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Making Attributions and Examining My Limiting Beliefs

My Inner Game - What do I believe about my work?

Sir John Whitmore, who wrote “Coaching for Performance” talks about each of us having an *inner game* which impacts on our performance positively or negatively. He speaks about our need to increase our self-awareness through a coaching approach, where questions asked by the coach enable us to focus on obstacles that prevent us from reaching our potential in our performance. The “obstacles” are the limiting beliefs that we can have about who we are and what we are capable of and most often, these are unconscious. In his work, he encourages us to consider how we can “shed the baggage” of these old beliefs that no longer serve us.

Looking At Ourselves More Closely...Which Attributions and “Stories” are you making?

How often, by your own estimation, have you had these thoughts over the last year?
What was the context for having these thoughts and how resourceful did they make you feel?

Supportive Beliefs - Examples	Limiting Beliefs - Examples
a. Overall, I have a really good, positive relationship with my pupils.	a. My pupils never behave well enough for me to teach well consistently.
b. I focus on what I can get done and achieve every day. Some days are more productive than others. I always try my best.	b. I never feel that I do a good enough job overall.
c. I ask for support when I need it, knowing that this is a strength.	c. If I ask for support, others will believe that I am failing.
d. Others have their own skill-set and aptitudes and I have mine. We all complement each other in this team.	d. I am not as good as the others and I have little to offer the team.

We each have a range of supportive beliefs and limiting beliefs which we may or may not always be conscious of. The less conscious we are of the limiting beliefs that we hold, the less resourceful we can find ourselves being in our behaviours, actions and even our performance.

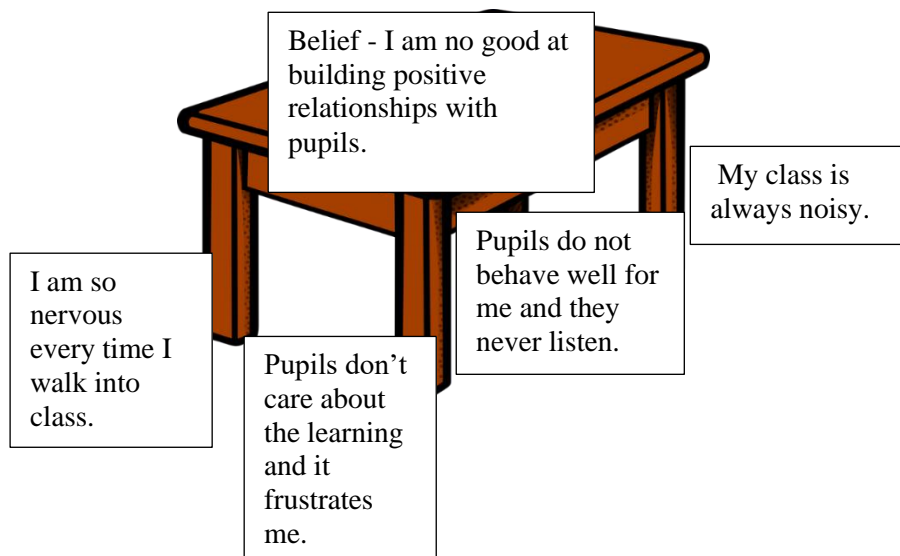


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The Belief Table – Building New Beliefs To Support Performance and Wellbeing

Tony Robbins, World-Renowned Life Coach, describes an activity called The Belief Table where he invites each coachee to place an unresourceful and limiting belief on the top of a “table” and asks the coachee, “What limiting evidence or further limiting beliefs are holding this table up?” i.e. What is holding up the “legs” of our table-top limiting belief and how can we bring each piece of evidence or further limiting belief into our consciousness to discern whether or not it is true, robust or valid?

Below is an example of a limiting belief and the evidence to uphold it. How robust, reliable or valid might you decide each “leg” to be?



In examining this example, asking questions about the “legs” of the table and associated attributions would assist in gaining more clarity about the real grounds for the main belief.

For instance, some associated questioning might take the form of:

1. When did you first experience nervousness going into the classroom? Can you remember exactly what happened? What have you noticed about your pupils and how they respond to you when you feel this way?
2. You say, pupils don't care about the learning – what have you noticed that they do care about? Can you describe a time when learning did take place and you noticed pupils were interested?
3. Do you believe that the pupils behave well for others? If so, what do they respond positively to? Is it the case that ALL pupils do not behave well for you or is it a smaller number?
4. Is your class being noisy a sign that they are not learning? Is your class being noisy that you do not have a good relationship with the pupils?

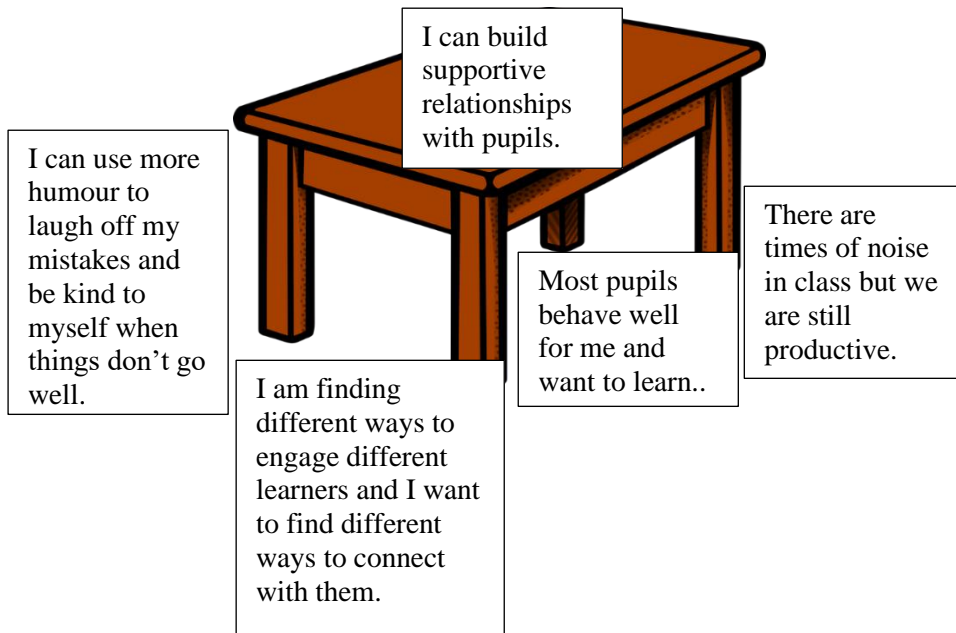
These are some examples of questions to ask ourselves or a coachee if we are trying to increase their awareness of what this main belief's impact is on our performance. These questions are not exhaustive and depending on the specific context of the coachee, there may be other more



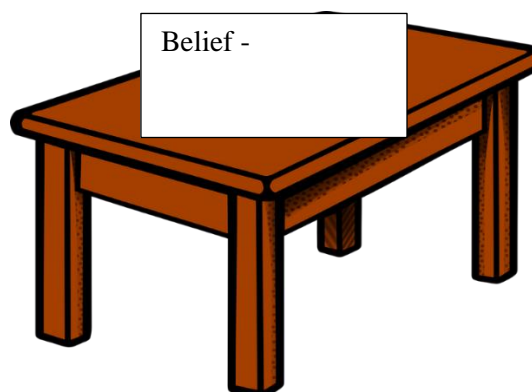
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insightful questions to ask. The main idea is to be constantly curious about the belief that is limiting potential.

Once this process has been undertaken, we can begin to create or modify this limiting belief so that it can become a supportive one. For example:



Now it's your turn. Which limiting belief would you like to put on the table top and consider "evidence" for?



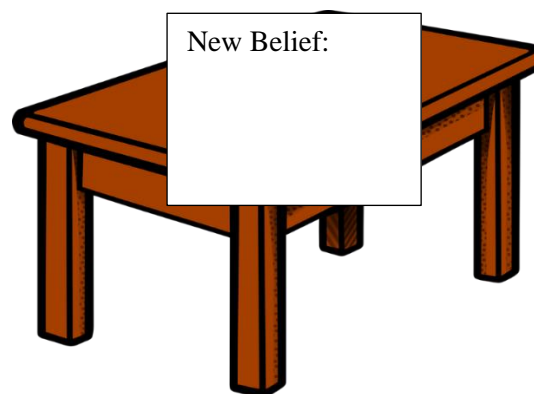


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What challenged you about this exercise?

What did you highlight for yourself? Did you notice where this belief may have come from? What might you come to believe now which is more resourceful for you?

Now, what new supportive belief would you now like to create or modify? This belief may provide you with a new “lens of reality” and support your wellbeing and performance.



What did you notice when you carried out this part of the exercise?

Where might you try out this new belief and in what ways will you continue to reinforce this belief and its positive impact for you?

What might you *feel* differently about if you practise this new belief?