

Each of us was born with the same basic emotional need for love and bonding. The degree to which those needs were met determines our sense of "belonging" and our ability to feel safe, secure and provided for, as well as our basic level of value and worth, first within the family structure and later, out in the world.

The degree to which those needs were met is also the foundation for our core foundational belief system.

What is a *core foundational belief system*? Put very simply, it's our book of rules about life.

Your "*core foundational*" belief system is just that - the "core" and "foundation" of your over-all sense of belonging, safety, security, provision, worth and identity. Literally EVERYTHING you think, believe, feel, and perceive; all the decisions you make and the ways you respond to and cope with your life - are based on your core foundational beliefs.

Here's a fact that will probably rock your boat: *approximately 90% of your core foundational beliefs were formed and entrenched in your subconscious by the time you were 8 years old.*

Yep - you read that right – *formed and entrenched* in your subconscious by the time you were 8 years old.

And there's more:

*You will spend your life gathering information, people and experiences to validate, substantiate, quantify and qualify your core foundational beliefs.*

Yep - you have brought into your life whatever you needed to give your core foundational beliefs credibility and validity. To affirm THEM. Whatever those core foundational beliefs were/are.

*Both negative AND positive.*

For example - if one of your core foundational beliefs is that you are *loveable*, you will have successful relationships - attracting and surrounding yourself with people who validate and affirm (i.e. proving to yourself) your "loveability." On the other hand, if your core foundational belief is that you are *un-loveable*, you will find yourself in relationships that are full of conflict and surrounded by people who are incapable of loving you (for whatever reason) thus validating and affirming (i.e. proving to yourself) how "un-loveable" you are.

We were not born with negative self belief. We LEARNED those beliefs. We weren't born with critical self-judgment and shame. We learned that too. Someone, somewhere taught us those things based on their own core foundational beliefs. (*We'll go much deeper into that later in the workshop.*)

As children we adopted most of the beliefs and emotional patterning of our parents and other grown-ups on whom we relied. As we grew older and our experiences changed, so did some of our foundational beliefs. But for the most part, those core beliefs stored in our subconscious remained suspended, leaving us to stubbornly and faithfully replicate our childhood patterns and defense mechanisms.

We formed conclusions about ourselves and the world from the very limited perspective of a child. Developmentally, children go through a period of what is known as "magical thinking" - where they believe they are autonomous and the world revolves around them. In magical thinking, a child puts themselves into the middle of any and all situations - and becomes not just the cause but also the effect. For example: if we grew up in a chaotic, conflicted home with addictive or abusive parents, we probably concluded they were unhappy because of something we did or didn't do. When our parents were unhappy, angry, neglectful, critical, or abusive, our magical thinking told us that it was because of something we did (or didn't do) - that we were not good enough or smart enough and it was somehow our fault.

As a survival mechanism, we may have developed a core foundational belief that we made people unhappy, and as that belief evolved, so did the belief that it was our responsibility to make them happy. Or, if we were judged and criticized, we may have told ourselves that we were unworthy and inadequate, that there must be something wrong with us.

It is from those experiences and conclusions we formed our core foundational beliefs - developing the behaviors that would get us love, attention, approval, and security. Some of us were taught to hamper our creativity, suppressing or repressing our spontaneity and playfulness so as not to draw attention to ourselves and annoy others with our noise. And, trying to be "good little girls", we may have learned to silence our spirit, to not make waves, not speak up for ourselves, deny ourselves and our needs by not asking for what we needed - and to keep the peace at any and all costs.

The good news is that core foundational beliefs can be challenged for validity and truth. Not only can be, but should be; need to be; deserve to be ***challenged for validity and truth.***

The majority of our core foundational beliefs are unconscious - deeply embedded in our subconscious, and that is why simple (positive) affirmations and "mind over matter" all by themselves (no matter how prettily they're wrapped and packaged) seldom work. ***All the positive***

*affirmations in the world can't change deeply rooted subconscious belief.* Because it is, by nature subconscious - we often don't even know it's there - let alone what it's saying in response.

*Let me give you an example.....*

.....Stand in front of a mirror. Take a deep breath and slowly exhale. Now, looking yourself in the eye, tell yourself (by saying out loud):

*"I excel in everything I do."*

What was the first thing that popped into your mind? If you are like most of us, it was some version of "no you don't."

That's a very simplified example of subconscious core foundational beliefs at work.

Now admittedly, I pushed the outcome response here - because the truth is none of us excel at *everything* we do. But I wanted to make you aware of that subconscious voice that responds to everything we think and say (even to ourselves) on a daily basis. There is a constant dialogue playing out in our heads at all times - and the only way to change it is to challenge it.

*This week's food for thought to chew on :*

*The first step towards bringing those core foundational responses into consciousness – is becoming aware of them, and then putting them (to what I call) the "think" test)*

the **THINK** test

is it well **thought out**?

is it **helpful**? does it **honor** me?

does it have **integrity**?

is it **necessary**? what **need** does it fill?

is it **kind**? being said **kindly**?

Think of a negative core foundational belief you have about yourself or your life. Write the sentence out: (example) "I don't deserve \_\_\_\_\_."

Now, taking that negative belief about yourself or your life, put it to the "THINK" test:

- Is that thought out or was it an automatic and unconscious response? What happened to make you believe that about yourself? Can you know that for absolute certain? Could you be wrong? Could the person who first told you that or led you to believe that have been wrong?
- Is that a helpful belief? Does it honor you? Is it based on fact or does it come from fear? Does it make you feel good about yourself? Does it help support you in being the best you that you can be? Does it inspire you or diminish you?
- Does believing that have integrity? Does it respect you? Does it unify you, mind body and spirit or does it divide you? Is it fair and moral and just? Is this thought in alignment with your values and what you want to pass on to others? Would you want someone you love to have this belief about themselves?
- Is it necessary to hold onto that belief or could you let it go? What would happen if you no longer held onto that belief? How are you served by believing it? What is your "pay-off"? How does it keep you safe? How does it keep you from being safe? Does it make you feel empowered or vulnerable? Does it get you what you need? What need within yourself does this belief fill?
- Is it kind? Said in kindness to yourself? Is it loving? Affirming? Nurturing? How does it feel inside yourself? Would you say it to another person? What is the underlying tone of voice when you say it to yourself? Again, would you want someone you love to have this belief about themselves?

### *Nothing changes until something changes.*

Awareness of the old (unconscious) pattern is the first step towards letting it go and bringing about change. *If change is what you really want.*

There are times we say we want change, and we mean it. Really we do.

*Or do we?*

Remember we are working with UNCONSCIOUS stuff here along with a hefty dose of ingrained unmet needs, patterns, behaviors and habits. And as strange as it might seem or as yucky as it might feel, it's not abnormal or unnatural to get comfortable with the discomfort.

We are intimately familiar with the discomfort; we know what it sounds, tastes, feels, smells and looks like. We know what's expected of us in it, we know how to respond to it, talk to it, deal with it and live with it.

So to challenge it, we need to look at the main (unconscious) sabotaging culprits:

### # 1: What's your pay-off?

The only reason we hold onto old beliefs or patterns of behavior is because they serve us somehow. We receive some benefit from them. Negative or positive, it doesn't matter.

For example, if the belief is that you will never have a happy relationship, what does holding onto that belief give you? How does it protect you? Does it keep you from being disappointed? Hurt?

Does this belief or pattern of behavior get you attention? Does it give you a sense of control or power? Does it free you from having to take responsibility for your own life and/or happiness? Does it protect you from having to take action or setting (and enforcing) boundaries?

### # 2: Resistance:

Another factor that can keep us stuck in outworn core foundational beliefs is resistance. Why would you resist giving up a negative belief or pattern of behavior that doesn't serve you any longer? That's a good question to ask yourself!

Is it because you would:

- \* Have to change?
- \* Take responsibility for your own actions and reactions?
- \* Loose control over a situation or others?
- \* Have to take risks, open yourself up or put yourself "out there"?
- \* Have to release yourself or others from culpability, blame, guilt or shame?
- \* Be judged by others?
- \* Feel guilty if you were happy while others still suffered?
- \* Quit playing small and inconsequential?
- \* Possibly walk away from toxic relationships and people?
- \* Finally face something you've been avoiding or denying?
- \* Risk being thought of as selfish, self centered and/or self absorbed?
- \* (List any other reasons for your resistance you can think of.....)

## Worksheet:

1.) Identify a self sabotaging or self defeating negative core foundational belief you have about yourself or your life:

2.) Put it to the “THINK” Test:

- a. Well *thought out* and/or still *true* today?
- b. Is it an *honest* assessment? Is it *helpful* in empowering me?
- c. Does that belief have integrity?
- d. Why is it *necessary* to hold onto that belief? What *need* does that belief fill?
- e. Is the belief *kind* to myself?

3.) Now rewrite (from #1 above) your self sabotaging or self defeating belief here:

4.) Set that belief straight with the insight you have from the “THINK” test responses:

*Important Note: becoming AWARE of the core foundational belief behind your negative self talk is the first step in bringing about change in your life and attitude. This week’s topic and focus is NOT about finding further (or any) fault with yourself. It is not about shame, blame or guilt. It is about becoming aware of what has been standing in the way – in YOUR way. We cannot change what we don’t even know exists – and this is about becoming conscious of the subconscious.*

*Be kind, gentle and compassionate with yourself !!*