YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT YOURSELF ARE CONTROLLING YOUR DESTINY

Who are these millions of homeless people and why are they homeless? These people are literally everywhere. There are certainly many sociological explanations for their extreme poverty and other problems. We can blame the government, we can blame the economy and we can blame others. Notwithstanding, there are tons of people out there who somehow manage to do exceptionally well in spite of everything. They do not have educations but are the richest people in the world. They may have had their face burned off in a fire and end up marrying a model. They may have a low IQ but have managed to do incredible things with their lives.

For every story about someone who is poorly off, there is a story about someone who is doing well. You need to understand that there are vast differences in the world about how people experience and react to the world. What makes this central idea so exciting is that what happens to us is entirely within our control, if we are willing to "go deep" and understand what it is inside of us that is controlling how we experience the world. What I am concerned about specifically is your beliefs. Your beliefs control how you experience and interact with the world. Due to our early life experiences, almost all of us develop beliefs about who we are and our relationship to the world.

The significance of these beliefs is that our beliefs end up creating our experience of life and the world around us. The experiences we have of life, the circumstances we find ourselves in and the results we achieve are all related to the beliefs that we adopt about ourselves. The reason this occurs is because we all do what we need to in order to create consistency between our lives and what happens to us and our beliefs. This is a profoundly important statement and something that if you really grasp it, can change your life, your career, and your destiny forever.

One of the most powerful needs people have is for their experience of the world to be consistent with what they believe. The drive for this is so incredibly strong that people will do almost everything to be right about their beliefs and will do this even when being right means they will suffer, be unhappy, or experience failure.

We all have beliefs and these beliefs are about a variety of different things. These beliefs could be such things as:

- Every time we apply ourselves, we are likely to fail.
- Every time we get close to people, they will disappoint us.
- We will only be loved when we need something or are sick.
- Success is for other people and not for us.
- We are not important.
- We do not fit in.

There are a ton of potential beliefs out there that we may have about ourselves that we potentially could have adopted about ourselves based on our early experiences. In almost every case, we do not choose the beliefs we have about the world but instead we have adopted these beliefs based upon our early life experiences and feedback from the world (especially with and from our parents). These beliefs end up controlling how we evaluate ourselves in relation to the world.

One of the beliefs that I have had to work on is that I cannot trust people. One of the reasons I think that I adopted this belief was because I learned very early on that I could not trust my parents in certain circumstances. Both of my parents lied to me on several occasions when I was younger. While in and of itself this was not a horrible thing, this engendered a tremendous amount of distrust in me at a later age. When I got into business situations as an adult, I started having my trust violated over and over again–by employees and others. Invariably, someone I would allow myself to get close to would violate my trust. Until I was in my early 30s, virtually every woman I dated (or married in one case) violated the trust I had in her. If she did not violate my trust (or I did not think she would), I was messed up enough at the time that I would push her away and end the relationship. I was only attracted to "bad girls" due to my belief that no one could be trusted. I wanted to ensure that my beliefs about the way the world worked were confirmed by the women I chose to spend my time with. The same thing occurred with many friends and employees of mine. I chose to associate with people I knew deep down were not trustworthy because this supported my belief in the world that people were not trustworthy.

This is entirely messed up, I know. However, we all have beliefs like this that are acting out in our life. Our beliefs about ourselves and the world are one reason that many people end up attracting the like-minded people into their lives. I knew one women quite well who went to Harvard Law School and associated with the highest class people you can imagine. This women dated a succession of at least 3 or 4 men over the course of a few years who literally beat the shit out of her. She would show up in arguably the most prestigious law firm in Los Angeles with black eyes and bruises all over her body. This is someone who was incredibly intelligent. Why do you think she was attracting and choosing to date a succession of men like this? I have not even ever personally known a man who beats up women and would not even know how to go about finding one. Notwithstanding, this woman somehow was able to attract these sorts of men and vice versa. The men she dated were bankers, doctors, and other professionals who would fly off into rages and kick and punch her.

What is going on in a situation like this? When you get deeply into it, what was going on, I think, was not a case of "bad luck". The woman was consciously and subconsciously attracting people who confirmed a belief that she had about herself, and the world, that led her to consistently being beat up. The more I think about this particular woman, the stranger the whole thing seems to me. The last I checked, several years ago, she was working in a battered women's shelter. I am not saying that women who are battered deserve this sort of treatment. What I am saying, however, is that a lot of it comes about because of certain peoples' beliefs about themselves and the world.

I entered into a marriage several years ago, with someone I was 100% confident on a conscious and subconscious level would cheat on me. I absolutely knew it. It was the most messed up and crazy thing imaginable. I got divorced because of it. It all happened, however, because of my beliefs about the world and the way it was.

You have beliefs like this that are controlling how you see the world as well.

The person living on the street who believes he is worthless and will always be poor has attracted this life as well. Whatever you believe will end up causing people and situations that will make you right about your belief. This is just how it works.

People attract the sorts of situations and create the sorts of lives that make them right about their beliefs. You are doing the same thing right now with your life and your career.

What is even more interesting is how we end up distorting reality to ensure that we make a belief seem true even if it is not. Several years ago, when I was around 24, I was dating a woman whose dad was an incredible womanizer. It was really out of control and he was such a bad womanizer and had been throughout his marriage that his wife had finally left him on a trial separation basis. He was 60 odd years old and had recently started dating a 24 year old girl. Since my girlfriend's parents were not divorced yet and she really hoped they would reconcile, she was very angry about this. One evening we were going out for the evening and she said to him, "She better not be here when I get back!!"

Her father smiled and did not say anything. We got back around 11:00p.m. and walked into the family room. To my astonishment her father's girlfriend was not there and he had somehow brought home two other girls who could not have been more than 30. He had his arms around them both with his feet up and was smoking a cigarette. He appeared to be having a great time.

"See she's not here!" he said. "But now I've got two others!" He was laughing and flashed me a smile. It was too much and my girlfriend ran to her room crying.

"He's such a womanizer!!" I remember her crying. "I cannot stand it."

A couple of weeks later I was out at bar with my girlfriend and her brother. A girl I had known in elementary school came up and started speaking with me. I had not seen her in at least 10 years and was very excited to catch up with her. We spent about 30 minutes talking and caught up. Then she gave me her number to call her so she could give me the contact information of a few other people from elementary school that I had lost contact with, but she was still in touch with.

My girlfriend absolutely flew off the handle. She told me I was a womanizer. From that point on everything I did was about womanizing. If I bought a new

couch it was because I wanted to have women over when she was not there. If I got a haircut it was because I wanted to look good for other women. Her entire view of me was about how I was a huge womanizer–even though I never have been and was not. What she was doing was distorting reality so that it matched her belief of the world that men were all womanizers (like her father), even if this was not the truth. Our relationship fell apart shortly thereafter, and I am confident she probably started dating a man who really was an womanizer. This was her view of reality and the world.

She put so much pressure on me that I was a womanizer that I almost felt like I should be. She was literally almost conditioning myself and my view of the world so that I saw myself as a womanizer even though I am not. This was due primarily, I believe, due to her deep-seated desire to confirm her beliefs about people. It was almost as if she was acting in a certain way so that I complied with what she believed about men and the world and the way she was worried I would act. She believed all men were womanizers and this belief caused her to act in such a way that maybe I would have ended up one eventually. This is no different than what we do to ourselves in other areas of our lives, however. For example:

- We believe we will get fired from a certain job so we act in such a way that eventually we do get fired.
- We believe that all men are womanizers so we act in such a way that the people we get close to become womanizers.
- We believe we will not succeed so we act in such a way that we do not succeed.
- We believe we are worthless so we become bums.

We actually make our worst fears come true by perceiving people and the world in such a way that these things do come true. The point is that we manipulate our surroundings and unconsciously shape the events occurring around us so that we get to be right about what we believe about the world. We want to create consistency between our beliefs about the world and our lives. Almost everyone out there wants nothing more than to be right and will do whatever is necessary to make sure their beliefs coordinate with what is happening to them.

When you get into the family life of most bums and other people living on the street, you will often find some of the most depressing stories. You will see people who had parents who were incredibly cold and unloving. This has likely shaped the beliefs of the people living on the street that the world is a cold and unloving place and "poof" there the people are on the street. One of my favorite television shows used to be *Intervention* which I watched for a few years before it finally got too depressing to handle. What the show is about is a drug addict, alcoholic, bulimic, or other "addict" of some sort who gets completely out of control and needs an intervention. What always interested me most about this show was the most severe cases and the family dynamic at work. What I have always looked for with a great deal of curiosity is the sort of family the people have whose lives get completely out of control and have the worst issues. In almost all cases there is a stoic, unsympathetic mother or parent in the background. The person who is addicted and whose life is spinning out of control does not feel any love in the world and has absorbed beliefs about how there is pain in the world and that his/her life cannot be fixed. The show usually goes into some early detail about the person's life and provides a background of the person's early beliefs about the world and how they got these beliefs. These beliefs usually are something that play themselves out in the peoples' subsequent addiction.

Most of us are acting and going through life largely unconscious to what we believe about ourselves. Whether it is therapy, meditation, biofeedback, or something else, it is incredibly important that we understand why we act the way we do and what makes us whom we are. Our lives are incredibly affected by our beliefs about ourselves.

Most people in the world are literally operating on auto pilot, based on beliefs about themselves they do not even know that they have. Everyone has an internal map of reality and this map is creating life and experiences. These beliefs are affecting us on a daily basis whether we want them to or not. We all have internal maps of reality and these maps operate primarily unconsciously and on automatic. We hold many beliefs to be true that end up creating our experience of life. Something that can change your entire life and career is when you realize the following:

You are the creator of whatever happens to you. Whatever happens to you is coming from inside of you. Everything that is happening to you is being generated inside of yourself–even if you cannot see this. The key to a successful career and life is to stop resisting what is happening to you and start choosing what to believe about the world to create the life you want.

Once you understand this statement your life as you know it and your ability to control what happens to you in your life will change. Understanding this statement and working with this statement is something the most successful people in the world are able to do and the least successful people in the world are not. In effect, the most successful people in the world choose what to believe about themselves and the world. I would estimate that less than 1 in 1,000 people understand this. Even fewer people are able to make this work for their own benefit.

I was about 18 when I first started realizing that I needed to choose my own beliefs about myself. This process was transformative on so many levels. I went from being a good student to being an extraordinary student. I got more popular. I earned more money. I became president of the organizations I joined. There were other incredible things that happened to me as well but it was all really based on the fact that I realized I had to choose what to believe. I was almost blackballed from a fraternity I was joining (that I would later become president of) because I had conditioned my mind so strongly.

As part of joining most fraternities the group will do everything within its power through certain rituals to make you feel worthless. For example, they will call you names and get you to say bad things about yourself. You will be threatened with violence and expulsion from your class. You will be told you are worthless in many, many ways. The point of all of these exercises is to make you break down and feel like as an individual you are worthless but as a part of the group you have value. Our fraternity was unusually severe in its approach to this and on at least one or two occasions I saw people have psychotic type breaks when they were undergoing this ritual hazing. Many organizations such as the Marines and others do this sort of hazing in one form or another and it is part of human nature. The idea is to shake your beliefs about yourself to the core so you rely on the group. This serves a useful purpose from the standpoint of determining the long term viability of groups. Many people undergoing this process would break down and cry and other stuff when confronted with the pressure of the hazing.

The problem I had when I was undergoing all this was that it did not work. I was stoic in many respects and not acting like I should. From the time I was around 18 until the present day, I have been someone who actively meditates and I try and do this at least once a day. The reason I do this is primarily to influence my subconscious mind and train myself to believe various things about myself, often regardless of whether or not they are true. When I was around 18, I became very interested in the mind and how it influences who we are. Specifically, what interested me most and what interests me to this day is how our beliefs about ourselves have such a serious impact on what ends up happening to us. I would meditate and do self hypnosis about topics like "self confidence," for example.

In my days of being hazed, as a "pledge" in my fraternity, being threatened with expulsion and told I was worthless and so forth I did not have the desired effect on the people whose job it was to harass me.

"What do you think about the fact that we all hate you and do not think you have what it takes to be part of our group?!!" one of them might be shouting at me after having dumped a giant 5 gallon pail of ice water over me as I was standing with my hands tied behind my back.

"Well, in all honesty I know I am a valuable person. I have value for the world. I am a self-confident person …" I might reply to the astonishment of my tormentors. This would piss them off and the abuse would pick up but I would never be thrown off course. I was not consciously resisting any of this, I just could not bring myself to honestly believe negative things about myself and be influenced by them.

These beliefs and statements would be coming directly from various self-affirmation tapes I had listened to. Different people reacted in different ways, but throughout my life as one person after another has tried to knock me down a post or two for whatever reason, the beliefs I have conditioned myself to believe have kept me on course, happy and doing well.

Several years ago, I was on an airplane traveling back from a business trip from our company's office in India. There were a bunch of British magazines inside the cabin I was sitting in. Since the batteries to my Nintendo Gameboy were not charged I was spending a lot of time reading these magazines. At some point I started reading an upper crust type magazine and there was a long article about a program called the Hoffman Process. Apparently, in various high society circles of London a ton of people were going to this program and the program was supposed to bring about some sort of profound transformation in people and how they viewed the world. What was even more encouraging to me was that all of these people from England were traveling to California to do the Hoffman Process. Since it was not too far from me, I found it very interesting that a self help program in California had gotten an apparent following among British aristocracy.

The program sounded terribly interesting because the testimonials people had from the program were in many cases quite profound. (In fact, to this day many of the people I personally know who have gone to this program have reported incredible changes. One guy I knew lost 80 pounds. Another person quit a horrible addiction a week after going. Other people I know report being happier than they have ever been. There is a "cult" of sorts of people who have gone to this program and reported some of the most incredible changes they have ever had in their lives. For others, there has been really no effect. The point is, there is something to what they do there which has a profound impact on many people

I arrived at the Hoffman Process, at their compound in White Sulfur Spring, California (in Napa Valley), around three years ago, on a Friday afternoon. For 8 days I did various exercises with the participants and went deep into myself, discovering how much of my life has been dictated by beliefs about myself I picked up when I was younger from my environment. This information was extremely useful for me to know. During the week I saw several people completely break down and have incredible experiences. I saw one person who realized at the age of 35 or so that she was actually gay. I can imagine the results this must have had on her and her family. I saw years come off of some people's faces as they seemingly got rid of emotional baggage they had been holding for some time.

The program is not something that was founded by a psychologist. It is a program that was founded by a tailor in New York, Bob Hoffman, who used to run it out of the back of his tailoring shop. It involves stuff like shouting at yourself, beating pillows with bats, guided imaging and other stuff that ends up having an effect on making us understand whom we are and where we got many of our beliefs from. The foundations of the program are not based on an understanding of complex psychology. Instead, they are based on the ability for people to understand how their need for their parents' love and approval from an early age had had a tremendous and profound impact on their life and their beliefs about the world. I enjoyed the program. I also sent my wife to attend the program and she enjoyed it as well. I also sent my father. I have also sent people who work for me. I have recommended the program to many people.

Essentially, what the program does is it enables people to understand that a lot of their actions and emotions in the world are occurring due to beliefs and behaviors they have adopted from their parents. The idea is that once you have freed yourself from being someone reacting to things your parents have done and said to you in the past, the more your own decisions are likely to be guided by what you *choose* to believe.

When I was younger, I used to stop and chat with the homeless people on the street at length. In many cases they have severe substance abuse problems and in other cases they have severe psychological issues such as schizophrenia. Nevertheless, a good portion of these people have nothing wrong with them biochemically. Many also do not have any serious substance abuse problems. Instead, their issue appear to be how they think about themselves. Their beliefs about themselves are controlling their destinies.

This has always been the issue with them. They feel worthless, they believe they are incapable of good, they believe they are incapable of being loved, they have beliefs about money that disempower them. When you pass these unfortunate people standing on the side of the road, you know that most of the problems they have are caused by deeply held beliefs that they have used to consistently disempower themselves.

This is the same reason you are not reaching your full potential. Your beliefs about yourself are controlling what is happening to you.

Regardless of who you are, this problem affects all of us–it is just in different degrees. On a personal level, I have spent that past 20+ years of my life uncovering and exploring my beliefs about myself and seeing if these beliefs empower me or hold me back. I would like to challenge you to do the same thing today. You need to manage your mind and understand how your beliefs about yourself, the world, and the people around you are controlling your destiny.

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