, go into a trance. I highly recommend you take advantage of this moment and communicate with the rest of the submerged iceberg.

Get comfortable, relax, and get ready to fall asleep as you normally would. If you're in bed with someone else, say good-night and make sure that you have your own space, that you won't be disturbed as you drift off. It's good to know that none of this is critical. If your partner rolls over and bumps into you, it's not that big of a deal. Relax, accept, and forgive. Your position isn't that crucial, but it may be beneficial to lie on your back with your arms at your side and your legs straight.

Now pay attention to your breathing. Deepen it as much as is comfortable and follow it for 3-5 cycles. And then say the following, silently, to yourself, as you exhale. Slow down your internal dialogue so that you are speaking to yourself as you exhale. This will help you build rapport with yourself. Although the following is a script, I highly recommend that you keep most of it intact and be absolutely sure, whatever changes you make to it follow the guidelines I've illustrated in this book. Although your mind is your ally, saying the wrong thing at the wrong time can slow down or even short-circuit the communication.

Remember to speak the lines to yourself as you exhale.

“Hello. I would like to communicate with my subconscious mind. First, I'd like to say thank you for everything you make possible in my life. I may not always admit it, but I do realize how much you do to help me every day. Thank you for everything. Next, I'd like to ask you to do something for us. As I'm sleeping tonight, I'd like you to find 5 examples when I was full of confidence (or a great public speaker, or compassionate to my mate, or quick on my feet, or feeling very attractive, or whatever it is you want to be or do in your life). Then, I'd like you to investigate those 5 experiences, and determine what internal qualities they had in common. What characteristics did they all have that made them

possible? Then, I'd like you to re-create those combinations of qualities in my life, to make them more and more available to me everyday in healthy, appropriate situations. And when I wake up tomorrow, please arrange it so that I am full rested, excited about my day, and feeling great. Thanks again."

MAKING THE CHANGE

The first time I ever spoke like this to myself, I felt very silly indeed, borderline crazy. If you're having a similar feeling, you may accept it for normal. We're rarely taught how to speak to ourselves in meaningful ways, and often such communication habits are considered uncool or impractical. But if you ask any communication guru or self-improvement expert, they'll agree that establishing a healthy way to talk to your self is fundamental to making the changes you wish to make. So for your own benefit, you may allow yourself to feel whatever it is you feel as you learn to speak to your self in a healthier way, all the while trusting that you're moving forward in a direction that you've chosen for yourself.

All of the previous content has been the fundamentals for belief change, but they are also the first stages of belief change. If you've done them, then at some level, you've reshaped your beliefs. By now, I think you may have figured out that changing your beliefs may require changing your world. You see, there's not much difference between the two. What you believe determines the world you live in, and by changing one, you change the other. If Billy-Bob really believes that sobriety is a healthier, more mature decision than inebriation, do you think he'll still spend as much time at the bar?

This changing of worlds may seem uncomfortable at first. That's normal, but as you spend more and more time in this space of transition, you'll become more comfortable, and you'll have more influence in what changes and how it changes. The biggest recommendation I can give you is to go with the flow and trust that whatever happens is good feedback and a great way to learn.

Although most beliefs are mutable, changing them can be tricky, and it depends a lot on how deeply seated they are. The first step is to identify the belief you want to change. Then, we'll go through some exercises so that you may better understand the benefits (pleasure) of your current belief and the drawbacks (pain) from changing it. We'll go through a couple of drafts to really nail down what it is you want to believe, and finally we'll make sure that the language is structured in such a way so that your new belief is both healthy and readily accepted by the rest of your mind. It's important to replace a limiting belief with an empowering one. Just removing an old belief without replacing it with something better can be more debilitating than the old belief.

Brainstorming Beliefs:

Perform the following exercise when you can be alone and relaxed for 10-15 minutes.

If you think you already know the specific belief that you want to change, I urge you to go through the following process anyway. Pick an area of your life that you would like to improve: Relationships, Self-Image, Financial/Career, etc.

Take a piece of paper and write your chosen topic at the top of the page. Then, begin writing, just like you did before. Keep your hand moving across the paper, writing down all the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs you have about your chosen subject. Keep the hand moving! If you don't know what to write, write 'I don't know what to write.' Keep going! With practice you'll find that this becomes easier and what may start as a trickle of information from the subconscious turns into a gushing torrent.

After you've done at least 8 minutes, stop and look over your beliefs. What's recurring? What resonates with you? What feels empty or meaningless? It's important to listen to your body right now. Usually, the stronger the feeling upon reading one of these statements or phrases, the more you believe it. So take your time and listen to your body. After you've gone over it for a few minutes, pick one belief to work with. This will be the belief that you're going to change.

Be aware that there are different levels of beliefs. There are really deep beliefs that create the structure for later beliefs: 'Life is difficult.' And there are beliefs that are closer to the surface, and therefore, easier to change: 'Life has been difficult this week.' I recommend that you take a more surface belief to work with, because it will be easier to change than a deeper belief. And as you gain experience, push further down and get at some of the more fundamental beliefs.

Now that you have your belief, write it down in your change-book on a blank piece of paper. You really want to take responsibility for it, get to know it before you say good-bye to it. Take a few minutes and ruminate on how this belief has affected your life. How has it motivated your actions? What have you done or not done because of this? Although it's not essential, can you determine when you started believing this, and why? Don't worry about it if you can't. Like I said, it's not essential. The new model of psychology does not require years of psychoanalysis to make a change. All it requires is the right technique and a motivation to change.

Now it's time to look at the pros and cons of your belief. It's important to remember that although you do not want to have this belief any longer, at some point in your life and in some instances, it has helped you to survive. So be thankful for it.

Pros and Cons:

Now take a blank piece of paper and write your belief at the top of it. And just under that write 'pros' or 'pleasures' or 'positives' or whatever is meaningful to you that signifies the helpful aspects of this belief. Then go through the brainstorming process again and think of all the ways this belief has helped you. Don't worry if something 'negative' comes out, just let it pass and do your best to keep your mind focused on searching for the positive.

When you've done 8 minutes, take a break, and repeat the process, this time for the 'negative' aspects. Here are some questions that may help you to see through your habits.

- How is this belief irrational?
- How much does it cost you in terms of received pain/forsaken pleasure if you continue believing this? Consider these areas:
 - emotionally
 - physically
 - financially
 - interpersonally
- How does continuing to believe this harm you?
- How does continuing to believe this harm your family and/or friends?

You've just made a list of the 'pleasures' and 'pains' associated with this belief, and in order for you to leverage your mind into making the shift between beliefs, you've got to speak its language. Like we said in the beginning, the first dynamic of consciousness is to move towards pleasure and away from pain. If you really value the belief you've been working with in this exercise, the 'pleasure' list is probably longer than the 'pain' list. If it's not, then perhaps go through another session of this. If after another session, the 'pain' is still longer than the 'pleasure' list, then either you don't really value that belief, or you've already leveraged your mind and are ready to believe something else, or you've got a really strong authoritarian voice, commanding the rest of you to believe something that is, ultimately, no good for any of you. If this is the case, paying extra attention to your language will eventually depose your inner tyrant.

In order to leverage your mind, you've got to shift the balance so there's more pain associated with the belief than there is pleasure. Doing this will take some attention and a little bit of time. Look closely at the 'pleasure' list and find the exceptions to those pleasures. Pretty much, you're going to find examples, situations, experiences that contradict your list of perceived pleasures. You're going to re-frame them from pleasures into pains.

For example, Little Johnny wants to stop smoking, and he's narrowed down his belief to 'I enjoy

smoking.' He's made a laundry list of pains and pleasures. On the pleasure list, he's written:

- *Smoking relaxes me.*
- *It makes me more confident.*
- *It gives me something to do with my hands.*

To stop smoking, he's got to debunk these perceived pleasures. With smoking it's quite easy to do.

- *Smoking relaxes me.*
 - *It doesn't actually. Nicotine is a stimulant so it actually does the opposite. That perceived feeling of relaxation is actually the relief from the cravings caused by nicotine addiction.*
- *It makes me more confident.*
 - *Again, it doesn't actually. Any perceived feeling of confidence comes from the relief from cravings. How could knowingly destroying your body give you confidence?*
- *It gives me something to do with my hands.*
 - *Right it does give you something to do with your hands, but there are plenty of other, benign ways to occupy your hands. Learning to twirl a coin between your fingers, for example. When it's convenient, eating fresh fruit.*
 - *It does give you something to do with your hands, and is that a good idea? Maybe we can assume that you need something to do with your hands because you've got a lot of nervous energy. How about getting to the root of that problem and learning to deal with your anxiety (or whatever) in a healthy way? Try learning to breathe deeper and slower. Scientifically proven to work every time!*

*As you can see, the point is to debunk the pleasurable aspects and to put them into the pain side of the equation. Once this is done enough, stopping smoking is actually easy. Don't believe me, check out Allan Carr's, *The Easy Way*.*

You may have noticed that these pleasure and pain lists are a subset of beliefs about the belief you're in the process of changing now. There's very few objective definitions of pleasure and pain, as we see in the case of masochists. What you perceive as pleasurable and painful is just that—a perception, and most beliefs are one-time perceptions or the conclusion of multiple perceptions generalized across all experience. To leverage your mind and make the change, all you've got to do is tweak your perception a bit, and it becomes easy.

Some people claim that it doesn't feel legitimate, that it feels as if they are tricking themselves. And, to a point, they are. But what these people fail to see is that most beliefs are tricks of perception.

Smokers, for example, have to work very hard to convince themselves, to trick themselves that they actually enjoy choking themselves.

Now go back to the belief you wish to change. It's time to find a suitable replacement. Although, we could just eliminate the belief without replacing it with something more effective, chances are a new less-than-desirable belief would naturally grow into its place. Remember the garden metaphor? Given the soil space and resources in your mind, something's going to sprout. To be more effective, you're going to design your own belief and plant it into your mind. Like in a garden, it's not realistic to expect to wake up tomorrow and pick the fruit from your new belief. Although, you may feel something different (and it's best to refrain from labeling or categorizing your change. Like plants, beliefs do well with just the right amount of attention. Over-watering can kill even the most hearty shrubbery), allow that belief to grow on its own. All you've got to do is trust that you're on the path you want to be, that you've planted what you wanted to plant, and it will bear healthy fruit.

So how do you design your new belief? We've already gone through a good starting point. We've gotten to know the belief we wish to change. Sometimes, you can discover the best belief by moving to the polar opposite of the belief you want to change. But these are the rare exceptions. Most times, you'll want to spend some time, working and re-working what it is you want to believe. Above all, the best guidelines have already been covered in this manual, and they revolve around language. The actual syntax of your belief will have huge consequences, either healthy or harmful. Chances are you're reading this guide because you've experienced some consequences of language at a subconscious level.

Remember, when you're designing your new belief, think about what it is you WANT in your life. Once you've decided what you want—better relationship with your partner, more money, greater intelligence, more free time—frame your language to achieve that. Like I've already said, many people make the mistake of setting their trajectory based on what they want to avoid, instead of what they wish to accomplish in their lives. Here are some examples of old 'weed' beliefs and the new beliefs...

- I enjoy smoking.
 - I enjoy breathing deeply. I enjoy being healthy. I enjoy deep breaths.
- I never have enough money.
 - Money flows to me easily.
- People don't like me.
 - Many people enjoy my company.
- The world is a dangerous place.
 - The world is a safe place.

Pros and cons:

Essentially, you're going to do the same thing you did for the belief you want to get rid of. You're going to make a list of 'positive' aspects if you were to begin believing this. Spend some time with this, imagine what your life would be like if you believed something different. Trust me, the possibilities probably extend further than your imagination.

When you're done make another list of the 'negative' aspects of shifting to this belief. What will you have to sacrifice? If you're going to believe something different, you're in personally uncharted territory so take that into consideration.

Once you've got your list of pleasures and pains, go through the pain side of things and re-frame, leverage them over to the pleasures. If you're going to succeed in believing this new belief, it's needs to be something pleasurable, something that will help you benefit as a whole person.

For examples sake, we'll use 'money flows to me easily.' A quite obvious contradiction for many is that quite plainly, money hasn't been flowing to them easily.

- *Money flows to me easily.*
 - *A common 'pain' could be ignorance. If money flows easily to the believer, then why don't they have any money? And how do they get the flow started? Another pain could be faith, because to shift to this belief requires a bit of faith. Of course, the former belief required some faith as well, but that was probably backed up by plenty of evidence.*
 - *The reason that this person doesn't have any money is because they've held a belief for a long time that needs them to struggle with money. The mind will do almost anything to validate its belief system, even keeping you in poverty.*
 - *Faith. To believe that 'money flows to me easily,' the believer needs a bit of faith. Quite possibly a lot of faith. And that's easily a 'pain'. To make that a pleasure, he can re-frame it into a challenge. Instead of being something that will make him suffer, the challenge of consciously putting his faith into something may help him to grow in unimaginable, healthy ways.*

Change the belief:

For this exercise, you're going to have a few options on how to do it. Your own creativity is welcomed and encouraged as long as you stick to the basic principle in each step.

Take your change-book and a pen and go somewhere you can be alone. Outside in nature is the best option, because most human beings respond in relaxing ways to the Great Outdoors. Somewhere near running water is ideal, but again, anything will work. The essential characteristics are that you have a space to be alone, quiet, where you will not be disturbed, where you feel comfortable.

1) Open your change-book to the belief that you're about to change. Read it again and think of all the 'pain' you've associated with it, all the reasons you have for wanting your life to be different. Really feel them, and realize that if you don't release this belief now, you're going to have to live through more of that pain.

2) Now, in your mind, step back from your emotional attachment to the belief. Watch it from a detached perspective. Watch, like you were at the movies, as you've failed or sabotaged yourself again and again from this belief. Take a deep breath and clear your mind. Then, think of something unrelated to your belief that you doubt. Maybe you doubt who's going to make it to the playoffs this year, or you doubt if it's going to rain this weekend, or you doubt any President's capacity to affect real change. Get into this feeling of doubt, and then...

3) Re-associate with the belief that you want to change, see through your own eyes as you're motivated from this belief, but this time carry that feeling of doubt with you. Maybe this belief doesn't have to be true? Maybe it's not true at all...maybe it's completely false. Really doubt that belief, and then...

4) Step back from that belief, and watch yourself, this time, as you doubt your belief. Take a deep breath and clear your mind. Then, think of something completely unrelated, that you once believed in, but no longer do. Santa Claus is a good example. If you've followed the instructions in this guide, you'll have made a list of former belief changes. Use any of these and then evoke that feeling of no longer believing something you once did. And when you've really got it...

5) Re-associate yourself with the belief, this time seeing it, feeling it from the perspective of no longer believing it. If you're using a belief such as 'I enjoy smoking', see through your own eyes as you remember how you once believed you enjoyed smoking, but you no longer do. And as this feeling rises strong, rip the page out of your change-book. Then rip it in half, allowing that feeling of freedom and relief wash over you. Rip it in half again and again, until you've only got tiny pieces of it left. If you're outside, bury the scraps of paper or set them free on a river or stream. If you're inside, put them in the trash or in the fireplace. Whatever you do, just let it go!

6) Now, it's time to plant a new belief in the garden, in the empty space. Previously, you wrote and edited carefully a new, empowering belief. Think of it now and associate yourself with it. Notice

how it feels. Then...

7) Take a step back and watch yourself relating to this new belief. Take a deep breath and clear your mind. Then, think of an unrelated situation, one in which you're open to the possibility of something. For example, you might be open to the possibility that you'll go hiking this weekend, or that you'll get promoted, or that you might marry your boyfriend/girlfriend. Any situation where you're feeling open to the possibility is fine. Then...

8) Re-associate with your new belief and really get into the feeling of being open to it as a possibility. Use your imagination and amplify this feeling. And then...

9) Take a step back and watch yourself being open to your new belief. Take a deep breath and clear your mind. Next, think of something that you are absolutely certain of. Perhaps it's a belief in God, or a belief that the sun will rise tomorrow, the belief that your favorite sports team has what it takes, the belief that your spouse/partner is the right one for you. Any feeling of certainty is fine, and once you've really got that feeling...

10) Re-associate with your new belief, this time bringing that feeling of certainty with you. Use your imagination and make that feeling stronger and more intense, more certain. And as it feels more and more certain, take your pen and write it in your change-book. And as you write it, allow the certainty that you've made a change wash over you.

CONCLUSION

Congratulations! You've just made a huge change in your life. Now, if things feel remarkably similar to how they were before you began this whole process, it's important to trust that you have in fact made the shift you were after. Give it some time, and you'll see that as you drift further away from this moment, that tiny, nearly imperceptible shift will add up to huge changes in your life and in your identity, all in helpful, healthy ways. It's like a ship in the ocean changing its heading by a tenth of a degree. It doesn't change much in the moment, but a few days, or weeks later, it's in completely different waters.

Obviously, you can use this guide again and again. The more you use it, the easier the process will become, until you can do it on a whim. And you'll gain competence in evoking particular states—doubt or certainty—when you want them.

Good luck!

Use your environment:

As you've learned by now, your mind perceives much more than you're consciously aware of, and this perception affects how you think, act, and what you believe. So use your environment to your advantage.

First, reduce or eliminate any and everything in your environment that may re-vitalize your old belief. For the smoker, all ashtrays and other cigarette memorabilia could be discarded or given away. This will help the believer to let go of the old belief and to accept the new one. For the person looking for greater riches, he can stop watching media that glorifies poverty and he can organize his financial life so that pile of bills is filed out-of-sight, not to be ignored, but only to be seen when and where he chooses. If he has a pile of bills on his desk that he sees every night when he returns from home, one of the first things that he's going to think about is how much he DOESN'T have. And that's not helpful for creating what he wants.

Second, fill your environment with images and sounds that remind you of what it is you want to believe. For the former smoker, this could be pictures of healthy lungs, of people running, of anything, really, that promotes a healthy lifestyle. For those on the road to wealth, it could be pictures that evoke images and feelings of affluence. It could be biographies from the library of the rich and generous. Anything that helps him to think of abundance.

Third, get creative. There are no rules where. So if you want to take a trip to Tahiti, get a photo album and fill it with brochures, pictures, and other things that help you create the experience of being in Tahiti. Then look at it every day. You're telling your mind what you want, and eventually, it's going to give it to you. How quickly or slowly depends on how well you change your beliefs and how well you focus on exactly what it is that you want. If you want a new car, go to the dealership and take it for a test drive. Then go again. As your going to bed or daydreaming, think about that experience, remember what it was like to be in the car. Keep feeding your subconscious, and it will get the message.

Your environment is a crucial key to maintaining and bolstering the change you've made. Make the most of it!

MORE LIFE-AFFIRMING BELIEFS THAT MAY FOSTER SUCCESS

- *Everyday, I learn more skills and behaviors that help me fulfill my goals in life.*
 - *This belief, once integrated, will ensure your path on the upward spiral, always improving.*
- *All that I need to succeed is within me.*
 - *Essential to self-esteem, self-reliance, and independence.*
- *I respect myself.*
 - *Respecting the self is a crucial step to empowerment, and all change requires empowerment.*
- *I respect others.*
 - *Respecting others will help create a more humane environment as well as a more enjoyable social life.*
- *I respect the environment.*
 - *While this includes respecting nature, I use environment to mean everything in the physical world around you, even the trash can. Respecting your space, the things in it, and the things that enable you to be the person you are is essential to a healthy world-view.*
- *There's no such thing as 'failure,' only feedback.*
 - *We're constantly defining situations and experiences. Some of these arbitrary definitions produce helpful effects and others produce harmful effects. By redefining failure as feedback, we can learn more from our journey in life and become better at achieving our goals.*
- *I am responsible for my beliefs, feelings, thoughts, reactions, and behaviors.*
 - *No matter what happens in your life, it's you who decided how you feel about it. And upon these feelings your reactions, thoughts, and behaviors follow. Taking responsibility grants you the right to change aspects of your internal world.*
- *There exists more in the world than my conclusions about it.*
 - *Human beings are creatures of habit, and this often leads to the assumption that we know all there is to know about the world—premature certainty. We see this on an individual level as well as a societal one, but the fact remains that there is much more in the world than we can explain as individuals or as a culture. There is mystery left in the world, and by recognizing it, we allow our conclusions, our ways of thinking to remain flexible, always evolving with changing times. This is quite possible the most effective belief, because it allows us room for periodic reassessment and the continual amendment of our belief systems. Essentially, it's a meta-belief, a belief about beliefs.*
- *All human beings are capable of more than they give themselves credit for.*

- *Outside of physical and mental handicaps, all human beings are born with the resources to do more than they allow themselves. It's so common that individuals short-circuit their potential, but at every moment of their lives, everyone has access to more resources, more capability than they realize. The human mind is the most complex system on the planet, and at any time we can access more of our potential.*
- *Most people are doing the best they can with the resources available to them.*
 - *We all grow up in different circumstances, have different experiences, and draw different conclusions about that experience. This is how we become unique individuals. Outside from the mentally sick and the criminally insane, people, generally, are doing the best they can with the resources available to them. It may be their experience has taught them that the behavior we find so irritating or ignorant or disagreeable is the necessary action that increases their success in life. Believing this opens us to a more compassionate world-view. If everyone's doing their best, maybe we'll be less critical in our judgments of them.*