

### More on Beliefs

In the intro article on beliefs you may have identified some of the beliefs you have about yourself. This article intends to go a step further and explores what you can do with this newly acquired awareness. As human beings we have been conditioned into our way of being. This conditioning is rooted in the beliefs we have about ourselves and the habitual patterns we created for our survival.

Ken McLeod in his book “Wake Up to Your Life” writes *“Beliefs provide a way to interpret what happens in life as part of a larger order, plan, or structure. ... Beliefs appear to confirm our place in the scheme of things because the interpretation they offer accords with what is already inside us.”*

The following example shows how conditioning, belief, and habitual patterns get in the way of life and how they operate within us. One of the things I noticed about myself is my addiction to work. Often, I would make work more important than my relationships. You can imagine that this did not go over so well at home. I would work long hours and compromise time with my wife, disconnect from my friends, and forget to look after my health. This is not the person I wanted to be.

Employment/work to me is much more than going to a place where I perform a task and get paid in return. It provides an identity, it is the foundation of my worthiness, I belong to something, it feeds my attachment to money. When digging deeper into this awareness it goes back to my childhood – making my father proud, trying to get him to love me, wanting a deep and meaningful connection with him.

The disconnection and lack of love and attention I felt with my father resulted in a belief I formed about myself explaining his behavior towards me. I interpreted it as not being worthy of love and attention. In my case I chose to compensate through work. At a young age I started to work during school breaks to make money and be as independent as I could be. I chose to try and make him proud in the hope of creating that deeper connection I was longing for. I compensated the void I was feeling by how much money was in my bank account and by being reliable and conscientious at work hoping for little crumbs of attention here and there.

To this day I notice when I am between contracts, I typically find things to do, have the need to feel productive, fill my day with projects. However, there is a big difference between my behavior then and now. I take much more time for my wife, friends and family and I take care of myself through meditation, yoga, and being part of a men’s organization allowing me to get in touch with my feelings. The conditioning does not hold the same strength and grip on me as it did years ago. The more awareness I have about the way I show up in the world, the less likely will my conditioning be able to run my life.

What can you do? Pick a behavior, ideally one that no longer serves you in your life. Know you have been conditioned into behaving this way. What was your conditioning? What beliefs about yourself are you carrying? Understanding the deeper beliefs is helpful as it provides the opportunity for change. Admitting to the belief, saying it out loud, sharing it, paying attention to it, takes courage and may bring forward a range of emotions. Don’t stuff those emotions down. Feel them. Be aware of them. The experience may be uncomfortable, but it will bring down the power this conditioning has over you.

Know you are not alone. Seek help. A friend, coach, mentor, or councillor may be able to provide support. You are worth it. Accessing the greater potential in you needs to start with you.