

Reevaluating the Past

Now that we've finished the first module, you must know a lot about yourself! But, knowing yourself means having true beliefs about yourself. This may be hard to take in, but ***it's completely possible that some of the things you believe about yourself aren't true at all!***

On our journey to be authentic, it's smart to observe your past and realize how it has affected your self-concept.

Everyone has some part of their past with negative experiences. Some of these experiences were our own fault, while others were not. ***What's most relevant is how the experiences of the past are understood. How have you interpreted them?*** It's challenging not to assign meaning to these experiences, but is the meaning that's been assigned true? More importantly, is it useful?

There are many signs that you're not using your past helpfully:

1. **You continue making the same mistakes.** The past should be useful. From the past, we learn what works and what doesn't, if the experience is interpreted correctly.
2. **You ignore your past.** Easy to do but has negative drawbacks. Time doesn't heal all wounds. Healing heals all wounds. If there's something in your past you feel the desire to forget, it's hurting you in the present.
3. **You've taken on the same negative attitudes, beliefs, or behavioral characteristics from your parents.** Do you have the same short temper your father had? Do you lie excessively like your mother? Do you mistrust rich people? Beliefs and attitudes that you didn't choose for yourself can be harmful to your self-image.
4. **A single negative experience is affecting your belief system today.** These experiences likely to occur in childhood but aren't limited to your early years.

For example: you didn't do well in art class in 4th grade.

You have the conclusion that:

- You have zero artistic ability.
- Your art teacher didn't like you.

- Your art teacher wasn't a good teacher.
- You're not a good person because you're not good at creating art.
- You lack any creative abilities.
- You're not good at learning new skills.
- You're not very smart.

And it can get worse from there.

Suppose one of your classmates made fun of your drawing in art class.

- I'm not good enough.
- People don't like me.
- I shouldn't let anyone see my artwork in the future.
- I will be reserved and cautious, so I will not be exposed to any criticism.

It's easy to see how negative and inaccurate beliefs can develop from negative experiences. These beliefs can influence every part of your life.

“Love yourself first and everything else falls into line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world.”

- Lucille Ball

Determine if your past is negatively affecting your self-concept:

1. **Make a list of your beliefs about yourself.** Focus on negative beliefs. Include all areas of your life where you feel limited or disappointed. Some examples are:
 - I'm not good with money.
 - No one will hire me.
 - I'll never had a good relationship.
 - I can't lose weight.
 - I don't have any self-control.
2. **Question your belief.** Most of your beliefs aren't justified if you examine them closely. This is an important step.
 - Where did this belief come from? Is the source reliable?
 - Is it based on enough evidence? One experience usually isn't enough. Touching a hot stove is enough experience to draw a valid conclusion. One failed attempt at dating or starting a business is

not.

- Is the belief reasonable?
3. **What is the belief is costing you?** Mistaken beliefs can cause a lot of damage. What are the beliefs you hold about yourself costing you?
- A lack of confidence.
 - Lower income.
 - Fewer friends or an unhappy social life.
 - The belief that your options are limited to change your life.
 - Overall unhappiness with yourself or your life.
4. **Choose a different belief.** Choose a belief that is closer to reality and supports a healthy self-image. “No one likes me” can be “I am able to make friends easily”.
5. **Find evidence.** For example: Remember a time in your life when your social life was more active. It’s only logical that if you can make a couple of friends, you can also make numerous friendships.
- **Convince yourself that your new belief is possible.**

It’s common to be limited by the past. ***We may not consider that many of our beliefs about ourselves are based on false evidence.*** There was a time in your life that you didn’t walk or read well. Does that mean you can’t do either well today? The human brain needs to assign meaning to everything that happens.

Sometimes that meaning is incorrect. Sometimes there is no meaning at all.

Do you have mistaken beliefs that are negatively affecting your self-esteem?

In the next portion of this self-concept makeover project, we’ll work further on building your self-esteem.

Here’s what you need to do today:

Please go through this important process of reevaluating your past by completing the steps in your journal:

1. Make a list of your negative beliefs about yourself. Then, focus on one belief at a time.
2. Question your belief.
3. Determine what the belief is costing you.

4. Choose an alternate belief.
5. Find evidence of your new belief.



Venus Warriors