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BELIEFS

How Do Thoughts Propel Me?



QUESTION FIVE

HOW DO THOUGHTS PROPEL ME?

“...it dawned on me that I have to change my inner thought patterns...that I would have to start believing in possibilities that I wouldn’t have allowed before, that I had been closing my creativity down to a very narrow, controllable scale.”

—Bob Dylan, *Chronicles Volume One*

New York City in the summer is hotter than a nine-day romance. Add the sweltering humidity and it’s no surprise that city dwellers spend their summers trying to escape the Big Apple. Depending on budget, the getaway plans range from a subway ride to the public beaches in Coney Island to a limo ride to a mansion in the Hamptons. In between those extremes, there are “share houses” on the beaches of Long Island and the New Jersey Shore.

Anticipating the summer of 2005, I read dozens of ads on craigslist from share house owners. Maurice’s pitch was the most interesting because he was more of a social engineer than a landlord. Since Maurice emanated his why, I signed up for nine weekends. Later that fall he approached me about a book on running a share house. At the time, I wasn’t having any luck with women—and that’s putting it kindly. I was working too much, partly because I didn’t have any money, but mainly because I couldn’t find anyone to go out with me. In a city with millions of single women, I seemed to be turning off all of them.

Maurice sent me his book proposal and I couldn't believe what I was reading. He wanted his house to be gender balanced and described his difficulties in recruiting men. He said there were tens of thousands of beautiful, fun, and smart women in New York between the ages of 27 and 37 (I was 34 at the time), but hardly any men who fit this category. He also said that most women echoed his sentiments about how few kind and creative men there were in New York.

His exact words weren't as relevant as what I took from them. My interpretation was that there were tens of thousands of amazing women in New York and most of them were *looking for a guy just like me*. Not only that, there was a massive supply imbalance in my favor.

From the moment of that realization, I was a magnet for incredible women.

I *did* nothing differently. My *actions* were exactly the same. I didn't start meeting women after I lost weight or saved money. I didn't buy a new wardrobe, join Hair Club for Men, or get calf implants. I only changed my thoughts, and in spite of being grossly overweight, with little disposable income in one of the most materialistic cities in the world, my dating life went from terrible to terrific in an instant.

I had reprogrammed my software.

By replacing a thought pattern on my mind's hard drive, I experienced the world differently. By simply believing that women were looking for a guy like me, it changed my perception which, in turn, became my reality.

The fastest way to transform your life is to change your thoughts. The foundation for this chapter is simple: *When you change the way you think about things, the things you think about change*. Again, the fastest way to transform your life is to change your thoughts. And it can be the easiest, fastest thing in the world to do.

It can also be the most difficult. Here's where things get tricky. Your belief systems about the ability to change belief systems hold the cards. There's a chicken or the egg question that we'll examine. Because what we believe is heavily influenced by axioms, here's the first of many in this chapter, courtesy

of Henry Ford, “Whether you think you can or whether you think you can’t, you’re right.”

Got Imagination? Steve Jobs and Russell Wilson Do

When my niece Jayme was five, we threw a raging tea party. We broke out the fancy china and sipped the finest teas from all over the world. Never mind that a fly on the wall would have seen tap water in plastic cups. After a while, we thought it would be fun to invite some of her friends. Suddenly we “heard” a knock. Jayme heard it. I heard it. And we both “saw” Avery walk through the door. This continued as Drew, Harry, Fanny, Asher, Grayson, Tillie, Ben, Sima, Ellie, Simon, and Sophie all joined us. Each time they knocked, we *heard* it and *saw* them enter. We served them tea and toasted to grandiose dreams. As our imaginations ran wild, the party took on a new life, taking us far away from Jayme’s playroom.

Was this real? Could scientists prove that it happened? With two witnesses to the best tea party in history, could they prove that it did not?

How do we differentiate between a real experience and an imaginary one? Do our opinions about whether it *actually* happened, or about our *thinking* it happened, make a difference? Studies on visualization show that whether you physically shoot 100 free throws or mentally visualize shooting them, the benefits are the same.

We’re constantly told to get more real, as if *real* can be so easily defined. The trick is to get more in touch with our imagination.

My friend Chi-Chi hates Sundays but loves Fridays so much that his favorite four letters are T, G, I, and F. On Fridays, his body is at the place he despises most, his office, but the mere thought of the weekend transports him to a happy place. On Sundays, when he could *be* in that happy place, instead of saying Thank God It’s Sunday, Chi-Chi is consumed with stress about the week ahead. On both days, his *thoughts* call the shots, which demonstrates the link between imagination and reality.

His imagination is his reality. To change your “reality,” all you need is a thought.



Imagination schmagination, you say. Nothing gets done with thoughts. Put in the time. Hard work and persistence are the keys to success.

Before you dig yourself a hole with this line of thinking, consider how much money professional sports franchises spend on athletes' minds. Alyssa Roenigk of *ESPN The Magazine* reported that when high-performance sports psychologist Mike Gervais addresses the Seattle Seahawks, rather than offer tackling tips, he says, "Quiet your minds. Focus your attention inwardly and visualize success."

Quarterback Russell Wilson has individual *weekly* sessions with Gervais that include what Wilson calls, "imagery work" and adds, "I truly believe in positive synergy, that your positive mindset gives you a more hopeful outlook, and belief that you can do something great means you will do something great."

These words come from a 5'11" quarterback who many analysts thought would never play a down in the NFL, much less start a game. Russell Wilson became the only rookie in NFL history to start every game and finish with a passer rating over 100—more than 12 points higher than the next best, Matt Ryan. In his second season, all Wilson did was lead the Seahawks to a championship.

When he walked off the field after a 43-8 victory in Super Bowl XLVIII, the storyline centered on *belief systems*. The commentators relayed how his dad, the late Harry Wilson, used to say to his son, "Why not you?"

When you hear a question enough times as a kid, it can define your life.

What question do you ask yourself the most? How does it influence your thoughts?



One of the themes from Walter Issacson's biography of Steve Jobs was the Apple founder's so-called "reality distortion field." His innovations sprang from *not* looking at things realistically. Rather than accept others' idea of reality, Jobs created his own stories and imposed his will on others to reprogram their expectations of themselves.

Issacson told Adam Lashinsky of *Fortune* the story about the time Jobs was working with Steve Wozniak (Woz) on the game *Breakout* for Atari. He told Woz, "You can make this in four days," and Woz said, "No, it's going to take four weeks." Jobs replied, "No, no, no. You can do it in four days." And Woz said, "Well, that was a reality distortion field, and I did it in four days."

An imagination that trumped "reality" allowed Jobs to accomplish what others insisted was impossible. Everything seemed impossible before someone did it.

You can pound your fist about "facts" and argue that not believing in gravity won't allow you to fly. You can list as many examples as you'd like about why we need to be more realistic. Just ask yourself how fighting for limitations will propel you. Who ever achieved anything beyond mediocrity by playing it safe?

When filmmaker Brian Koppelman, best known as the cowriter of *Ocean's Thirteen* and *Rounders*, is criticized for encouraging artists to dream, he has an elegant response, "...the world is already out there dispensing 'reality,' discouraging the creative journey, tamping down enthusiasm, limiting opportunity. So I want to stand there in the face of that reality...And I want to help you get to the finish line any way I can."

Koppelman, Jobs, and Wilson recognized that your imagination and your affirming thoughts are the biggest factors in your success. You have the power to create the stories that serve you best.

It's True If You Believe It

To figure out what software is running on your computer, hit control+alt+delete, and the task manager will display a list. Tapping into your own software is more challenging. We all run thousands of thought programs simultaneously that were

written by our parents and families, teachers and coaches, and “society” at large.

My second toe is longer than my first toe, and my mom told me it was a sign of intelligence. My friend Raffaella’s mom told her it was a sign of beauty. My friend Jen’s mom said it was a sign of royalty. Of course we all *believed* our moms.

Monte’s mom told him that Albert Einstein was dyslexic so it had to mean that Monte’s dyslexia was a sign of a genius. Einstein, along with Alexander Graham Bell, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison, and George Washington compose a formidable dyslexic starting five (though they routinely get beat in practice by John Lennon, Steven Spielberg, Richard Branson, Vince Vaughn, and Paul Oakenfold).

When I learned that my godson Reed has the same birthday as inventor and entrepreneur Elon Musk (Tesla Motors, SpaceX, SolarCity, and Paypal), I wrote to him, “Geniuses and pioneers are born on June 28.” My friend Woody tells his kids that the brown spots on bananas are the sweetest and best part, and his kids fight over the brown spots. Imagine how different their reaction would be if he referred to those parts as bruises. Is what he’s saying “real” or “true?”

It’s true if we believe it.

Daniel Gilbert, Harvard professor and author of *Stumbling on Happiness*, says that perception “holds one of the deepest truths in psychology, which is that the mind generates reality.”

Belief systems are also known as software, attitude, perspective, accepted wisdom, frame of mind, or emotional DNA. Fallacies are belief systems that have been debunked. If your software is in sync with your desired path, it will propel you. If it is not, it will sabotage your efforts.

We are conditioned and programmed (some might say “brainwashed”) to believe certain things and to think in certain ways, which can be a good thing. The software, “Look both ways before crossing” serves to keep you safe. Other belief systems—such as “We’re on this Earth to suffer” or “It’s called a job because it’s supposed to suck”—may not serve you. The key is to differentiate the two types. Once you’ve done that, you can write new software to reprogram your own hard drive.

Rejection is Redirection

Any comic will tell you that pain is the second best thing for his act. Only shame is better. Imagine how this outlook can transform the way you view adversity in your life. The late Nora Ephron was raised by writers who told her that bad experiences were opportunities for great copy. This programming by her parents led her to reframe suffering from “this sucks” to “wait until I write about this.” Ephron’s reframing resulted in three Oscar nominations.

Michael Parness—who went from a homeless addict to a multi-millionaire finance author—survived an abusive childhood by repeating to himself, “Your pain is not in vain.” Citing Viktor Frankl’s book, *Man’s Search for Meaning* as inspiration, Parness says this one belief was enough to sustain him through hard times.

A leading man doesn’t complain. When a situation goes against his expectations, he realizes that his attitude is what matters most. If the service is awful at a restaurant, he can choose to focus on gratitude, that he has the luxury of being with loved ones and having food to eat. He can laugh at it and turn it into a funny story. He can deal with it by talking to the manager. Or he can leave. Complaining is not in the toolbox of leading men. It’s choosing to be unhappy and asking others for sympathy in a story that paints you as the victim.

Rejection is redirection.

That’s the chorus I repeat when something seems to go against me. That website never called me back about distributing my videos. *Rejection is redirection.* The retreat center that is perfect for my budget and schedule is booked. *Rejection is redirection.* That woman shot me down. *Rejection is redirection.*

Please put your own spin on this. Michael Jordan made a commercial highlighting all his missed shots and losses and then said, “I failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” Yoga teacher Heather Archer says that when you feel like you’re being rejected, it’s actually the universe redirecting you to something bigger. Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter India.Aire finds strength in the saying, “Every breakdown holds a breakthrough.”

How do you react to adversity? What about criticism? I believe that people

are either expressing love or crying out for love, which gives harsh words a different meaning. If someone criticizes me, my first reaction is that I must be doing something right. My attitude comes from believing that a coach only bothers to correct the star players.

A mental shift can reframe crisis and rejection into opportunity and redirection—if your imagination allows it.

Are Your Thoughts Your Own?

I'm torn between telling you reprogramming is easy (after all, what could be easier than changing your mind?) and admitting that it can be difficult. You already saw that my mentality about dating changed instantly when I read Maurice's proposal. You've also heard about people who have had near-death experiences. Once they realized they weren't going to live forever, their entire perspective changed and they saw the world in a new way.

When it comes to altering your beliefs, there is value in acknowledging what you might be up against. Thoughts become embedded in our minds when we hear them at a young age or from people we view as authorities. Even when we see or feel evidence that contradicts these beliefs, we hold on tightly.

I've seen and heard thousands of data points since I was a child that milk makes bones strong. From the charts on my classroom walls growing up, to the "Got Milk" campaign with famous athletes showing off their milk mustaches, it has been hammered into me so much that I believed it. Never mind that milk gave me gas and made me feel sluggish. So much programming was ingrained that, in spite of my discomfort, I continued to drink it.

I only began to budge when I learned that Americans drink more milk than any other nationality *and* have the highest rate of osteoporosis. My health coach, Amelia, told me that baby calves drink milk to turn into 800-pound cows. When she asked, "Do you want to be an 800-pound cow?" I budged a little more.

Are you getting the feeling that I'm brainwashing you about the perils of milk? You may be right. Also understand that my words only matter *if you choose to believe them*. The reason we're talking about milk is to show how

pervasive attitudes take hold of us—and how they can harm us when we don't question them. It would be equally naïve for you to *stop* drinking milk if it works for your body.

The real question is: Are your thoughts your own?

“The conflict between what we're told we feel and what we really feel may be the richest source of confusion, dissatisfaction, and unnecessary suffering of our time.” That quote from the book *Sex at Dawn* might be applicable to everything.

I made a choice about milk based on what works for me—not what others, with their own agendas, were selling me. But it took a mountain of evidence to get me to change a belief system that wasn't serving me. Now imagine how tough it can be if you're not even aware of your thoughts.

The reason it's worth challenging your beliefs—and asking if your beliefs are propelling you in the right direction—is that the returns are immense. One “aha” moment that leads to a shift in perception can change everything. And you don't need to be sluggish, near death, or at rock bottom to change what you choose to believe.

The Science Behind Belief Systems

Spa Samui, a health retreat in Thailand, has a library of books and films, and one sunny day in paradise, I watched Bruce Lipton's *The Biology of Belief*. Lipton, a Ph.D., earned his stripes for his pioneering research as a cell biologist at Stanford and the University of Wisconsin.

I couldn't stand science in school, yet I was spending two and a half hours on a tropical island watching a lecture about protons, membranes, and DNA. I was riveted. Lipton explained that a cell is made up of both DNA and proteins, but genetics research has focused on the DNA while ignoring the proteins. That's right; many scientists just flat-out ignored the proteins of the cell. That's like studying the biological properties of an egg and throwing out the yolk.

The Human Genome Project, and other gene research, has led many people to believe that humans are wired a certain way—that our genetic makeup, and not our choices, means that many aspects of life are beyond our control.

Scientists from this school of thought tell us that our DNA determines if we're going to get sick or depressed.

Lipton explains that our proteins are controlled by our environment. Our *perceptions* control the behavior and physiology of the cell, turning genes on and off. So while you may be “wired” for depression, your proteins, which are malleable, are the catalysts that turn on the gene. Therefore, even if you have the depression gene, your environment—which includes everything from nutrition, physical surroundings, and perceptions—determines whether it gets switched on. If it were only about the genes, you would be born with diseases. If it's about what turns the genes on and off, that could explain why some people who are predisposed to a trait exhibit it, while others never do.

After watching Lipton, I watched Dr. Andrew Weil explain that a significant part of the protocol for researchers to test a new drug is to give a placebo, a pill with no medicine, to a control group. Weil said that although researchers often look at the placebo effect as a nuisance to their research, it's precisely what they *should* be studying. Just thinking that something works is often all it takes for it to work. Again, your thoughts hold the cards. Deepak Chopra says, “We are the only creatures on Earth who can change our biology by what we think and feel.”

The placebo effect reinforces the power of imagination.

The information from Lipton, Weil, and Chopra resonates because, long before I learned the fancy scientific terms, I knew the concepts were true. It started at age five when I read *The Little Engine That Could*. Whether saying, “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can,” changes us on a cellular level isn't as important as knowing it works for me.

Are we here to suffer or is every day a gift? Is it called a job because it sucks, or is your job how you offer your gifts and provide for your family? Is rejection telling you to crawl into a cave or to fight for something better?

That's the beauty of belief systems. You get to choose and create the ones that work for you. You tweak and amend. Along the way, others will try to influence you. Your parents, the media, and society will speak their truths about their belief systems. You get to pick and choose to come up with *your* truth.

The “Secret” Weapon for a Book Deal

When a friend mentioned *The Secret*, I thought he was referring to *The Strangest Secret*, a 1956 spoken word record by Earl Nightingale that my brother gave me when I was 28. *The Strangest Secret* is that, “We become what we think about.”

A film and a book called *The Secret* were released in 2006 with a similar message. The Law of Attraction states that like energy attracts like energy and whatever we think and feel in our inner world shows up in our outer world. The combination of timeless wisdom, brilliant marketing, and Oprah’s endorsement brought the law of attraction to the mainstream. I knew it had hit the big-time when Charles Barkley said, “I’m thinking thin,” during a TNT broadcast.

It wasn’t long before I started hearing horror stories about *The Secret*. People ran up huge debts, reasoning that they were “thinking” about abundance and that the law of attraction guaranteed its arrival. Why not take a credit card advance when the law dictates the money is surely on its way? So what if they’re not doing anything to earn money?

Remember that no program or “secret” works unless *you* work it.



Aspiring authors are quick to point out statistics that fewer than one in a million authors gets signed by a publisher. Even though I had no experience or education as a writer, the enthusiast in me took over, and I believed I could overcome the odds. But after pitching *The Finance Doctor* and getting rejected by publishers all over town, I started to buy into the story that it’s impossible to get published. Even when we start out with strong beliefs, rejection can lead us to reframe our story to rationalize our lack of success.

Frank was one of the editors who rejected my book. But unlike the others who wouldn’t give me the time of day, Frank sent me a detailed letter full of criticism and suggestions. I received his “red pen” as a gift of awareness. I

then made the wise choice to hire Frank as my editor and consultant, and I published the book myself.

After I released *The Finance Doctor* in September 2000, it seemed like all people wanted to talk to me about was *their* book—the one they had always wanted to write. Before long, I was the most popular volunteer publishing consultant on the planet.

Meanwhile, Frank, a life-long New Yorker, was on vacation at Del Mar racetrack, just north of San Diego. He thought it was paradise and decided to start a literary agency coupled with a move out west. Frank is a leading man who followed his heart and actualized his ideal day. When he first moved to San Diego, he went to the racetrack every day. Now he only goes every day it's open.

Frank recalled my background in business and sales, and on a lark, asked if I had an interest in working with him.

“What does a literary agent do?” I asked.

Frank explained that an agent finds authors and then calls publishers to sell their books.

Contemplating my recent string of unpaid gigs, the answer was easy. “Okay,” I said, “Let's do it.”

And so we did. Our startup budget of \$200 each barely covered business cards and letterhead, but we were up and running. Before Frank left for San Diego, I met him in New York, where he had set up several meetings. What he didn't tell me was that it was a week of free gourmet! Editors from the most prestigious publishers like Doubleday, Random House, and HarperCollins were buying us meals at New York's finest restaurants. I couldn't understand why they were wining and dining two schmoes who didn't have a single client (not even Mr. Skin at this point) simply because we had hung a shingle. Frank explained that an editor's job is to acquire books and they depend on agents to send them material.

“They *need* material?” I screamed. “What about the millions of manuscripts they receive?”

“That's the slush pile,” he said. “Most of it belongs there. Every editor

I know complains about how hard it is to meet his quota for acquiring high-quality books.”

“So you’re telling me editors get paid to *buy* books?”

“Well, not exac...”

I cut him off. Finding the right story to propel you is *not* about taking in all the information, which can lead to a paralysis of analysis. MBA graduates, in particular, know so much about what can go wrong in business that they often remain on the sidelines.

I could have listened to Frank explain that editors get paid for their discerning judgment, that they get paid both to reject and accept books. After all, we just devoted almost an entire chapter to active listening. But at some level I grasped a key question: How would that story propel my success?

Rather than become more realistic, take a cue from Steve Jobs’ reality distortion field and latch on to the stories that propel you to build your own reality. In this case, it helped that my pants were tight from feasting on the expense accounts of publishers. Why else would they have been entertaining two rookie agents if they weren’t dying for material? The *evidence* that I turned into a story made me believe.

Picture the graphic of me being programmed with a new software update, along with the caption, “Publishers, Who Get Paid to Buy Books, Are Dying for Good Material.”



I had a night to sleep on this new belief system. On our final day in New York we had a meeting with Pete, an editor at Crown, an imprint of Random House. Whereas before I believed that it’s all but impossible to get published, now I believed that publishers are dying for good material. I was transformed from the hopeless author to Lloyd Christmas, Jim Carrey’s character in *Dumb and Dumber*, who believed that one in a million meant, “So you’re telling me

there's a chance!"

Even though we didn't have any clients or other projects to discuss, I never mentioned *my* next book idea during any of our previous lunches. After all, I was nothing but a guy with no writing credentials who had self-published one book that hadn't sold more than a handful of copies outside of blood relatives. But with this new belief system percolating, before my shrimp cocktail arrived, I told Pete I wanted to write a book about using poker skills in business.

"Funny you should mention that," Pete said. "I actually brought up this idea at a brainstorming meeting and everyone loved it. We just need to find the right author."

Three months later I received a contract and a healthy advance from Random House. *The Poker MBA: Winning In Business No Matter What Cards You're Dealt* was published in May 2002. My only regret is that I didn't dedicate the book to Bruce Lipton, Earl Nightingale, and *The Little Engine That Could*.

One more time: The fastest way to transform your life is to change your thoughts. When you change the way you think about things, the things you think about change.

How to Reprogram Your Software

Just as it was once accepted that the world was flat, prior to 1954 it was accepted as fact that it was impossible for a human being to run a mile in less than four minutes. Yet on May 6 of that year, in Oxford, England, Roger Bannister ran a mile in 3 minutes and 59.4 seconds. In the next three years, 10 runners logged sub-four-minute miles. Their software was reprogrammed by evidence, which led them to believe they could accomplish what they previously had deemed impossible.

By now you get the concept. Let's get to work putting it into practice.

Four Ways to Reprogram Beliefs

1. Inquire. Question your beliefs continually.
2. Find examples of others who exemplify beliefs that propel you.

3. Provide evidence that supports your beliefs.
4. Sustain your beliefs through words, visuals, and other affirmations using the senses.

1. Inquire. Question your beliefs continually.

Byron Katie travels the world asking people four questions. I spent two days at her workshop, and the woman is a broken record, which I offer as high praise. She asks the same four questions, over and over, for any thought that pops into your head.

1. Is it true?
2. Can you absolutely know it's true?
3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?
4. Who would you be without that thought?

Katie reminds us that *we are not our thoughts* and that many of the thoughts running through our minds are not even true. At Katie's workshop, I watched a woman in intense emotional pain explain how her dad had screwed her out of her inheritance. Twenty minutes later, after being prompted by Katie to answer these four questions, the woman realized she had *invented* a story that made her miserable. Inquiry led her to a new truth, freed her from her misery, and she floated off the stage.

If you say or think, "I can't make money doing something I love," stop and ask these four questions. I use inquiry so often that I rarely get past the first question. *Bill never returns my calls. All politicians are corrupt. No one keeps his word anymore.* Whenever I have a thought like this, I stop and ask: Is it true? This one question can be enough to snap you out of a negative thought pattern.

2. Find examples of others who exemplify beliefs that propel you.

Watch a marathon, and you'll see people older and less athletic than you finishing the race. Your software will instantly be reprogrammed. Your mind can't help but register: If they can do it, I can do it. That's why we were so inspired by Jim Abbott, who was born without a right hand and still managed

to pitch for 10 years in the major leagues (including a no-hitter).

Fans worldwide were inspired by Tyrone “Muggsy” Bogues who was only 5'3" yet had a brilliant 14-year NBA career. If you are 5'11" and running software that says you're too short to play professional basketball, seeing a 5'3" player will reprogram that belief. Likewise, Russell Wilson's Super Bowl title changes how we view the height of quarterbacks—and the power of visualization.

3. Provide evidence that supports your beliefs.

In *Learned Optimism*, Martin Seligman explains that a technique of cognitive therapy is to use evidence to help people change their beliefs about themselves. If a man talks about what a terrible dad he is, the therapist walks through all the evidence that demonstrates what a great dad he is—healthy kids, doing well in school, respectful, etc. The technique reprograms the faulty software by feeding the mind bits of information that it knows to be true.

Go back to that thought, “I can't make money doing something I love,” and question it. Do you know any wealthy people who love their work? If so, you can see that your thinking is flawed. With that recognition, you let go of the thought and replace it with one that serves you. If it rings true, feel free to use this affirmation: *When I'm doing something I'm passionate about, it leads me to maximize how I serve people and how much money I earn.*

4. Sustain your beliefs through words, visuals, and other affirmations using the senses.

Both malicious leaders and loving coaches know the value of sounds and words to brainwash us. By using multiple senses, they get their message to seep into our thoughts. Fight songs, banners in locker rooms, inspirational posters in corporate offices, and t-shirts with catchy slogans all serve this purpose. The goal of branding is to influence consumers to believe a message. If you see and hear, “Built Ford Tough,” and “Kraft is Cheese,” enough times, you start to believe it. In *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg writes that Facebook uses slogans to foster a culture of risk-taking. Its corporate office has posters on the walls that

say, “Fortune favors the bold” and “What would you do if you weren’t afraid?”

Find ways to make your highest beliefs reach your eyes, ears, and heart to create the thoughts that propel you. If billion-dollar companies and malevolent leaders can use slogans, songs, and signs to brainwash others, you can find even more effective ones to brainwash yourself.

What pictures do you keep in your wallet, on your desk, on your fridge, and in your car? What words are you saying out loud or to yourself most frequently? What song is stuck in your head right now? The subconscious believes what it sees and hears.

Reprogramming Leads to Results

After watching *The Secret* in 2006, Jennifer Thompson created a mock-up *New York Times* Bestseller List with her book on green smoothies in the #1 position. At the time, Jennifer had little writing experience and a tiny fan base for her blog. She hung the mock-up above her desk, and every day when she sat down to write, she looked up and visualized her success.

Does this sound like New Age foo-foo dust to you? I’ll spoil the ending by revealing that, seven years later, Jennifer signed a contract with a major publisher for a book about green smoothies.

Was this a coincidence? Some of Jennifer’s friends (and all of the haters) thought so. Then again, they are the same type of cynics who cite the statistics that only one in a million authors ever get a book deal. Her book is not on sale yet, so it remains to be seen if Jennifer will make the bestseller list. I, for one, would not bet against her.

Jennifer’s story is a perfect example about how the right beliefs and tactics lead to professional and financial success. Now let’s take this to another level in order to create your own story about wealth.

Entitlement and Benchmarking

My mom used to say that any idiot could walk into a department store and pay retail, but it took real brains to buy a \$100-shirt for 20 bucks. I have fond memories of our family driving home from outlet malls while congratulating

ourselves on our savings. I also have warm memories of shopping with my dad at his favorite store, Syms, where “An educated consumer is our best customer.” A powerful slogan can stick with us forever. Finding bargains reinforced our family’s story that we were educated and thrifty. The downside is that it placed more emphasis on saving money than on making it.

My friend Hal calls being penny-wise and pound-foolish “misery economics.” You run all over town to save a nickel on tuna fish or gas when you could be working on your next deal. Hal called me out for spending so much time saving money that I missed opportunities to make it. I was so attached to finding bargains that I loved to repeat gambler Titanic Thompson’s quote that, “The key in life is not to *be* a millionaire; it’s to *live* like one.”



“Entitled” is one of the trickiest words in the English language. Like budget hawks, my mom used it in a negative context, with frequent rants about how kids think the world owes them something. Shaking her head, she would say, “I don’t know where they get their sense of entitlement.” As I grew older, I started to hear the opposite of my mom’s sentiment, which is that we are all *entitled* to the life of our dreams.

The language in my home led to a negative view of entitlement. “Don’t take anything for granted” and “Never show up anywhere empty-handed,” were familiar refrains. My mom brainwashed me with these beliefs and now that I’ve had a chance to test them, I’m glad she did. In fact, I’m passing the torch by brainwashing my godkids with them.

My belief that no one owes me anything jibes perfectly with my belief that whether I’m writing a book, telling a story, or making a business pitch, I have to create value for the other person and earn my right to be there. But does that belief also mean that I’m not entitled to a happy life? Thomas Jefferson never said we were entitled to a life of happiness. He wrote that it’s our inalienable

right to *pursue* a life of happiness.

The word “privileged” is double-edged as well. Again, we choose what meaning we give to words, ideas, and other people’s assertions. Ivy League is associated with diligence and intelligence, which are universally seen as positive traits. It is also associated with privilege and entitlement, which is why Harvard sometimes carries a negative connotation. In *Trading Places*, Dan Akroyd’s character says, “He’s wearing my Harvard tie. Like, oh, he went to Haaaarvard.” That’s all the audience needs to hear to hate him and root for his rival character, played by Eddie Murphy.

Then again, many Harvard grads are laughing all the way to the bank. Having a peer group with high expectations is a critical asset in shaping belief systems. We benchmark ourselves against our peers, and those closest to us affect how we view our potential.

Choose Your Top Five People As If Your Life Depended On It: Because It Does

When I was getting my MBA at Arizona State, I had friends in three of the top MBA programs: Stanford, Wharton, and Harvard. While my peers at ASU were figuring out how to pad a job offer by a few *thousand* dollars, my friends’ peers were figuring out how they could start companies worth *billions* of dollars. My peers aspired to take on a lease of a luxury car. Those from the top schools aspired to take on *industries*.

Hal is a business magnate (with an undergraduate degree from a public university and without an MBA) and being in his presence is an exercise in brainwashing. He tells me all the time that there is more competition for the \$10-an-hour job than the \$10 million-a-year job. He believes it because he lives it. He sent his kids to public school and instead invested in influencing their imaginations, including pulling them out of class for Tony Robbins’ events.

Robbins’ mentor, Jim Rohn, said, “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.” Hang out with a bunch of Dougy Downers and they’ll bring you down, just as positive people will lift you up. *Life is contagious*. Write down the names of the five people you spend the most time

with and see if they embody your goals and aspirations.

James Altucher turned his book *Choose Yourself* into a phenomenon and built on that momentum by starting a popular podcast. He credits much of his success to the company he keeps. Altucher, who is forthright about his social struggles, still goes out of his way to meet new people who inspire him. “When people with positive energy are around each other,” he says, “more energy is created.”

Altucher uses seven steps to create that energy—what he calls a Scene. The list below is excerpted from Altucher’s blog by permission. I received that permission because I appreciate how much others impact our thoughts, and thus, made it a point to build a relationship with a forward-thinking author.

How You Build a Scene: Courtesy of James Altucher

- find the people whose work inspires you. Businesses, writings, art, whatever.
- come up with ideas for them. How can you help them?
- start doing your own work. Share with the people you like. Interact with the people who interact with you sincerely.
- try to meet the people who inspire you. Some of them are busy. Some would like to meet.
- go to conferences and meet the people who inspire you.
- every day work. Every day create. Every day share. The people you share with slowly solidify into your Scene.
- and then...repeat. Never stop helping.

Rumi, the 13th century mystic said, “Set your heart on fire and seek those who fan your flames.” Ponder that thought while you answer these questions:

1. With whom do you benchmark yourself?
2. Did you choose these people, or are they part of a peer group you fell into?
3. Name the five people who will contribute most to keeping you living like a leading man.

Your Money Thermostat Is Set by Your Upper Limits

Effective selling is transference of feeling. Mr. Skin *believed* his service was a bargain and promoted it with passion because he would have paid 50-fold for it. When his business took off, his deep-seated beliefs that he was entitled to more (as were his customers) fueled his company's growth. Others would have sabotaged success.

Gay Hendricks believes that most troubles in life are "upper limit" problems. In *The Big Leap*, he describes his thermostat theory. Just as a heater automatically turns off when it reaches its set point, we turn off once we reach the upper limit that we set—or that was set *for us*. Hendricks says that our thermostat gets programmed in early childhood, before we can think for ourselves. He cites a statistic that within two years of hitting the jackpot, more than 60 percent of lottery winners return to their prior net worth.

Even world-class poker players are notorious for "leaks" in their bankroll. It amazes me that some of the most disciplined rounders, who make millions from their ability to calculate odds, piss away their money playing craps when they know the odds are against them. Other common leaks, and this goes for everyone, range from jewelry to drugs to electronics. I offer the same advice to poker players as I do to anyone who wants to hold on to money: Plug your leaks.

That's where the power of belief systems comes in. You can't plug a leak until you know what is driving it. And even if you plug one, another will appear until the thermostat has its day. If compulsive shopping is driven by feeling unloved, understanding how credit card interest snowballs won't plug it. Research on compulsive gambling reveals it's a form of self-punishment. Hendricks would describe it as an upper limit problem, and anyone can see that self-worth is at the heart of it.

Upper limits are often set by other people's projections. Isabella, a professional model who is insecure about her looks, constantly asked her mom if she was pretty. This divine little girl was seeking validation from Mommy and what she got instead was, "Pretty like the butt of a pot." Isabella's mom has a belief system that telling kids they are pretty leads to vanity. And she may be right. Her intention of keeping Isabella's ego in check was effective. Just

ask her plastic surgeon and the pharmacist who doles out her anti-depressants. Parents and teachers who preach some variety of “don’t get too big for your britches” imprint their upper limits on their children and students. As leading men, we have the power to imprint what we believe and to break through old, limiting beliefs.

Your belief systems about money were influenced by the axioms most prominent in your upbringing. You may have heard thousands of times that “money is the root of all evil.” Maybe you were told the Bible actually says it’s the love of money that is the root of all evil or that it’s tougher for a rich person to make it to heaven. Either way, those are strong messages that influence your thermostat.

In his book, *The Trick to Money Is Having Some*, Stuart Wilde offered these fighting words: “All philosophies which teach that poverty is groovy, do so as a cop out. It keeps the non-performing members happy for they can live in the ego trip of thinking that somehow their lack of creativity and effort will be blessed at a later date.”

Everyone has a take and unless you get clear on your own take, you might be mistaking someone else’s truth for your own. Whose thoughts are you thinking right now?

Setting Your Own Thermostat

When you ask empowering questions, you replace the beliefs of others with beliefs that ring true for you. The first step in raising your thermostat is recognizing that you have a thermostat.

Start with these questions:

1. Do you have the power to change your thermostat?
2. Which people influenced your thermostat? How is that setting working for them?
3. Why do you want to change it? How will it improve your life?
4. What are you afraid of? How will your life change when you raise your limits?
5. Are you entitled to a privileged life? What about if you work for it?

As I said earlier, this can be the easiest thing in the world—or the hardest. Whether you think it’s easy or hard, you are right. Once you’ve asked these questions, just as you would move the knob on a thermostat, do it for your life. In this case the cliché fits. It is as simple as lifting a finger.

Or is it?

You can work on your subconscious mind, but the real trick is believing it and *being* it. You simply can’t think your way into being. The law of attraction states that your thoughts are made of pure energy and attract like energy. For all the techniques we’ve discussed, convincing yourself of beliefs is not always a linear, methodical process. To align your thoughts with your vision, it will require a conscious commitment.

It is up to you to decide if this is easy or hard. For now, let’s give Wayne Dyer, author of *The Power of Intention*, the last word on this: “I have a little bit of a different take on *The Secret*. We don’t attract what we want. We attract what we are.”

Poker Is a Hard Way to Make an Easy Living. Or is it?

My dad, a retired accountant and a medium-stakes poker player, delights in saying, “I never steer you wrong.” From the time I was eight years old, he played blackjack with Andy and me, teaching us basic strategy and emphasizing that you can’t beat the house. To this day, he loves to remind us that Las Vegas luminary Steve Wynn says, “If you want to make money in a casino, own one.”

My father’s words led me to major in Hotel Administration with an eye on the business end of casinos. I interned at the Mirage when I was 19, and even though I was more attracted to the sucker end of the business (being the player, rather than the house), I managed to beat the toughest poker games in Vegas. My dad was so concerned that my success taught me the wrong lesson that he kept repeating the poker proverb that it’s “a hard way to make an easy living.” He told me that when M.C. Hammer’s dad (*U Can’t Touch This* and *2 Legit 2 Quit* were big in those days) quit his job to play poker full-time, he couldn’t win. Even as I was proving to be a consistent winner, my dad kept explaining why it couldn’t last.

For every cliché, there is an equal and opposite one. The early bird catches the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese. Good things come to those who wait, but only what's left behind by those who hustle. I'm all for a good bumper sticker, but I'd rather you choose your beliefs than unconsciously live by the ones that others propagate.

Some people defend long-held beliefs to the point of absurdity (or insanity), rather than accept new, valuable information. The very survival of a belief system depends on continuing to find evidence to support it. My dad had a mountain of evidence to prove how hard it was to make a living playing poker because he looked for it—and missed seeing obvious examples to prove you can.

I now see he was projecting, but as a kid I viewed it as *the* truth, not just his truth. Even after years of success, my dad's words pushed down my upper limits. Let me rephrase: *Believing* my dad's words pushed down my upper limits.

Before I moved to Los Angeles in 1995 to play poker full-time, I had doubts about the decision. On the home-game circuit in Maryland, I played regularly with Jim Boyd, who had won tournaments in Las Vegas, and I wanted to know if a pro thought I had what it took. I had beaten the games in Maryland for a year, but it didn't undo all of my limiting beliefs. The culprits of seeking validation are *not knowing who we are* and *not believing in ourselves*. When I asked Boyd if he thought I could play professionally, I will never forget the incredulous look he gave me, which meant even more than his words, "Aren't you already playing professionally? I'd kill to have a piece of your action."

My dad's belief systems affected me—not so much that I couldn't win—but enough to push down my upper limits. It wasn't until I met Phil Gordon that one belief system would collide with another.

The Money Is at the Top

While promoting *The Poker MBA* in Las Vegas during the 2002 World Series of Poker (WSOP), I met gambling legend Amarillo Slim and ended up collaborating with him on his award-winning memoir, which was published by HarperCollins in the US and Random House in the UK (publishers need material!).

Frank and I followed that up by building a niche representing poker authors just as the game was exploding into the mainstream. One of our authors was Phil Gordon, co-host of *Celebrity Poker Showdown*, and a world-class poker player and entrepreneur. Phil is a leading man who teaches poker using my favorite technique: empowering questions. Little did I know the impact he would have on my thoughts.

Phil's mental approach to poker goes far beyond knowing when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em. While editing his manuscript on tournament poker, one concept kept surfacing: *The money is at the top*. Because most people want to win *something*, they play fearfully once they are close to any prize money. Phil explained how smart, aggressive players take advantage of those playing it safe, giving themselves a chance to make the real money—which goes to the top three spots. I didn't realize it at the time, but Phil was reprogramming my software.

Prior to 2006, the most I had ever won in a poker tournament was \$7,000. When Frank asked about our plans to attend the 2006 WSOP, I told him it wasn't worth it. The poker book market was saturated, making it a poor investment of time and money to search for more poker authors. Frank reasoned that it was more of a reward than an investment, and I ultimately agreed.

Since I had finally erased \$50,000 of credit card debt, I timed our trip so, in addition to networking, I could play in the \$1,000 7-Card Stud Hi-Lo event. As I had done any time I left New York, I sublet my apartment for \$900. Because, in my *mind*, I had already earned back the buy-in before the cards were dealt, it altered my mindset as the tournament progressed.

On July 24, 2006, the tournament started with 788 players. Back in 1995, after Boyd's validation, I had worked as a "prop" player at the Bicycle Casino and was paid \$25 an hour to play poker with my own money (The casino uses props to keep as many games going as possible and increase their rake). I played quite a bit of 7 Card Stud Hi-Lo and became a solid, but not world-class, player. Over the next 11 years, I had played the game fewer than a dozen times. Let's just say no one pegged me as one of the favorites to win. Many opponents viewed me as dead money. As expected, I was rusty and

hemorrhaged chips from the start.

On our first break, I went to the pool for yoga and breath work. It became my ritual for every break. I felt the physiological benefits, plus I reasoned that I was gaining an edge over opponents who were smoking and eating junk food. My actions influenced my beliefs and reinforced that I was more disciplined than my opponents.

I hunkered down and as the rust wore off, I accumulated chips. When we quit in the wee hours of the first day of a three-day tournament, we were down to 99 players and I had the eighth most chips. All I had to do was finish in 70th place, and I would earn \$1,793. I was in a position to wait for other players to bust out and be assured of winning my money back, plus \$793. But in my *mind*, I had already recouped all but \$100 of my investment. Because I had paid off all my credit card debt, I felt even freer.

You are in a stronger negotiating position when you come from a place of power—and that power comes from your *perception* of the situation. If you need the money, you'll be scared and tentative (which are, after all, feelings) and your adversaries will pick up on it. Even though I felt free, the temptation to lock in a modest slice of the prize money was strong, just as Phil had explained.

And then my new software kicked in—the screen “New Update” flashed in my mind—and there was Phil Gordon screaming, “The money is at the top!”

I made a conscious choice to avoid finding out the prize money for any place besides first. The only number I knew was \$172,091—the winner's share.

Just as Phil had described in his book, others began playing scared. I sought out the players who were running the “move up in prize money” software instead of “the money is at the top” software, and I attacked. At the end of day two, with nine players left—and only eight coming back the next day for the final table—fear ruled most of the other players. My mental computer, on the other hand, was running *the money is at the top*. I continued to attack and knocked out Dan Heimiller, who finished ninth and took home \$7,888. Heading into the final table, I was the chip leader.

On day three, I played aggressively from the start. Unfortunately, the cards didn't cooperate, and half my chips disappeared within the first hour. I did

manage to stay alive as four players were eliminated. The good news: I was guaranteed \$49,479 for fourth place, while third paid \$65,971, second paid \$102,542 and first paid \$172,091. The bad news: I had the fewest chips. The worst news: I had failed to block out all payouts besides the one for first place.

The reward for moving up one spot was more than \$16,000. *Maybe if I sit back and don't play any hands, someone else might lose their chips.* That software ran for about a second (a second too long?), then *the money is at the top* software clicked in and I continued to play to win. I knocked out Mark Bershad, said a silent thank you to Mr. Gordon, and we were down to three.

Two previous WSOP winners, Pat Poels and Jeff Madsen, were my remaining opponents. If you had asked me, at that moment, to rank the table, I would have said Poels was the best, I was second, and Madsen was third. For the next two and a half hours, none of us blinked. Television condenses an entire tournament to an hour or two because it's like watching paint dry: raise, fold, shuffle, deal; raise, fold, shuffle, deal. Finally, Pat and Jeff got involved in a big pot, and Jeff was all-in. If Pat won the pot, I was guaranteed an additional \$37,000. Pat would also have more than twice as many chips as me.

After Pat took down the pot, I was six figures richer than when the tournament began.

The Delusional Moneymaker

In 2003, a 27 year-old from Tennessee paid \$39 and won a satellite tournament online that earned him an entry into the \$10,000 main event of the WSOP. A man who had never played in a live poker tournament in his life was suddenly staring down Johnny Chan, back-to-back main event winner who was immortalized in the film, *Rounders*. This rank novice, Chris Moneymaker, lived up to his storybook name and took down the poker elite on his way to becoming World Champion.

Moneymaker made \$2.5 million and made an even bigger impact on the psyches of untold numbers of other fledging poker players by making them believe they could do the same. He said that, during the tournament, something clicked in his mind and he *believed* he could win. Given his inexperience, he

was deluding himself about the upper limits of an amateur—so much so that he won first place.

Delusional might be an even trickier word than entitled or privileged. We label dreamers as morons and imbeciles, only to redefine them as visionaries once they succeed and we witness the results. How many people do you think told Michael Dell, Larry Ellison, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg that they were delusional to think they could drop out of college and build multi-billion-dollar technology companies? My estimate is about as many who are scratching their broke asses wishing they had invested in them.



What about my tournament? Where was my upper limit? A few hands earlier, I believed that I was the second-best player behind Pat Poels. Then it was down to the two of us. I read him for a bluff when he raised with a queen showing and re-raised him with my pair of nines. I was right that he was bluffing. Unfortunately, my hand never improved, he caught another queen, and at three in the morning, I was eliminated.

I was devoid of emotion, as I had been the entire tournament. As I turned to walk away, a reporter from *Card Player* magazine asked me for an interview. I asked him to give me a few minutes, and I walked over to one of the abandoned tables.

Then I put my hands on my face and bawled like a baby. For five minutes, tears streamed out of my eyes like water from a fire hydrant. Was I happy? Sad? Relieved? Overwhelmed? After three days of displaying no emotion, it all flooded out of me. Then I collected myself and walked over to the reporter. He asked, “How do you feel?”

For the previous seven years, I had vacillated between broke and \$50,000 in debt. With a \$100 investment, I entered a poker tournament three days earlier and had just won \$102,542. So, of course, I didn’t have to think much

about my response.

“Disappointed,” I said, with tears in my eyes.

In retrospect, I was most disappointed in my *thoughts*. One could argue that my thoughts wouldn’t have changed the cards that were dealt—but they absolutely would have changed the way I played them. It’s not so much that I made tactical errors; it was more that I lacked a game plan—I didn’t have an *idea*—for how to beat Poels. At least I had learned a lesson from Moneymaker to convince myself—even *delude* myself—that I’m the best player in every tournament I enter.

You may have been told thousands of times to be realistic, that you’re not entitled to anything, and to keep your expectations in check. Now consider if all those projections are working for you. Ask yourself if you would be better off being delusional, raising your sense of entitlement, and increasing your upper limits. After all, those three thoughts may be the most significant elements to becoming a *moneymaker*.

Stories Are Organized Beliefs: Tell the Ones That Propel You

Facts are what happened. Stories are how we remember and explain them.

Fact: I earned \$102,542 for second place at the WSOP. Story: I succeeded because...

- I improved my health and had more energy and mental clarity than my opponents.
- I got my finances in order and didn’t need the money.
- I was open enough to assimilate Phil’s message that the money is at the top.

Because it was exactly two decades from the time I first played poker, I could have used these facts to reinforce the adage that “overnight success usually takes about 20 years.” Our minds grab on to events and organize them in ways that support our belief systems—whether or not those belief systems support us. If I had a negative view of myself, or the universe, I could reframe the same

facts in all sorts of stories:

- I lacked the confidence to finish first.
- A glimmer of success will make me feel even worse when I go broke again.
- Even a loser like me can catch lucky cards.

Those with disempowering belief systems can find a way to turn anything into bad news. The story I choose is that I made 100 grand because I took a holistic path and asked empowering questions to reprogram my beliefs and improve my habits. My inner state of abundance created an opportunity—one that I was able to seize due to my discipline and emotional intelligence—that led to external abundance.

Doesn't it make perfect sense for a holistic coach who writes a book about empowering questions to craft such a story? By asking questions, I made my business profitable, paid off my debt, hired Amelia as my health coach, sublet my apartment, and showed up for the tournament not needing to win. And the universe rewarded me. Or did I just catch lucky cards for three days?

We can view experiences from whatever lens we choose. There are many facts about your life. You'll process them better by asking these three questions:

1. What stories are you telling yourself about the facts in your life?
2. What stories are you telling others?
3. Are the narratives that you repeat over and over propelling or sabotaging you?

Lottery Winners and Paraplegics are Equally Happy: Say What?

For all the talk about raising our upper limits, let's avoid the trap of thinking that money solves all of our problems. I believe that our minds play the biggest role in our wealth, but anyone who quotes his "net worth" in dollars and cents has a limited view of his own value. The Peace Pilgrim, who walked more than 25,000 miles with no possessions, was on to something—especially now that airlines charge for checked luggage—when she said that everything you don't

need is a burden.

After my WSOP score, I didn't buy one new toy. It wasn't out of restraint. I didn't want anything. I've always viewed money as freedom tickets and viewed waste with disdain. When I returned to New York, I was still a slave to my inbox and found running the agency to be a grind. I wasn't any more or any less happy.

This might surprise you, but it makes perfect sense to psychologist Daniel Gilbert. In his TEDTalk, he says, "The fact is, a year after losing the use of their legs and a year after winning the lotto, lottery winners and paraplegics are equally happy with their lives."

In other words, if I had gone to Vegas and lost my legs instead of winning a hundred grand, Gilbert believes my happiness would have returned to its set point within a year. But I had *beaucoup dólares* and war stories to tell! I was the lead story on "Page Six" of the *New York Post*, which opened new doors. At a charity poker event in the Hollywood Hills, I played at the same table as *Old School* and *Hangover* director Todd Phillips, WSOP champion Jesus Ferguson, and Leonardo DiCaprio. I soon learned that cash, publicity, and even A-list name-dropping made *zero impact* on my happiness. Going all-in on his position, so to speak, Gilbert adds, "If it happened over three months ago, with only a few exceptions, it has no impact whatsoever on your life."

Gilbert was saying that what we *do* and *have* doesn't change how we *are*. What determines our happiness is the lens through which we view life (a fancy way of saying imagination), which is why Gilbert says we can "synthesize happiness." As for the poker windfall not making a difference, Gilbert was right. My life (if not my ego) was exactly the same as it was before Vegas. Having broken through my money limits, I still had work to do on my life limits. I chose to keep my mom's belief system that we're not entitled to anything. But I also started to believe that if I worked on it, I could live the delusional existence I was crafting for myself.

It's time to get even more tactical so that your thoughts propel you.

How to Reprogram a Belief System

List one *limiting* belief for each of the following:

- Money: (example) Money doesn't grow on trees.
- Health: (example) It's too expensive to eat healthy.
- Purpose: (example) Anything you do, after a while, is going to feel like a job.
- Relationships: (example) All relationships get stale and are unsustainable.

Now take each limiting belief through four steps:

1. Inquire. Ask yourself if the beliefs are true and if they're serving you. Reword them so that they support your mission and are true. You must believe what you are saying.
2. Find examples of others who exemplify beliefs that propel you.
3. Provide evidence that supports your beliefs.
4. Sustain your beliefs through words, visuals, and other affirmations using the senses.

Example:

Money doesn't grow on trees.

1. Is that true? Technically, yes, though if you own mango or avocado trees, you might think it does. Reword: I earn more than enough money to feel prosperous *because* I am talented, I work on my craft, and I am dedicated to providing value for others. Ask yourself if you really believe this? Keep revising until the statement is both true and propelling you.
2. List successful people in your field who are prosperous.
3. For evidence, make a statement that's true. *If this fits...* When I worked that job I thought I had to do, I earned a decent paycheck but always felt stressed, tired, and worried about money. When I did X, I always felt hopeful and had a better outlook about money.
4. Affirm using the senses. On my fridge, mirror, and screensaver, I see: I can earn more than enough money to feel prosperous because I am

talented, I work on my craft, and I am dedicated to providing value for others. I repeat this three times whenever I take a shower.



Is changing your thoughts easy or hard? You decide. Either way, leading men commit daily to making sure their thoughts propel them.

QUESTION FIVE:
HOW DO THOUGHTS PROPEL ME?
More Empowering Questions

1. List belief systems that propel you using statements that you believe and that include the word because for:
 - a. Money:
 - b. Health:
 - c. Purpose:
 - d. Relationships:

2. List the five people you spend the most time with. Now list the five that most embody the life you want. How will you make those lists the same?

3. Rewrite your ideal day beyond your previous upper limits as if you are entitled, privileged, and delusional.



If your mind is in the right place and you are working hard to no avail, perhaps you need to sharpen your saw, find a new saw, or find an approach that has nothing to do with a saw. In other words, you need to find the *tools* that uniquely suit you.