Discover Your Limiting Beliefs

Did you complete the exercise on identifying your unachieved goals? Was it uncomfortable? Good! Discomfort is a sign that you're doing something that can make a difference. Though you have begun the process of discovering your limiting beliefs, we're going to delve deeper into the topic in this lesson.

How Do You Acquire a Limiting Belief?

Limiting beliefs are pervasive in our lives. You probably are aware of many of them. Limiting beliefs come from a variety of sources. Some of these sources might surprise you. Many of these sources were actually trying to help you, so don't blame them. They simply believed the wrong things, too.

Here are but a few:

1. **Family.** Most of our family means well. Regardless, many of our limiting beliefs come from familial sources and our suggestibility to comments from our families can vary. Maybe your mom told you that you couldn't run track in high school because you're too heavy; now you believe that you could never be a runner.
    - Maybe your dad said that no one in his family ever went to college, so you believe it's not a possibility for you.
    - Maybe you grew up in a lifestyle that was economically challenged, so you decided that being wealthy was impossible for you.
2. **Friends.** Much like our families, friends can do and say things that lead us to believe we're less capable than we are. ***Keep in mind that many of our 'friends' don't want to see others do a lot better than they themselves are doing.*** Also, people tend to unintentionally push their limiting beliefs on others.
3. **Teachers.** Teachers can have a lot of influence over us. When we're younger, they're almost like parents. Later, they're almost like our boss. Teachers are people too. Some of them have their stuff together; some do not.

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4. **Our own interpretation of events.** In many ways, this is probably the only real source of our limiting beliefs. For instance, it's not really what your parents said to you, it's your interpretation of what was said to you.

    - For example, if your parents said, *"You'll never be able to get into college."* You could believe that what they've said is true or you could believe, *"They don't know what they're talking about. I can do it if I want to do it."*

5. **Anyone or anything else that comes to mind.** Other people, books, the internet, the news, movies, and more all have the opportunity to give us pause and doubt. Consider all the sources of information and opinion in your life. They all have the opportunity to steer you in the wrong direction.

"***If you develop the absolute sense of certainty that powerful beliefs provide, then you can get yourself to accomplish virtually anything, including those things that other people are certain are impossible."***
- William Lyon Phelps

Discovering Your Limiting Beliefs

To change anything, you first must identify it. It's important to stay relevant. We all have tons of limiting beliefs, but the truth is that many of them are irrelevant. Only worry about the limiting beliefs that are going to have the greatest impact. When you've dealt with those, you can deal with the others.

Part of being successful is focusing on the most important issues in your life. Remember to keep that in mind as you go through the process of discovering your limiting beliefs:

1. **Make a list of the areas in your life where you feel challenged.** If you have an area of your life that displeases you and you're not actively doing something to fix it, then it's a pretty good bet that you have a limiting belief. Otherwise, doesn't it make sense that you'd be doing something to rectify the situation? ***Your behavior is an indicator of your beliefs.***

    - Consider how you're doing in the following areas:

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- **Finances.** Are you feeling financial pressure in your life? Do you have all the things you need or really want? How much money do you have in your savings? Do you have the income you desire? Is that income secure?

- **Relationships.** Are your relationships satisfying? Consider your intimate relationship as well as your relationships with your family, friends, and co-workers.

- **Health.** Are you taking good care of yourself? How is your weight? Do you go to the doctor regularly for checkups?

- **Fun / Adventure.** Are you doing the things you really want to do? Do you dream of going to Europe but haven't been? Do you want to learn to play the piano but never have?

- **Any other aspect of your life in which you're experiencing dissatisfaction.** Think about any other areas of your life where you're less than thrilled. If you're not pleased with your life, a limiting belief could be the cause.

2. **Identify the beliefs that are contributing to your challenges.** Make a list of all of your beliefs, good and bad, regarding the challenges you identified above. Don't attempt to filter them as positive or negative while doing this process; just get them all listed as you brainstorm and examine them later.

    - Here's a short example around money:

        - Making over $100k a year is really hard.
        - I'll never be wealthy.
        - Rich people are dishonest.
        - I'll never have enough money to have a nice house.
        - If I'm rich, people will try to steal from me.
        - My friends will treat me differently if I have a lot of money.
    - Can you see why it would be difficult to make a lot of money if you believe these things?

3. **Identify the beliefs that are holding you back.** Think about which beliefs are having the greatest negative impact on your life. One way to do this is

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to ***consider how your behavior would change if that belief were eliminated from your life.***

    - Don't just guess which beliefs are the most damaging. Really examine it and consider the change that your life would experience if you weren't held back by that belief.

4. **Put those negative beliefs in order.** Start with the limiting belief that you feel is creating the most challenge in your life. Put them all in order from the belief having the greatest negative impact to least. It makes sense to spend your time where it's going to do the most good. Prioritizing your time is always a valuable strategy.

Now that you have a list of your limiting beliefs and have them in order, it's time to start dealing with them.

How Can You Tell if a Limiting Belief is False?

Obviously, there are some things that are essentially impossible. A 50-year-old man that's never played basketball won't become a professional basketball player, for example. So, some limiting beliefs are accurate, and it would be silly to argue otherwise. However most of our limiting beliefs are inaccurate.

A limiting belief could be false if:

- **It's not based on experience.** If your belief isn't based on actual personal experience, it's likely to be false. To a large extent, you don't know what you can and can't do until you've tried. Many times, you might have to make 100 attempts or more to know the truth.

- **It's not based on a physical limitation.** Just like our basketball example, there are things that we physically just can't do. You can't lift 50,000 pounds over your head. You can't flap your arms and fly to the moon.

The next lesson will teach you how to eliminate a limiting belief. You'll be amazed by how much lighter and more capable you feel.

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Get Started on the Tips in This Lesson

Choose one part of your life where you're facing the greatest challenges. Identify the limiting beliefs in that part of your life. Rank them in order from most damaging to least.

Then determine if those beliefs are false.

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