

WHY CAN'T I CHANGE WHEN I WANT TO ?!!!

Peeling the Onions of Life to Better Understand Yourself.

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At some time in our life we have all decided that we want to change in some way - the way we do something, the way we react to something, the way we feel about something, the way somebody can "push our buttons," or a habit. We look at what that is, we decide how we want it to be different, and we work on making the change. Only to find that the next time we are in a particular situation, we do things the same old way. Then we may be frustrated and disappointed, and even quite angry with ourselves. Why didn't the change stick? What happens that makes us revert to our old ways, even when we really want to change, and have worked to make the change? The answer is **ONIONS**. What do I mean by onions? I mean beliefs - actually belief onions. Let's look at what beliefs are and how they work.

A belief is a very strong feeling that something is true. It is a **feeling** of certainty. When we believe something, we are absolutely certain that it is true. We don't question it or doubt it. **BELIEFS** determine the way we see ourselves and the world, the way we react, the way we behave, and the way we feel. Once a belief is formed, we don't have to be consciously aware of it. It is so powerful that it can do its job from the subconscious mind. It is just there, affecting everything that happens to us, and we are no longer aware of it. Some beliefs that affect us most, were formed when we were children, and have been in the subconscious mind since then, affecting us every day. Now, where do the onions come into it?

LAYERS, that's where. Our beliefs are inside layers of **feelings**. To bring a belief that has been in the subconscious mind, into conscious awareness, we usually have to go through a few layers of feelings, like peeling one layer off an onion, at a time. **So, what do our "belief onions" have to do with our ability to change?**

The reason we do things the way we do is mainly because of our beliefs. If we want to change, we have to change our beliefs. To change our beliefs, we have to be aware of what they are. We are often not aware of beliefs we formed in childhood. Most of us think we know what we believe, but we usually have quite a few beliefs we are not aware of. For example, every child develops a **survival belief** when they are very young. It goes like this - "To survive here I have to" Each child has his or her own unique belief about what they have to do to survive in their particular situation. It is formed very early in life, by a child's mind. Most of us are completely unaware of our survival belief and how it affects our life as an adult. The survival belief is usually inside several layers of feelings, and those layers of feelings have to be peeled away to bring that core belief into awareness. How do we do this?

An effective paring knife for peeling these onions is a small set of questions you work with. Start with a concrete situation. For example, you know that every time you talk to a certain person, (e.g., your boss, your brother, your mother) you feel angry, or hurt, or frustrated, and you want to change that. You have probably already figured out that you can't change the other person. So how do you change your reaction? Start with the first feeling that you feel. It might be anger. Ask yourself "**Why** do I feel angry?" Explore the answer, trying to stay with feelings. When you have an answer, then ask yourself "**Why** do I feel that? **Why** does that matter? **Why** do I care about that?" Let the answer come into your awareness, again staying with feelings. If

you can't **feel** anything, it isn't a real layer of the onion. It is your logical mind trying to reason things out, and sometimes, your feelings don't have anything to do with what your logical mind thinks. If you continue with this process, you will come to the core belief, and when that happens, it often feels like a light bulb has gone on. It can be one of those "Ah Hah!" experiences, of insight into oneself.

Once you are aware of the belief that is behind your reaction, you now know what to work on, to bring about the changes you want. Achieving that awareness can be the hardest part of the work. Keeping that belief in your conscious mind, gives you options you don't have when it is on automatic pilot, in the subconscious mind. The next time you are in that type of situation, it can make an enormous difference to tell yourself, that the reason you have reacted a certain way is because of your belief. Say the belief to yourself. See the connection between your belief and your reaction, and how that makes you perceive the other person. Then ask yourself how you would like to be able to react. What belief would enable you to react that way? What would that belief **feel** like?

By becoming aware of the beliefs that affect you, by practicing how a different belief would feel, and by practising how you would react from the new belief, you have some very powerful tools to help you make the changes you want to make.

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