

## Techniques for Challenging Self-Limiting Beliefs

Many people carry around a number of beliefs which have held them back for years. Typically these beliefs are formed in early life, often as a result of a single high-impact event, or because of the behaviour of a significant adult. These early beliefs are very powerful and remain deeply embedded in adult life. Despite our intellectual maturation, as adults we often behave and act according to this early 'scripting'. Often these beliefs are highly significant, sometimes relating to our deepest fears about our ability to survive emotionally, socially and even physically.

As a consequence, we can often unconsciously sabotage ourselves, both in terms of managing our relationships and getting what we want out of life. Typical self-limiting beliefs include the following:

- I am not lovable
- I am a failure
- I have no power
- Others are not to be trusted
- Other people are to blame for my bad feelings
- I/You/Others can never really change
- I need the approval of others before I can act
- Make one mistake at work and the gutter beckons

It is possible to do something about these damaging and potential-sapping beliefs. One technique for beginning to shift them is as follows:

Answer the following questions for yourself: alternatively use them to help coach a client

- What actually is the belief that limits you? Describe it in a sentence beginning "I believe ....."
- How was this belief formed? Think back to a time in your personal history when this belief was created, and identify the circumstances and people involved.
- Do you still want to believe this about yourself/others?
- What would you rather believe? Create a sentence beginning "I would like to believe ....."
- What behaviour(s) could you now adopt that would be consistent with your preferred belief? Generate a range of behavioural choices.
- What will you actually commit now to doing?
- How will you/we check your progress?