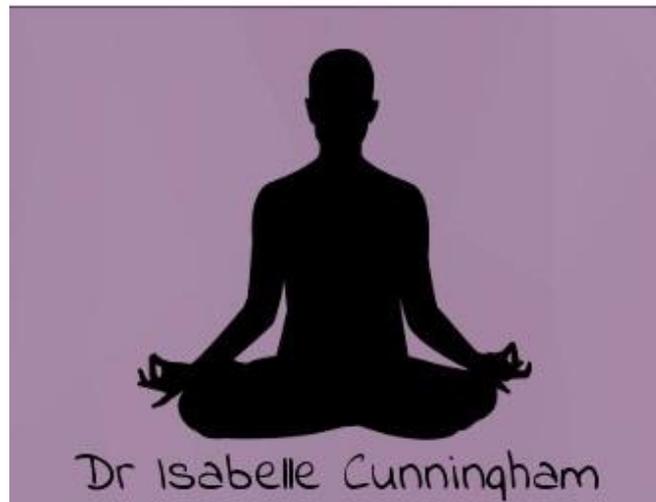


How to Change Negative Belief Systems And Live A Happier Life



Much of the pain and suffering we experience in our lives is a result of old belief systems we have stored away in our unconscious minds. In many ways the unconscious mind is like a library where ideas have been filed like books waiting to be referred to, when an answer, a solution or a response is required.

These belief systems are not always in alignment with our intelligent mind. In fact, if we were able to really look at them clearly and pull them apart, we would think most of them to be ridiculous. This is because most of them were formed before we were five years old and have been kept unaltered for all these years, jumping off the shelves and dictating our actions, thoughts and responses before our intelligent mind even has time to assess the situation.

For example, if you had a parent that often ignored you as a child, you may have concluded that your parent did not like you or that you were unimportant or even unlovable. This information may have been stored away in your unconscious library, ready to be called upon every time anyone ever ignored you or even seemed to be ignoring you, for the rest of your life.

So that when a lover does not answer us straight away, or a friend does not return our text as fast as we want them to, the old belief system can be triggered. Our unconscious mind connects to the old story and we immediately start to feel rejected, unloved or whatever we felt as a little child when our parent was not giving us the attention we needed.

This is not something our intelligent, conscious mind concludes. It is an old belief system that we can often be completely unaware even exists for us. But do we really want a five-year-olds' ideas to be guiding our lives as adults?

This process for storing belief systems in the reactionary unconscious mind, is a fool proof way of helping us gather important information that will keep us alive. When we are little and our unconscious mind is in that early stage, it is collecting reference material for the future like, don't cross the road without looking, fire burns, don't run with scissors, etc. These are all good belief systems but the way our lifestyles have evolved means that we have also stored a lot of information that is not necessarily true and often more destructive than helpful.

In the situation above, where we were little children, who have concluded that we are unlovable because our parent ignored us, we have adopted a story that is stored in the library of our unconscious mind. The story says people ignore us (or don't listen, or don't spend time with us, or whatever else) because they don't like us, we are not acceptable, we are not valued, etcetera.

In fact, there could be many reasons our parent appeared to ignore us, that we, as little children had no concept of. Perhaps our parent was suffering from depression and didn't know how to deal with the demands of a small child. Perhaps they had relationship problems or hated their job. Maybe they had financial problems and were preoccupied with worry. Perhaps they had belief systems of their own to do with spoiling children by giving them too much attention! There could have been hundreds of reasons and only one of those hundreds of possible reasons had anything at all to do with us not being loved, valued, wanted or acceptable.

Still the one we usually choose at that very young, self-centred and inexperienced age, is the one that is all about us. Then it gets locked away in our unconscious library and we use it as the "true story," the reference point, for the rest of our lives. Until one fine day we realize, that belief system is not helping us or benefiting us at all. We realize that old story is, in fact, hurting us; causing us to suffer, ruining our relationships, making us respond or behave in ways that are not in alignment with the way we want to behave, or feel is the best possible versions of ourselves.

As little children we believed that absolutely everything that ever happened was about us. So the conclusions we drew, as a result of our experiences, that formed our automatic belief systems were mostly about us. We were not capable of formulating belief systems that took everything being our fault or about us, out of the equation. This is why most of our unconscious belief systems (the reference books in our survival library) just don't serve us very well today. They were all written by a small, inexperienced child who thought everything that ever happened and everything anyone else ever did was all, ultimately because of them.

If you have ever reacted in a way that made you question yourself or that you didn't like or that made you feel out of control, then you were acting from your unconscious belief system. It is not the way your intelligent, experienced self would choose to act.

If you ever feel sad or depressed, angry or afraid and can't really come up with a rational reason, it is probably because a story is running in your unconscious library which is causing you to associate with feelings you experienced as a small child.

We don't always live completely from these old belief systems and most times we are able to stop and think before we respond but when we are stressed, taken by surprised or the situation resembles the old childhood scenario a little too closely, the intelligent thinking mind is bypassed. The unconscious reference library jumps in to save us so fast that it completely avoided the logical thought process and BAM! We find ourselves acting like a child (either throwing a tantrum, sulking, hiding, whining, hitting out, overcome with fear or running away).

As we don't have a list of all the thousands of belief systems we have stored away, that have been wrongly recorded and that jump out and take us over like some sort of Mr Hyde, it may seem difficult to start getting rid of those ones that do not serve us.

However there is a very simple and effective formula we can use to help us identify and change these old erroneous belief systems and live happier, more positive and less reactive lives.

THE FORMULA

1: Write down the problem (or the story), in the form of a statement.

When you feel angry, sad, afraid, rejected, any emotion or feeling that is painful or causes you suffering, ask yourself, 'what is the problem' or 'what is the story, I am playing a role in, here?' Then write that story down.

For example: 'My mother never really listens to me and annoys me with her negative thinking.'

2: Ask yourself if this statement (or story) is true.

You may say 'yes' because it feels very true to you. Or, you may say 'no'. You may realize that something makes you jump to this conclusion (that your mother never listens to you) without any real evidence or you may believe on an intellectual level that your mother does not have to listen to you and she can think in any way she wants. You may believe that you have no right to dictate how your mother should behave. Still, negative or painful feelings may still arise for you, because the situation triggers an old, painful belief system.

3: Explore how you know this statement (or story) is true.

For example: She talks about other people in a judgmental way all the time. She goes on with another topic of conversation instead of responding to me when I tell her something. She doesn't pay attention to me.

4: Can you be completely positive that the statement (or the story) is the absolute truth?

While you may perceive the statement to be true and the circumstances may make the statement seem true to you, we can never truly know for sure what another person is thinking, how they are feeling or what their behaviour means. Everything we decide about everything that goes on outside of us (and often inside too) is based on a story we have made up. We may be able to make a great case to support our belief but ultimately, everything we know about another persons' thoughts, feelings and motivations can only be an assumption based on our own experience and beliefs' about ourselves and the world.

Even when someone sits and tries to really explain how they feel or what they think to us, we can only ever understand what they are saying from our own perspective. We can only ever see their story through the filters and lenses of our own experiences and the beliefs that have formed in our minds as a result of our own experiences. We can only ever understand their story as far as it is relative to our own story.

Therefore, the only real truth, is that we never really know that anything is true for sure unless there is physical evidence. Even when we know someone's behaviour is true, we still can never really know their motivations, except from our own perspective.

Our subconscious mind has collected a stack of conclusions about why other people act the way they do or say the things they say. But that is all we have...conclusions. Often we view these conclusions as universal truths and we allow ourselves to become completely involved in the story associated with that 'truth'. Even when that story causes us a lifetime of pain and suffering.

5: How does believing this statement (or story) make you feel?

For example: It makes me feel like my mother does not love or respect me. I feel unloved. It makes me angry.

Now we can see that by believing in the reason we have selected to explain our mothers' behaviour, we are creating a 'story' to become involved in (in fact to star in) that causes us pain and suffering.

6: How would things change for you if you did not have this belief (if the reason was different or there was another story) – how would you feel, who would you be?

Don't try to change your belief at this stage, just close your eyes and consider or imagine for a few moments how things would be different for you and how you would feel if you did not believe that statement (the story) was true.

In this example, how would it change your relationship with your mother (if you did not believe that she did not love or respect you)? How would it feel if you believed the truth about why she didn't seem to listen to you was different and was about her and not about her feelings toward you? How would that change the way you feel about yourself, about your mother and about your interactions with your mother? If you knew for sure the reason she seemed not to listen to you was nothing at all to do with her feelings toward you? How would it change who you were?

Just sit and feel that for a minute. Then write down the way it would make you feel.

7: Now write down the original statement in reverse in as many ways as possible.

For example: Here is the original statement – 'My mother never really listens to me and annoys me with her negative thinking'.

Let's reverse that statement in a few different ways.

- 1/ My mother listens to me and annoys me with what I see as her negative thinking.*
- 2/ I never really listen to my mother and I get annoyed with my negative thinking.*
- 3/ My mother really listens to me and I choose not to judge her way of thinking.*
- 4/ My mother is not good at showing me that she is trying to understand me and she says things that come out looking like she thinks in a negative way.*
- 5/ My mother and I communicate in very different ways. I don't try to communicate with her in ways that are familiar for her or that she can easily understand.*
- 6/ When I choose to communicate with my mother, I don't need her to respond in ways that make me feel safe or respected.*
- 7/ I allow my mother to be her own person and behave in any way she chooses. I do not need to control my mother's behaviour.*

Keep rearranging your story until you find one that feels right for you. Make sure it is one that changes the way you view the 'truth' so that it does not support the way you wrote you felt when you believed the original statement.

Choose a story that makes you feel good. Any of the above stories could be just as true, or truer, than the original story.

8. Now use this formula to address a negative belief of your own.
Start again from step one but this time, use a story that is true for you in your life right now.

9. Use the formula

Next time you find yourself in a situation where an old belief (a false truth or painful story) arises and makes you feel unhappy, angry, hurt, unloved, afraid or anything else that is equal to pain and suffering, use this formula to change the story that your old beliefs have invented for you to be involved in.

Work through the steps in your mind at the time it is happening, if you can, or work it out on paper just like we have done here, at a later time.

The more you do this, the faster negative old belief systems that cause you pain and suffering will be eliminated and the happier you will be...the more open and free you will be to star in the stories that make you feel loved, joyous, safe and positively powerful.

This formula will work to help you banish any and all belief systems you have, which do not serve you in a positive way. You do not have to try and rake through your unconscious mind and find all the belief systems you have collected over the course of your life to address them all. That would take forever and it certainly wouldn't be much fun.

Personal growth should be fun. It is exciting when we find a limitation within our thinking that has been keeping us prisoner and realize it is just a shadow and that we can easily break free of it. We have been trapped by an illusion and the sense of freedom and empowerment is exquisite.

Simply notice every time you experience pain or suffering, including fear, anger, resentment, disappointment, any feeling, any emotion any reaction that is outside of the way you want to be feeling and ask yourself; "What is the story my belief system is making up here for me to star in?" It may be something like, "my partner expects me to do everything around the house and doesn't show me any love or consideration!" There you will have your story and you can begin to change the belief system behind the story, so that you are not the victim in your own story anymore.

This formula is not intended to justify, make excuses for, or ignore other people's behaviour that is not acceptable to you. There will still be many situations when you do not want to be treated in certain ways or when you cannot tolerate another person's behaviour or a situation. The difference will be that you will not be attached to the situation or take it personally. You will feel calm and you will be much less likely to become involved in the story. You will be able to make choices for yourself that are based in what you want for yourself in your life, right now. Not based in old, outdated and often erroneous belief system that are hidden from you, in your unconscious mind.

Namaste
Isabelle