

“PEELING BACK THE ONION”:

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
REPROGRAMMING
YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS
MIND AND YOUR
SELF-LIMITING BELIEFS.**



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Index

1. **Peeling back the onion analogy**
2. **The Subconscious mind, beliefs, emotions and behaviours**
3. **Your belief system and biases**
4. **Ego defence mechanisms**
5. **How to acknowledge and let go of limiting beliefs**
 - a. **Not judge your limiting beliefs**
 - b. **Self-interrogation/Awareness**
 - c. **Acknowledgement, forgiveness and letting go**
 - d. **Make a choice, setting intentions and taking action**
 - e. **Your Reticular Activating System (RAS) and setting intentions**
6. **Other things you can do to reprogram your subconscious mind**
 - a. **Focus on one thing at a time**
 - b. **Mediation and Breathing exercises**
 - c. **Seeking help**
 - d. **Sleep and morning best time to program mind**
7. **Affirmations**
8. **Quick summary to dissolve limiting beliefs**
9. **Reference**
10. **Resources**

Peeling back the onion analogy

Peeling back the onion is a notion I've been hearing this phrase the last few years in regards to a person's beliefs and social conditioning. Its only recently that I have come to fully appreciate what it actually means.

Throughout life since the day we are born we are conditioned by our environment, the people around us and the events that occur to us. Through this process we begin to form beliefs, which we soon accept to be out true-selves; our identity.

Whist some of these beliefs may be beneficial, many of these beliefs are actually holding us back. These beliefs can have can a negative impact on you and influence your behaviours. For example, a belief that 'you are ugly' may drive you to get cosmetic surgery in hope of looking 'beautiful' but even after the surgery you still may feel you are ugly. Some of these negative beliefs can even lead to depression and anxiety.

Other examples of these negative beliefs I am talking about are:

- I am not good enough
- I am not worthy of love
- I am ugly
- I'm not perfect
- I can't achieve that
- I don't deserve to be happy
- I can't be happy unless my parents are happy
- I can only be happy with more money
- It is unsafe to relax.
- It is unsafe to be happy.
- If I do something good for myself, someone else will be upset.

Now don't get me wrong, everyone has some or even all of these beliefs. However, certain beliefs may dictate how you live your life more than others. The beliefs are made stronger whenever you are confronted with a situation where the belief is confirmed. The belief may also be made stronger just based on an association you make that actually may not be true.

For example, you may feel you are not beautiful. Then sometime during your life, you fancy someone but this person asks your friend out instead of you. This may make you think the person didn't ask you out as you were not as beautiful as your friend; hence you made an association. The truth however might be that the person actually liked your friend as they shared common interests.

Now going back to the "peeling back the onion" analogy.

The negative experiences and emotions that you go through (all based around your negative beliefs) form your perceived identity. I say "perceived identity" because it's the identity you believe you are, but in fact, prior to the experiences you probably didn't have any of these negative beliefs. These beliefs could have been formed when you were as young as a baby.

Hence by delving into these beliefs and slowly learning to acknowledge and let go of these beliefs, you are able to move forward and not be weighed down by the negative beliefs.

So in the analogy you are represented by the onion. The outer layer protects the inside which is like the “mask” we often wear to protect our insecurities. Whilst you’re conditioned beliefs and experience are the layers that you peel/remove to understand how and why these beliefs formed. The older you get the more experiences you have to “peel” to reach the core and hence it’s a continuous journey but one that will leave you satisfied and content with your true self. Plus like peeling an onion you might find yourself having many tears on the journey to each you core and truth.

Now if you’ve read this far you either super interested or thinking I’ve lost my mind. So allow me to go deeper, into how you can let go of the self-limiting beliefs. Let’s start by understanding the subconscious mind.

Peeling back the onion is an analogy showing an organic process of revealing and removing a multitude of layers. This process has many layers, like the layers in an onion. If you can’t understand this, go buy an onion and peel it. Layers of what? There are layers of memory, emotion, concepts and life as it really is.

The above paragraph adapted from-

<http://www.metamia.com/analogize.php?q=peeling+the+onion>

The Subconscious mind, beliefs, emotions and behaviours

To understand the subconscious mind let start with understanding the conscious mind.

The **conscious mind** is part of your brain that helps you with logic and reasoning. It also controls the actions of your brain that you do intentionally whilst being conscious.

For example, to get from the sofa to the remote, you might reach your arm out. You did this action voluntarily and hence this is controlled by your conscious mind.

The **subconscious mind** (or the unconscious mind) on the other hand is responsible for your involuntary actions such as your breathing rate. So if you actively try to control your breathing rate, then you are doing it consciously but when you are focusing on another activity then that's your subconscious mind. So when you breathe naturally and not applying attention to your breathing that's your subconscious mind.

Your subconscious mind is also where all your beliefs, past experiences, memories and learnt skills are stored. So when you experience a certain feeling or emotion towards something, it is caused by your subconscious mind. This means your environment, family, culture/religion can all affect your subconscious mind. This is especially true during the earlier stages of your life.

For example, if you are about to give a presentation but then you suddenly have fear and anxiety it's due to negative beliefs and/or memories towards giving presentations in your subconscious mind.

Certain beliefs, experiences, memories stored in your subconscious mind can be all thought of as programs. An example of this would be if someone upsets you by calling you ugly, this can be due to the person triggering a program in you. This program may be a set of beliefs that make you feel that you are ugly and upsets you. Furthermore, you may have experiences in your past where people have called you ugly and upset you; these experiences (that are made up from a belief or set of beliefs) make the program stronger.

Hence experiences/memories can act as evidence and make a belief that you have stronger or weaker. So beliefs get stronger when there is evidence that supports the belief and they become weaker when evidence contradicts the beliefs. The more you focus on a belief and find evidence to support it, it gets stronger. This is why focusing on negative beliefs such as 'I am not confident' can cause you to feel less and less confident.

Repetition is vital to influence the subconscious mind.

This means the beliefs we have can alter the perception we have of life and this can in return control our emotional responses to events and interactions. This consequently affects your behaviours and the outcomes we get; our behaviours being our actions such as what we say and what we do.

What's interesting is that many of our beliefs are hidden from us; they are submerged deep in our subconscious minds. These beliefs as mentioned can be formed when you are a baby or later in life.

Furthermore, as emotions are triggered by the subconscious mind it's difficult to stop them without knowing the beliefs and programs. However, by becoming aware of the beliefs you can find it easier to control your thoughts and in turn your emotions. Thus, to change our lives we need to go deeper than exploring our emotions. We need to go to the core level of our beliefs.

Another key thing to remember is that your subconscious mind is not critical or judgmental. So, it does not analyse or reason the input it gets. It stores information based on the messages, experiences, instructions and conditioning it gets.

What this means your subconscious mind doesn't distinguish the difference between that which is real or what is imagined. A good example of this I have heard is when you have a nightmare. So, you might wake up with your heart pounding and you're sweating. But the nightmare existed in your mind, you weren't in any real danger at all but your mind didn't know that. You physiologically reacted as if the nightmare was actually taking place in reality. This is why advertisements can work so well, as they can trigger beliefs/thoughts in our subconscious mind.

Another example of our beliefs affecting our emotions and behaviours:

An individual is heading to a job interview and has spent months preparing in advance. However, as he arrives, he gets nervous and he starts stuttering. He has spent time thinking positive thoughts and even visualising. However, when faced with the interviewer this all changed. This is because his unconscious self-limiting beliefs arose and this portrayed as nervousness. The result of this emotion was that he stuttered and couldn't remember his answers. Perhaps he wasn't aware of these beliefs, or perhaps he had repressed them hoping it not to be true. However, either way as he had not addressed them, these beliefs still had control over him and affected his emotions, behaviour.

Attitudes versus beliefs

Attitudes can be described as hypothetical constructs that represent a person's like or dislike for anything. Attitude is a judgment made on the 'attitude object' (a person, place, task, event, skill, etc.). Judgments from attitude can range from positive, negative or neutral. These attitudes arise from your beliefs. Hence, your attitude towards something could be considered a combination of your thoughts, behaviours and emotions.

Your belief system and biases

(This following section is taken from the book 'The Gamma Mindset' by Chris Walton)

In the book 'influence', social psychologist Dr Robert Cialdini shows that we tend to believe what we are told by people who we respect and are trustworthy authority figures such as doctors or lawyers. We believe what they say and don't bother checking for evidence.

The following are examples by Dr Andrew Newberg about how we can distort our reality to fit in our biases.

- **Family Bias-** we tend to believe information given to us by family and close friends without too much question or checking of facts. We have relied on these people, and we like and trust them, so we tend to believe them.
 - A good example would be if your parents compared you to someone else (i.e. other family members) and say you're not good as them. If this continuously repeated by your parent, it may develop a belief in you that you are not good enough. So you spend most of your life trying to justify to your parents 'you are good enough' through doing things that make them happy.
- **Self-serving bias-** we tend to maintain those personal beliefs that benefit our own goals or interests.
- **Group-consensus bias-** we tend to put more value on those beliefs that are shared by others; the more others agree with us, the truer our beliefs seem to be, even if they are not factually true. Conversely, the more people who disagree with our beliefs, the more we will begin to doubt these beliefs, even if they are true.
- **Projection bias-** we assume that people in the same group (religious, socio-economic etc.) as us have the same beliefs and view the world in a similar way. It's the 'everybody thinks like us' mind-set.
- **Uncertainty bias-** generally, we do not deal well with feelings of uncertainty and ambiguity, so we prefer to hang on to some beliefs, quickly form an opinion or make up our minds, or conversely to disbelieve facts about which we are unsure, rather than to remain uncertain for very long. We tend to do this even if it is in our advantage not to come to a conclusion or to wait to make a decision to form an opinion until we have more information.
- **Publication bias-** we tend to believe information that is published or reported in the media, such as on television or by some other seemingly reliable source, without asking too many questions. As an example, in 1976 the BBC broadcast that the planet Pluto would have a bizarre gravitational effect on Jupiter as it passed the planet, and the effect could be felt even on Earth. It reported that if you jumped at just the right time you could experience a wonderful floating effect. Hundreds of people called in to say that they had experienced it! Of course, no such effect was possible.

We all operate every day according to one or more of these belief biases. We need them to survive, to avoid being inundated and overloaded with information. However, we can always evaluate our beliefs bias and our beliefs and see if they are helping us or actually holding us back from reaching our full potential.

So how can we change our beliefs and be more aware of the beliefs in our subconscious mind? Well before we get there let's have a look at what our ego defence mechanisms are.

Your beliefs and the Placebo effect

A study by Moseley et al. 2002 investigated two groups suffering from same degenerative knee disorder. Group A had a surgery designed to scope out the knee and relieve the symptoms of the disorder. Group B, with the permission of the families had a fake surgery (placebo surgery). Only three small incisions were made in Group B's kneecap, to make them think they had a real surgery. Both groups reported that the surgery was a success. Researchers believe that a minimum of 1/3 of all medical treatment including surgery is due to the belief that the treatment is going to work- the placebo effect.

- In this landmark and fascinating study, people with osteoarthritis improved equally well regardless of whether they received a real surgical procedure or a sham, which is a particularly striking example of the placebo effect and implies that belief can have an effect even on a "mechanical" knee problem. From the abstract: "In this controlled trial involving patients with osteoarthritis of the knee, the outcomes after arthroscopic lavage or arthroscopic debridement were no better than those after a placebo procedure."
- In 2008, these findings were fully supported by a Cochrane Collaboration review (Laupattarakasem 2008) which concluded that "there is 'gold' level evidence that arthroscopic debridement has no benefit," and by New England Journal of Medicine (Kirkley) which reported that "surgery for osteoarthritis of the knee provides no additional benefit to optimized physical and medical therapy."
- This study inspired more comparisons of orthopaedic surgeries to shams. By 2016, at least four more popular surgeries have been shown to have no benefit (Louw 2016).

Ego defence mechanisms

Our ego defence mechanisms can be described as strategies that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings (Freud 1937; McLeod 2017)

We use these defence mechanisms as a way to protect yourself from feelings of anxiety, guilt or sadness. It's an evolutionary and natural mechanism in everyone that becomes active when we perceive potential threats. The defence mechanisms work at an unconscious level (i.e. subconscious mind) and help a person feel better or fight of unpleasant feelings.

The table (McLeod 2017) below shows some examples of defence mechanisms and gives an example of each:

Mechanism	Description	Example
Repression	Repression is an unconscious mechanism employed by the ego to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious.	During the Oedipus complex aggressive thoughts about the same sex parents are repressed
Denial	Denial involves blocking external events from awareness. If some situation is just too much to handle, the person just refuses to experience it.	For example, smokers may refuse to admit to themselves that smoking is bad for their health.
Projection	This involves individuals attributing their own unacceptable thoughts, feeling and motives to another person.	You might hate someone, but your superego tells you that such hatred is unacceptable. You can 'solve' the problem by believing that they hate you.
Displacement	Satisfying an impulse (e.g. aggression) with a substitute object.	Someone who is frustrated by his or her boss at work may go home and kick the dog,
Regression	This is a movement back in psychological time when one is faced with stress.	A child may begin to suck their thumb again or wet the bed when they need to spend some time in the hospital.
Sublimation	Satisfying an impulse (e.g. aggression) with a substitute object. In a socially acceptable way.	Sport is an example of putting our emotions (e.g. aggression) into something constructive.

These mechanisms can therefore be used against painful aspects of external reality. The ego defence mechanism act is an evolutionary SURVIVAL mechanism. Although, sometimes the defence mechanisms are healthy, other times they are not and can make the problem even worse.

Check out this article which gives good information-based research and thoughts as we are resistant to changing.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/03/this-article-wont-change-your-mind/519093/>

The main takeaway is that “from an evolutionary perspective, there are more important things than truth.” In other words, there are times when we don’t want to face or accept the truth because it would bring about emotions and feeling that would make us uncomfortable and make us feel judgemental towards ourselves.

In relation to beliefs, these ego defence mechanisms play an important role because they help protect certain beliefs you have obtained through life, even if the belief is doing more harm to you than you think. Furthermore, some of these beliefs may not even be true, but people will cling on to them despite there being no evidence.

An example of this would be perhaps you have a certain dislike towards someone (let’s call them person X) because you believe they are a bad person and that they hate you. This belief is based on the way they treated you in when they were younger. Perhaps person X bullied you or they were never nice to you. Now 20 years later, you see each other whilst shopping and person X come over to you. Person X apologises to you and explains they had been going through a hard time at home when they were younger and released their own frustration on you. However, you still hate them for what they did to you. Your ego defence mechanism then kicks in, and you believe person X is lying and that they still hate you. You therefore, don’t accept their apology and walk on.

Now this might seem okay, after all person X did treat you badly when you were younger. However, for weeks and years on you carry this hatred towards them and rather than addressing and acknowledging this hatred, you carry on blaming this person. You may justify this hatred, which makes you feel angry every time you think about person X even though they are no longer in your life. Furthermore, you may even carry the belief that other people hate you based on how you were made to feel when you were younger by person X, even if this may not be true. Hence this will affect your self-confidence and bring you unnecessary emotional stress. You could also then meet other people with the same characteristics as the person X and assume they too are a ‘bad’ person.

Ultimately this belief you developed, that you haven’t acknowledged because of your ego defence mechanism, is constantly irritating you and playing with your emotions.

To be truly able to overcome this belief and move on, you need to be first consciously aware of these beliefs and acknowledge them. You need to recognise whether or not these beliefs and defence mechanism are actually beneficial or not for you. Only by consciously

acknowledging the beliefs and ego defence mechanisms can you actually be able to start moving past them and begin to let them go.

However, with our ego defence mechanism in place this can be very difficult and in fact you will have to move out of your comfort zone. This means you will feel discomfort when doing this and hence this why it is never easy.

The discomfort may mean you face fears and truths you have been avoiding in your life. Such as the fear of failure or the fear of what others will think of you. It may mean you have to be more vulnerable and empathetic. But if you are able to stay with the tension and move through it and face the truth, it will ultimately allow you to feel a weight has been lifted of your shoulders and allow you to move forward.

A good example of this in my life was when I was overweight and eating unhealthily. As much as I knew I was fat, I would rationalise to myself that it was okay and I would lose the fat in the future (even though I didn't know how). I never wanted to fully accept the truth I was fat. Why? Because I was scared it would make me not good enough for others and it would mean I was ugly. Now none of this was truth but It was based on beliefs and assumptions I accumulated when I was younger. It was only when I was faced the truth, I was able to accept it, I could look forward to taking steps that would move me towards living a healthier lifestyle.

I guess you can think of it as by consciously acknowledging your beliefs, ego defence mechanisms and emotions, you are taking responsibility of your life and this is the first step towards transformation.

The well-known concept of '[cognitive dissonance](#),' proposed in the 1950s by the social psychologist Leon Festinger, also amounts to a description of a stealthy psychological defensive maneuver. According to Festinger, we strive to find harmony between our actions and attitudes. A lack of agreement between the two leads to a feeling of tension—a dissonance—which we are then motivated to relieve by either changing the attitude to fit the action or vice versa. So a smoker who reads the research on lung cancer will feel compelled to either quit [smoking](#) or dismiss the science, thus defending against internal conflict (Shpancer 2018).

So how can we acknowledge and let go of limiting beliefs?

How to acknowledge and let go of limiting beliefs

The following section was inspired by the experiential healing method which I learnt in 2018. See resources to find out more information.

Another common example I have seen of how your subconscious mind can work and how limiting beliefs can be formed.

Let's say you are 6 years old and you get 80% in an exam and you are proud and happy about it. You are super excited and show your mum. Your mum at the time is busy looking after your baby brother and she may also be expecting you to get higher marks. Your mum then says well done but tells you should study harder next time and get higher marks.

You may then start believing that your mum has rejected your marks and that they aren't good enough. Furthermore, you may indirectly believe that she thinks that you're not good enough. This belief 'you are not good enough' is in your subconscious mind and stays there as you grow up. As you grow up you find more evidence to make this belief stronger which makes you feel sad or angry. In order to not feel this way, you may start doing things that you think will make your mum proud of you. Perhaps you will try to achieve higher grades or perhaps you will buy a house as you believe this will make your mum proud and you will feel 'good enough'.

However, no matter what you do, you are not happy as you have not acknowledged the underlying belief that 'you are not good enough'. In fact, most of the things you achieve in your life are due to you trying not to feel as if you are 'not good enough'. Remember the more you focus on a belief and find evidence to support, the more the belief gets stronger. But at a subconscious level you still have not acknowledged the feeling of being 'not good enough'. The reason for this could be due to you not acknowledging this belief could be due to your ego defence mechanism protecting you from feeling hurt. And just like that it feels like your 6-year-old self is controlling your life, and not your older current self.

1) Not judge your limiting beliefs

Firstly, I think it's important to say WE ALL have self-limiting beliefs. No one is perfect and never think someone is better or worse off than you. No matter where a person is in their life, they will surely be going through a battle of their own and no doubt everyone has a self-limiting belief. However, the key thing to move forward and to become a better version of yourself is to acknowledge the beliefs.

The key thing when acknowledging the belief is to NOT judge YOURSELF for having it. Don't be harsh on yourself or feel there's something wrong with you, everyone has a self-limiting belief. The key is to acknowledge it and try and find out how it formed in the first place.

2) Self-interrogation/Awareness

One of the best ways to discover your limiting beliefs is by asking yourself questions and journaling. The problem with journaling is people often don't know what to write or they start writing and don't try to go deeper. Their excuse is 'I don't know what to say' or 'that's all there is' or 'this is too much effort'. Also remember this could be another ego defence mechanism of yours.

But I want you to keep writing and going deep as you can. Don't stop writing even it means you're writing the same thing over and over again. And if you really stuck, write and ask yourself 'what else is there that I'm missing'

One of the keys to journaling is to write down whatever that comes to your head and not judge it!

The types of questions you can ask yourself are:

- What do you want to achieve in life and what's stopping you from achieving them?
 - For the what's stopping you question, I want you to be super honest with yourself and after you write something, try and see if you can expand or go deeper.
 - Also, with the what's stopping you question also write down the feeling you have attached to it
- What's your biggest fear? What emotion does this bring up? When did you first experience this fear and what happened?
- What story do I have attached to my limiting belief?
 - E.g., If your limiting belief was 'I don't deserve to be loved', the response to the above question could be my mother didn't pay a lot of attention to me when I needed it.
- List all the beliefs you know you have. Are any of these beliefs beneficial or not. How do you know they are beneficial, what actual evidence is there in your life from what you have experienced (not what other people have experienced)?
- What makes me sad/angry/happy? Why and what makes me feel this way.

- What beliefs do I have that I believe to be true? How does this belief serve me? Can this belief **create a spiral of emotions or is it constant?**
 - E.g., Q) what beliefs do I have that I believe to be true?
A) **I believe people should support each other.**
 - **Q) How does this belief serve me?**
A) **It allows me to support others and in return I get supported.**
 - **Q) That's sounds fair, but that doesn't mean everyone will be able to support you. Can this belief create a spiral of emotions or is it constant? A) Well, if I ask someone to help me and they say no then I wouldn't be happy.**
 - **Q: So does the belief serve me? A: No.**
- **What kind of thing does your internal dialogue say and how does it make you feel? Is your internal dialogue beneficial or not?**
 - **So throughout the day take a note of what you say to yourself and how it makes you feel.**
- **What beliefs have I got from my parents? Do these empower me or not?**
 - There's always some kind of belief picked up from parents such as 'I am not good enough'.

If you are finding it too difficult to face up to your beliefs or feel uncomfortable, take 6 deep breaths in and out. Then journal what comes to you. Remember not to judge what come up for you.

3) Acknowledgement, forgiveness and letting go

When you start to acknowledge these beliefs, you start to understand the patterns and things you do in your life. You become more self-aware. Furthermore, it allows you to start the journey of forgiving yourself and letting go of these limiting beliefs.

The way you can acknowledge these beliefs is to write down the first time you experienced such a belief. You can do this by creating a timeline of your life and writing down all the time you felt h belief. For example, if you are 20 years old, grab a sheet of paper and write out the ages 0-5, 5-10, 11–15, 16–20. You then for each age area write all the times when the belief showed up.

You make be thinking how on earth your meant to remember when you were a baby, but when you start journaling, you will be surprised by just how many scenarios you bring up from your past.

Remember the key to journaling is to write down whatever that comes to your head and not judge it!

When you find the youngest version of yourself that formed the belief, then try and write down the scenario as it happened in which you formed the belief. Also write down what kind of thoughts you were having and notice if there was anyone around you in the scene that caused you to create the belief.

All this should help you to identify and help let go of your limiting belief.

However, if it's still difficult, imagine yourself in the scene when you developed the belief then try the following (either A, B or both):

A. If there was one or more other people in the scene then do this:

- Imagine that the younger version of yourself in the scene is walking up to the person who caused the belief and start talking to them.
 - Say whatever is coming up for you towards the person that caused you have the belief. **Literally say it out loud.**
 - I.e., maybe you have hatred toward them (which is completely fine, (**don't judge the emotion that comes up**)). Then just imagine yourself talking to them and letting it all out.
 - E.g., if you are 5 years old in the scene and your older brother made you feel worthless, then say you might want to say 'Brother I hate how you treated me when I was younger. I thought you loved me but you made me feel worthless'
- Once you have said everything you want take a deep breath and think of how the belief helped your life (the gift of the belief) and tell them all. **There always some kind of benefit.**
 - For example, although you have felt worthless, perhaps it allowed you meet better friends or perhaps it led to where you are now in your career, or perhaps it made you work extra hard or perhaps it made you more empathetic towards others.
- Once you have said that repeat to yourself **'I am now choosing to let go of the belief that _____ and feelings associated with this belief'**

B. If it was just, you in the scene then do the following:

- Imagine that an older version of you was able to step into the scene and talk to the younger self. Now imagine talking to the younger self and do the following:
 - Apologise to your younger self for all the times the belief held them back.
 - E.g., if the belief was 'I don't deserve to be happy', then say to your younger self 'I'm sorry that you felt you didn't deserve to be happy' and continue saying whatever else you would like to get out.
 - Even if it is hatred to your younger self then say it and acknowledge the hatred. Don't pretend you didn't hate your younger self, now is your opportunity to let all your suppressed feelings out.
- Once you have said everything you want take a deep breath and think of how the belief helped your life (the gift of the belief) and say them all out. **There always some kind of benefit.**
 - For example, if you felt worthless think of how feeling helped you in your life (there's always at least one occasion it helped), perhaps it allowed you meet better friends or perhaps it led to where you are now in your career, or perhaps it made you work extra hard or perhaps it made you more empathetic towards others.
- Once you have said that repeat to yourself **'I am now choosing to let go of the belief that _____ and feelings associated with this belief'**

4) Make a choice, setting intentions and taking action

Once you have acknowledged the belief and chosen to let it go, it's vital to accept where you are and make the choice of moving on and setting new intentions of where you want to go.

So, choose who you want to be and what you want to do. Ask yourself the following:

- **What has the belief held you back from doing?**
- **What type of person would you like to be if you don't have the limiting belief?**
- **Where do you see yourself in five-year time/what is a goal you would like to achieve in 5 years? What steps can you do to achieve that goal? What is the one thing you can do this week to help you achieve the goal?**

When you answer these questions make sure you can visualise the end result and what it would look like. Literally see, hear, smell and feel everything that would be in your goal.

5) Your Reticular Activating System (RAS) and setting intentions

Your Reticular Activating System (RAS) is found in the base of the brain. Its role is important in controlling your consciousness. Specifically, your RAS plays a role in arousal, sleep-wake transition, motor response (e.g. walking) autonomic functions (e.g. breathing), eating, elimination (wees and poos), dreaming.

Additionally, the RAS acts as a filter dampening down the effect of repeated stimuli like loud noise, which allow you to focus, and also helps to prevent your senses from being overloaded. The RAS filters external stimuli such as suppressing repeated stimuli (such as sounds and tastes) so we don't get sensory overload.

You can think of the RAS as the gatekeeper of the brain. As this part filters out what you pay attention to and what to disregard. Your brain can only process so much at a time. The RAS filters things through that it thinks is important.

For example, when you learn a new word, you keep hearing it everywhere. If you like a certain type of phone, you notice more and more people using it. This is due to the fact that when you first encountered these things, they left an impression, so now the RAS keeps alerting your brain every time you notice them.

So how does it know what's important?

Well, it depends on what you focus on the most.

In relation to beliefs, the more your RAS focuses on something it uses it as proof to make a belief stronger or to deny the belief. Hence, your RAS seeks information and validates your beliefs. It filters the world through the information you give it, and your beliefs shape the information you receive.

So ultimately your RAS responds to repetition, imagery and emotion. Hence after you've acknowledged the limiting belief and set a new intention, it's important to REPEATEDLY look at images of what your intention looks like, to visualise it and emotionally feel how it would feel to have accomplished the intention. The more you do this, the more your RAS will focus on achieving the intention.

Other things you can do to reprogram your subconscious mind

1) Focus on one thing at a time

Focus on one belief and intention at a time. It might seem good to focus on multiple things at the same time. But focusing on one thing at time, you narrow down your focus and you can accomplish the goals faster.

2) Meditation and Breathing exercises

Meditation can help to shift your focus away from your conscious thought. This can be useful before journaling and delving into your beliefs. Literally before starting the self- interrogation/ awareness process do 5-10 minutes of meditation.

Meditation also helps focus you to train your mind to maintain focus for a long time without getting distracted.

Sometimes when people think of meditation it can cause resistance and it may be easier to come up with excuses to not do it. So instead, try and think of it as a breathing exercise. I personally enjoy doing the Wim Hof method, but there are loads of other breathing exercises. The Wim Hof guided meditation is shown in the YouTube link below.

But to summarise you take 30 deep breaths. As you breathe in ensure you are breathing deep. So, imagine yourself breathing into your pelvic floor. With the Wim Hof method, on the 30 breaths in, you hold it for as long as you can and then you continue the breathing exercise for three rounds. See the link below for more information.

Wim Hof guided breathing exercise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAhAOTXHeNs&t=153s>

3) Seeking help

If you're finding it hard to do this yourself, don't be afraid to ask for help from friends. Talk them through the steps and get them to ask the questions, this can make it easier for you. Otherwise, there is no shame in seeking for a help from a professional. Remember, this doesn't mean there is something wrong with you, in contrast it shows you are taking initiative to make your life better. Some people also often learn better with other people's help.

4) Sleep and morning best time to program mind

Two of the best times to help set new intentions for your subconscious mind are when we wake up in **the morning** and when we're going to bed **at night**. During these times we have a greater influence over our subconscious mind.

Not only this but by focusing on your intention in the morning, you help align you focus for the day as opposed to getting distracted. This is why I often advice people not to check your

social media in the morning, as you are exposed to many different stimuli, instead focus on the one thing you want to achieve.

Meanwhile do the same when you go to sleep at night but also review what went well during the day and feel gratitude for what went well. Also review what went bad and how you could improve this for the next day.

Affirmations

Many people love affirmations and use it daily. Affirmations are helpful in directing your focus and helping reprogram your beliefs. However, even if you repeat these affirmations a million times, if deep down you have strong opposing beliefs to these affirmations, then you're wasting your time. This is because affirmations are done on a conscious level and are always filtered by the subconscious mind (remember this is where your beliefs lie) because they usually don't match your belief system. In other words, you are actually using these affirmations to mask your opposing beliefs as opposed to delving deep into the root cause of the belief.

For example, if subconsciously you believe you are not good enough, you could make an affirmation saying you are good enough and you are having amazing self-confidence. You could repeat this a million times and feel how it would feel to be enough and confidence.

This may help and allow you redirect you focus when you feeling down. However, unless you delve deeper into what events and circumstance that caused you develop this belief of not feeling good enough in the first place, then you will always feel deep down you are "not good enough" to do something.

It's almost as if you're using the affirmations to run away from the feeling of not good enough. Like another ego defence mechanism.

What you need to do is sit down and try and finding the root cause of the inadequacy feeling. That way you can let go and move forwards to feeling you are enough. In addition to this you can use affirmation to help redirect you focus to who you want to become.

To make the affirmations stronger make sure you can actually feel how it will be to achieve whatever you want. You could do this by doing activities which you put off before because of your limiting beliefs. Then the more you do these activities, you can condition your brain to realise actually you are enough.

Quick summary to dissolve limiting beliefs

1. Spend 10-15 min meditating or doing breathing exercises.
2. Begin the Self-interrogation/Awareness part to identify limiting beliefs and journal down your answers. **Remember to not judge what comes for you.**
3. Begin the stage of acknowledging, forgiving and letting go of the beliefs.
4. Make the choice of letting go and set new intentions and take actions.
5. Use affirmation and visualisation in the morning when you wake up and at night before you sleep to help focus on your new belief/intentions.

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