

# How to Change the Way You Think

Tags: [#behavior-change](#) [#personal-leadership](#)

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## Dialogue

Title: How to Change the Way You Think

While everyone has some beliefs that they're conscious of—politics, religion, sports, and popular social issues seem to provoke speedy expressions of support or scorn—we actually have far, far more beliefs at play in our lives than that. The difficulty is that those beliefs are frequently framed as facts, certitudes, thoughts, theories, norms, shoulds, and should nots. Most of us fail to recognize them for the beliefs they are. They're down there in the dirt, below the surface, sitting solidly in our subconscious minds. Many are so far below our levels of consciousness that we never even realize we have them. Whether we know it or not, though, our beliefs are almost always calling the shots.

How do the beliefs of leaders affect how they show up for others?

Forty years ago, I believed that business was mostly about doing bad things. Business meant big companies where profits took top priority, where people put on suits, sat in offices, and conspired to do evil deeds against consumers and the folks who worked on factory floors. In that context, I never would have even considered opening one of my own.

I should say though that many of us have beliefs that, although we don't know it, conflict with our values or our visions for the future. And those beliefs are inhibiting our success. Many of us will say "the socially appropriate" thing in public, but in reality, deeper down, hold different, even conflicting, beliefs. Often we don't even acknowledge to ourselves what we really believe in our hearts because what we believe isn't really "acceptable."

Examples of beliefs:

You can't find good people.  
I could never take two weeks off - things would completely fall apart.

Businesses exist only to make money.  
People will never pay for quality.

Hope:

Martin Seligman tells us: "One of the most significant findings in modern psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think."

## 1. Identify the Issue

Pick a problem. What's an example?

## 2. Backtrack to beliefs

We project the parts of ourselves we're least comfortable with--both the desired and undesired--onto others. When others embody parts of ourselves that we don't like and have repressed, we tend to get angry. Or, alternatively, when others live out the dreams we don't dare to let ourselves live, we hold them high in admiration and are drawn towards them.

Examples?

- This I believe...
- Start with the shoulds...
- Listen carefully to the voices...
- Illustrate the issue...

## 3. Do some homework

This is understanding how we've arrived at where we are. What's critical about that understanding?

Learning to confront our cannons.

## 4. Check the equation

What does this mean?

## 5. Mindfully adopt a new belief

From:

Meetings are generally a waste of time.

To:

How to run a meeting well is one of the most important things a leader at this stage needs to learn.

How?

Point --> Change now, find facts later.

## 6. Erode old patterns with new thinking.

- Read your vision regularly and share with others.
- Commit to journaling.
- Hang around with people who share the new belief.
- Regularly reference success stories that support your new belief.