

# **BELIEFS**

## **AND HOW TO CHANGE THEM**



**A MANUAL  
OF METHODS  
FOR CHANGING  
BELIEFS IN  
OURSELVES  
AND OTHERS**

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# **Beliefs and How to Change Them**

**A manual of methods for changing  
beliefs in ourselves and others**

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**Excerpts from the book**

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## Why Write a Book on Changing Beliefs?

**(Page 3)** Long ago, I began studying something called Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP. NLP made some pretty incredible claims about what it could do. One of the claims that most fascinated me was that NLP could influence people’s limiting beliefs. I first learned to do this at a very small scale, and practiced my skills by working in sales. I convinced people they needed to buy something. I kept my integrity – I never sold people things they didn’t want or need. It became frighteningly easy to sell people things, and I resigned because I knew too much about influencing people’s buying beliefs. Besides – I had bigger fish to fry! In those days, I worked full-time with the criminally insane in a large state mental health center. It was one thing to be able to convince a housewife to buy a telephone answering machine. But I wanted to be able to convince someone who thought it was “cool” to kill people that it was actually BAD to kill people. THAT is why I learned this stuff. I practiced and practiced, and I got pretty good at it. However, while many of my patients changed and got better/stable, I never did quite master the art of convincing a judge I never saw or talked to that the client was now stable and ready to be discharged. So the patient’s got better, but it didn’t help them at all. They were still in the hospital. I left to move on to bigger and better things.

I most certainly did not learn these techniques overnight. I worked hard, practiced, experimented, screwed-up, got lucky, cried in frustration, gave-up a few times, got back into it, persisted, and finally I decided this was incredibly useful material for the world.

I became absolutely convinced that the world needed to learn techniques for understanding and changing harmful beliefs in themselves and others on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. On that date, I witnessed the impact of some people who actually believed that driving airplanes into buildings full of civilians was in some way a good thing to do. I cried a lot. I felt shocked that there could be that much hate, prejudice, and intentional hurt in the world. Then I decided to finish this book, in hopes that it would help change things for the better.

## Overview of the Book

**(Page 9)** Have you ever noticed that people believe strange things? Having worked with the severely mentally ill, I have met people with some of the most bizarre beliefs in the world. Let me tell you about some bizarre beliefs, and use your imagination to “try them on.” Please also be sure to “take them off” after your experiment!

I met a person who believed if a certain pattern of letters and numbers occurred in a license plate ahead of them, then God was giving them a special message telling them to kill the driver of that car. Now imagine if you believed that, and your best friend was borrowing a friend’s car that just happened to have the fateful pattern. What would you do?

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I met other people who believed the government was following them and trying to kill them, and they would look around the room and “find” microphones and bugs. I knew it was a thermostat – but they knew with equal certainty it was a microphone. Everybody has at least “moments of paranoia” when they think people are talking about them, or are planning something. It is a MOST unpleasant feeling – especially if it persists!

I met people who thought their mind was being read by other people, and they would line a hat with aluminum foil to interfere with the “brain waves” they believed they were transmitting. Now imagine if you believed this, and someone in the hospital came up to you and said they wanted to take an EEG! (An electronic measurement of the activity of your brain.)

I also met people who thought having the skin on their back split open with a sword or bullwhip was the most sexually exciting thing in the world. And they weren’t patients in any mental health facility. Nor were the people who thought that the government was going to take away all of their civil rights and they needed to buy and store as many guns and weapons as possible because the government was going to come to their house to take away those civil rights. In fact, all of those people were employees of that mental health facility!

Have you ever been around people who had completely different beliefs than your own for any length of time? People’s beliefs have a profound impact on their behavior. If you believe that you are part of a chosen group that is most certainly going to heaven because of specific things you believe, you don’t have to be nice to anyone or put up with their lack of thinking like you. In fact, some groups use this as a reason to kill people who don’t think the way they do. And that has been going on for thousands of years. Or, maybe you believe you have to be good to people and nice to them in order to get into heaven. Or maybe you don’t believe in heaven at all.

As you learn about “Beliefs and How to Change Them,” you can learn to influence people’s beliefs, and even learn how to change them. I ask that you keep in mind two very important guidelines: **“Good beliefs” are beliefs that get people to treat other people with loving kindness and caring, or at least do no harm. Bad beliefs are beliefs that get people to treat others with hatred, hurt, or cold indifference.** Beliefs that enhance separateness are indeed a tremendous challenge to the world. I have no interest in helping people decide on any “truths.” If that is why you got this book, you may as well attempt to return it. If you think you are going to change people’s beliefs to agree with your own, I hope you will read this book and learn why that is absolutely unnecessary. But when you see people using their beliefs as a reason or excuse to treat other people badly, I hope you will use the skills and methods in this book to help them change and shift those beliefs. That way, we can all work together to make the world a nicer place to live for everyone who lives here on the planet.



## The Three Sources of Beliefs

**(Page 30)** It is this writer’s belief that **believing is one of the most random events in the universe**. In other words, who decides our facts and who decides our fictions is a completely arbitrary process, though we all rely on a “feeling of certainty.”

I like to think of beliefs being formed or “sculpted” over time. Sometimes they form slowly, and sometimes they form quickly. There seem to be three main ways that beliefs are formed.

1.) One of the ways people learn to believe information is when it is repeatedly “tapped” into them on a frequent basis – in other words, by their **culture or environment**. Being raised in any kind of family delivers to us a set of values and “ideals.” We often spend our lives trying to fulfill (or trying to rebel against) our parents’ values. Either way, the beliefs and values in which we are immersed are often adopted unconsciously. By living in a commune or belonging to a church, being around others who share our beliefs helps to reinforce and to shape them. This is like sculpting by using little, persistent chips.

One interesting aspect of this cultural influence is that “cultural carriers” such as newspapers, magazines and television inherently value certain messages and simply do not carry other messages. Nobody on the evening news will ever tell you, “Everything is alright. You are safe. All is right in the world. Have a good night.” But certainly they would love to inform you of the latest threats to your well-being that they have uncovered! Our culture tells us a great deal about what to consider important, and what to ignore. Unfortunately, the values that our culture thereby labels as important are not always useful for us as individuals or as a society.

## Changing Beliefs Using NLP Models

### Honesty and Ethics

**(Page 71)** If you work with belief shifting, you need to be ethical and honest in your work. Asking strategic questions of your clients does most of the shifting. When you ask and answer questions, you help to build their confidence in you as an expert. Also, as an expert, the information you give to your client or customer will be given a “special status” called, “factual, truthful, believable” information. As an expert, and as a person in an assisting role, you must be very careful to only give your client truthful information. It is perfectly acceptable to say, “I don’t know.” This is because your “information” is still reliable – you have informed the person that you do not know the answer. But if you instead falsify information, your client will detect it unconsciously in your communication. While we utilize the tools of ethical influence to assist others in accepting opinions and ideas, you never want to use these tools to disguise or distort facts. This would destroy the trust and rapport that is so vital to any beneficial interaction.

The most important aspect of changing beliefs is not how to CHANGE a belief, but what target belief to shift the belief INTO in its place! When you change a belief, you leave a “void,” and that void must be filled in by another belief. (Notice the underlying metaphor of containers in those last statements?) In other words, if you simply change a belief, you never know how that change will impact the larger system – the person! This is the notion in NLP of ecology – how does this change impact the larger system of the person and their environment. If you simply change a belief, sometimes you can disrupt a very essential belief in the person’s belief structure. This can have very powerful positive or negative effects.

## Changing Beliefs Using Sub-Modalities

**(Page 80)** Of all the different models in NLP, I believe that the submodalities model has the broadest applications. You will easily find a million different ways to use this model, once you begin to master the subtle nuances of how to work with it. There is a very “overt” side to working with submodalities that is taught in almost any advanced NLP training. You can learn techniques for working with different problems, and for maximizing motivation and commitment. There are also a huge number of very subtle aspects to submodalities work that I was taught in Design Human Engineering™ training.

## Weakening Beliefs with NLP Models

**(Page 91)** Let’s start with ways to utilize NLP models and language to weaken beliefs that the client has identified that they want to change.

We will first teach you statements to weaken a belief, and then patterns to strengthen beliefs with language. We do this because you often want to weaken a current belief, then introduce and presuppose a more ecological belief when you are doing belief change, rather than trying to just “overpower” the old belief. There are several additional ways to weaken or strengthen beliefs that do not involve language.

### Weakening Beliefs with Submodalities

Ask them about something they used to believe, something they feel uncertain about, or something they feel doubtful about. Look for gestures, glances or other non-verbal submodality cues that indicate “where” in the space around them do they “store” things they don’t really believe.

## Changing Beliefs with Language

**(Page 92)** One of the fastest and easiest ways to influence beliefs is to utilize language skills that are specifically designed to influence others. In fact, the remainder of this book will focus on using language patterns in strategic ways to help you influence beliefs.

There are two main categories of belief shifting language patterns. The first is generally aimed at helping to weaken or “challenge” limiting beliefs. The second set of language patterns is generally aimed at helping to “install” or “strengthen” beliefs.

From the very beginning I became fascinated with why some patterns worked well with some people, and other patterns worked well with other people. Nobody could tell me what the “difference that made a difference” was in this context. It took me four years of studying, experimenting, working and playing to finally discover some patterns, and one of the reasons for writing this book was to make my observed patterns explicit.

One of the ways I practiced these patterns was by taking a single pattern, and using it over and over again all day long. The next day, I would take a different pattern and use only that pattern all day long. This helped prevent my only using the patterns that worked for myself, and helped me to realize the different patterns that work with different types of people. It is also why I developed the NLP practice cards I sell. These practice cards include examples of a programmed learning via color and font structuring that I developed as part of my thesis in Education in their design as well, to help you learn the categories and notice some new distinctions. **(Excerpt Note: The practice cards and the full book teach the categories of the different language patterns – and these categories of language patterns are not taught by ANYBODY else, as I discovered them myself by my immersion in the information!)**

## Beliefs That Could Change the World

**(The remainder of this excerpt is pages 159-173, or the last two sections of the book.)** Please carefully note that I am not in any way saying anything about TRUTH. Truth and believing are two very different things. Truths are beliefs that people have that are simply facts in their world, and (they believe) nothing can change them. It has been said that truth is unchanging. If you have been alive more than 25 years, you have probably had your own truths change several times. We could define truths for our purposes as beliefs that people absolutely will NOT allow you to alter, and simultaneously beliefs they will dislike you for questioning or trying to change. In fact, the best definition I can come up with for truth is simply beliefs that people become extremely emotional about. But if truths are facts about the world, facts can be shared and explained to others, and people can be made to understand the truth of the facts without the need for anger, hostility, threats or demands. Facts can “stand on their own.”

I suggest that in the interest of surviving as human beings, that we all come to an agreement that **the more emotional a person becomes about their beliefs, the less likely those beliefs**

**are to be true, or based on facts.** I am voting for an approach of “pure reasoning” versus “emotional forcing.” I fully understand that people get very emotional about their beliefs, but as a big group of beings living together on the planet, we cannot decide what is true and what is not true simply on the basis of who gets the most worked up, who gets the biggest gun, or who can “convert” the largest number of people to their way of thinking. If we look at history, this has gotten us into trouble many, many times. Instead, truth needs to be calmly presented to people, perhaps even presupposed to them. But the more emotional a person becomes about their beliefs, the more you should begin to doubt them.

The fact is we are all human and living here in a big, huge community called, “Planet Earth.” We have been running enough experiments on people and rats and monkeys over the ages to learn some very significant ideas. Certain things help to keep order in societies and systems, and other things help to create destruction and disorder.

### **Three Beliefs that Could Destroy the World:**

#### **1.) “Some people are just ‘better quality people’ than others.”**

This is the basis of racism and sexism. We (that means ALL human beings) have much more in **common** than we have different about us. When we focus on how we are similar, we help to build rapport and understanding. We all have different abilities developed, different “strengths” and different weaknesses, but overall, we have a lot in common. We need to be proud of our uniqueness, celebrate how we have developed a particular skill or ability – but we need to stop quickly when we try to think that this makes us “better quality” in some way than another person or another group of people.

One way we build prejudice is by ascribing particular qualities to different races of people. I remember growing up in a city that had a huge Mexican population. (To this day my heart “warms” when I hear Spanish spoken in a Mexican accent, as it reminds me of home!) It was very common for me to hear the phrase, “Those lazy Mexicans...” As I got to know more and more of the Mexican people in my community, I discovered that most of them worked at LEAST two jobs, often lived crowded together to save money, and saved and saved all week so they could send their hard-earned money back to Mexico to support their families - and they were VERY thankful to have the chance to do that! I actually believed as a young child that the word lazy meant, “Works two jobs!” I kept thinking, “People seem angry about laziness. Why is it so bad to have two jobs?” (I.e. – I picked up on the emotional tag on the laziness belief, but didn’t understand why having two jobs was bad.)

Whenever we decide one “group” or “type” of person is better than another, we are truly ignorant. Generalizations like that simply don’t hold up in light of facts. One of the purposes of enforced integration is so that people have the opportunity to interact with others from different groups and races. Sooner or later, you will begin to discover that those “thems” are an awful lot like “us.” In fact, as long as you keep your eyes and your heart open, you will begin to discover that people are very, very similar. We all have likes and dislikes, and we all have abilities and limitations. They run the entire gamut. If you allow yourself to interact with other people long enough, you find there is “one in every crowd,” no

matter what “group” that crowd is made up of. But that one jerk does not define a quality present in everyone in the group.

Furthermore, any time someone tells you “this group is better than that group,” you can pretty much bet that they are a member of the “better” group! If they have to build themselves up by tearing someone else down, then their sense of, “I’m an okay person” is probably not strong enough to stand on its own. If they tell you they are better than some other group or type of person, you can most certainly bet they are not. But I don’t recommend pointing this out to them.

If we absolutely have to have prejudice, then I want to build some new prejudices – positive prejudices! Let’s try to find the **good** things that different cultures and people do, and be “positively prejudiced” instead of negatively. Which group feeds you the best and the most food? Which group loves their children more than any other? Which group is most tolerant of stupid ideas? Which group will help you no matter what the cost? Which group shares resources best? It is STILL prejudice, but at least it is a different flavor! (Non-bitter!)

## 2.) **“You must believe what I believe in order for us to get along.”**

What people believe and how people behave are two different things. I may object completely to what another person believes, but as long as they don’t hurt other people with their beliefs - don’t lead others into creating more hate in the world - then I support them in having the freedom to think whatever they want to think. We need to stop trying to control people’s beliefs, and focus on controls for harmful and damaging behaviors. It is pretty simple to decide on the most basic harmful and damaging behaviors. And this writing down of such guidelines has been going on since ancient cultures like the Sumerians.

## 3.) **“My God is the REAL God, and if you don’t believe me, God and I both hate you.”**

For myself, this is a classic example of what I call, “Silly Human Ignorant Thinking.” (Makes for a nice acronym too!) Religion is supposed to be about LOVE – at least that is what I was taught and believed since I was a child. I could feel it in my church, I could feel it when we sang together, and I could feel it in my heart when I prayed. So I am quite sure, based on my own experience rather than any specific teaching or dogma. Unfortunately, as we have come through the ages, we have distorted religion into “Laws about what to hate.” I like to think God really meant, “Laws about what you should avoid so you can survive together more easily.”

I remember seeing in a magazine a protest group in Washington D.C. One of the protesters was holding up a sign that said, “GOD HATES \_\_\_\_\_!” (No need to fill in the blank!) I remember absolutely cracking up laughing, just totally roaring with laughter, and holding onto my rocking stomach because I couldn’t believe that somebody could be so stupid as to believe that God would “hate” something or someone. Then I looked at my parents, and they were looking at me with the utmost seriousness. My father began to explain to me why he

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thought it was true. Even though I respected him as an authority and a wise man, I knew in the deepest part of my being that my God did not hate anything or anyone.

A recent book summarized it beautifully. Allegedly, God sarcastically said to someone, “Sure! I gave man free will, and I get pissed off when he actually USES it. Yeah, right!” That just plain doesn’t make sense. I like to think of it this way – we are all God’s children, and he decided not to put a fence in the back yard. So he lets us run all over the place and do anything we want. Some of us go racing like lemmings off of cliffs. Some of us smack the other kids in the yard. Some of us sit down, hold hands and work to make each other feel good and grow together. Either way, we are all his children.

Any parent who has a little bratty monster for a child will tell you; you gotta love the brats too! If that human parent can do that, don’t you think God can too?

You can take anything in the world, and help make the world a better place by celebrating it, promoting it, loving it and working to share it with others. Even if it is a totally wacky idea, you still can do a minimum amount of damage if you stick with “promoting what you want” versus “destroying what you don’t want.”

If your religion brings you peace and joy and happiness, then let your whole life express peace and joy and happiness. Then people will come up to you and ask you why/how you are so happy, and you have the perfect opportunity to welcome them into your way of life or thinking. The biggest batch of opposition I have encountered in teaching belief work is from Christians who fear I will somehow destroy their truths – and they most often respond with hatred, threats and hostility. I have read the Bible cover-to-cover six times, and I don’t remember reading that as a “recommended plan of Christian action” anywhere! And worse yet, they never even bother to ask me if I am a Christian in the first place!

George Carlin said it beautifully in his typical terse style: “Religion is like a lift in your shoes. It’s okay if you want to wear lifts in YOUR shoes, but don’t go nailing lifts onto the native’s feet!”

And the bottom line is, even if you ARE right about your God being the only real God, I’ll find out just a moment or two after I die anyway.

### **Three Beliefs that Could Save the World:**

#### **1.) “There is something good in every single person.”**

To which I like to add, “And something good in every married person as well.” I add the word single to point out there are no exceptions. One of my most foundational beliefs (widest scope) is that there is something good in every person. My many years of experience in counseling and treating the criminally insane tested this belief to no end! However, there was always at least one redeeming quality - even in the worst criminals with whom I worked.

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Even if it was just that they loved one small child somewhere, or at the very least, that they could do good physical labor.

For the rest of my life, I will always remember being out in a locked and guarded courtyard with a team of mental health staff, supervising a basketball game that the patients were playing that was “getting out of hand.” Here was a group of serial killers, rapists, thieves and torturers playing an absolutely VISCIOUS game of basketball. There were guys leaving the game bleeding, and some of the staff were discussing cutting the basketball game off – which was not going to be an easy thing to do! Suddenly, ALL of the players on the far north end of the basketball court (where the ball was being dribbled across some downed player’s chest) began shouting, “WHOA!! HO! STOP!! HOLD IT!!!” The players all FROZE in position. A mother duck and her four chicks marched from their nest in the corner of the courtyard over to a large puddle at the other end of the courtyard, and for a brief moment, all of the playing stopped, all the violence stopped, and the baby ducks ran through this “corridor of violence.” Everyone was laughing out loud, because the mother duck appeared to be yelling at everyone on either side as she led her kids through the mayhem. The game then resumed, almost – but not quite – as vicious as it had been a moment before! With all of our planning, prompting and hoping to get the players to calm down – it simply “happened” by the introduction of a bunch of baby ducks.

Everyone has something good about them or inside of them. Some people work very hard to keep it covered, but we need to trust it is there and work to “highlight” it in them. I discovered early on in working at that hospital that the most effective counselors had an “image” in their mind of the patient being more sane and better behaved than they currently were. Somehow, the patient always seemed to sense this high expectation, without it ever being verbally communicated. And they tried to live up to that expectation.

**2.) “What I do, think and feel makes a difference in the world.”**

You can never know the full impact you have on your environment, but what you do makes a difference. If we each take more responsibility for our own behavior and the impact it has on others, we can make it through this world together. We can also learn how important it is to help others instead of throwing up barriers and difficulties for them.

I remember going to the grocery store one day, and I had been job hunting. I was horribly, horribly depressed. I felt like nobody wanted me. I was quickly running out of money, and I was having trouble concentrating. I even swallowed back tears as I went into the grocery store. I went to the grocery store just to get some food with the little money I had left. When I walked in, a young girl behind the service counter looked at me with a huge smile and said, “Hi! How are you today?” Her smile was so warm, so friendly, so inviting – not seductive or “forceful.” Just a smile. I felt like a thousand pound weight was immediately lifted off of my chest. I smiled back at her and said, “I’m fine, how about you?” She grinned and said to me, “I’m fine. And thanks for the smile!” I kept grinning and said, “You probably recognize this smile – because I just caught it from you!” She laughed, and went about her work. I’m sure she was just “feeling friendly,” but her smile stayed with me. In a single moment, she

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lifted a depression that had been building for weeks. I was amazed at the impact she had on me. And I’m sure she had no clue.

If you are feeling like the whole world is against you, and somebody politely lets you in his or her lane in traffic, it can change you. I am in total support of the “Random Acts of Kindness” campaign, because sometimes very simple acts of kindness can impact a person at a time when they are forming important beliefs, and it “flavors” or influences those beliefs in a positive way. You don’t have to be “Mother Theresa” or be always kind to people in order to have a positive influence. The more people there are out there acting randomly kind, the more kindness there will be in the world. We can’t just “hope” the world will change in some direction. We have to live the kind of life where what we want to find in the world around us comes out from ourselves! Only then can we expect it from other people.

### 3.) **“Love and compassion are the most powerful and positive forces in the universe.”**

Whatever you love, love it deeply, dearly and intensely. Live your life as if you were always standing in the presence of someone or something you love. That will help you avoid acting in hateful ways. If you are wondering if you should do something or not do something, imagine later that day telling your children, your spouse, or even your “dream lover” about what you are doing and why you are doing it. If it involves a lengthy explanation of why you are doing it, you may want to think twice before acting.

It is one of my beliefs that our feelings and emotions have an actual “influence” on the world around us. I actually believe that if I feel loving feelings and stand next to a plant or another person, without saying or doing anything else, I am having a positive impact on them. I also believe that if I stay in a loving state inside myself, I am much more able to interconnect with people and more able to absorb and transmute some of the negative influences I encounter.

## **An Amazing Fact about Cooperation**

There is a very interesting book called, “Games of Life” by Karl Sigmund. [Oxford University Press, Inc., New York NY, 1993] Sigmund is a mathematician, and the book is about applying the mathematics of game theory to ecology, evolution, relationships and other areas. In it he describes computer models of cooperation and competition. One of the most intriguing aspects of this book is that the amazing genius who wrote it has an excellent sense of humor. He makes jokes out of complicated mathematical discoveries.

I would love to devote pages to clarification, but the bottom line is – cooperation between parties to achieve goals is FAR more beneficial than the attitude or the behaviors of cheating or competition. Even if a person want to lie, cheat and steal their way through life, they may get some temporary benefit from these behaviors, but in the long run they would have fared much better with cooperative behaviors than their uncooperative behaviors.

Somehow, this fact has not soaked into the minds of people living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I believe it is beginning to seep through to many people, but is not yet all that mainstream. What is humorous about this is that the immense power of cooperation and pushing



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simultaneously in the same direction with united force so easily and clearly outweighs the benefits that cheating and not cooperating produces, that anybody who learns to understand the mathematics of that benefit would be quickly converted to cooperation. But at this point in time, many people think that “Joining hands to cooperate is a bunch of tree-hugging hippie crap! I have to FIGHT my way to the top! If you have something I want, I have the right to do ANYTHING I want to do to get it.” While this has been an almost accepted way of thinking in our culture, the impact of such behaviors on the larger society is extremely damaging on all levels.

There is a project called, “The Venus Project.” The people involved in this project have not just discovered the value of cooperation, but they are forming a sort of alternative culture and society in which cooperation is foundational. Several billionaires have been keeping their eye (and a lot of their money) on/in this organization, and I hope that their experiment is a tremendous success. Visit [www.thevenusproject.com](http://www.thevenusproject.com) for more information.

Another guiding source of cooperative efforts is the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, which is collection of 17 global goals developed by leaders from 193 countries and organized by the United Nations in 2015. The categories of goals include things like No Poverty, End Hunger, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and sanitation. You can download a copy of the document at:

[www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals)

I have my own project aimed at supporting the “Good Health and Well Being” category called, “The Tribe of Nines<sup>sm</sup> Project.” It is my goal to teach 10,000 people my class I call, “The Shifting Memories Method<sup>sm</sup>.” I am disgusted that nobody has stepped up to support veterans and other people with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and the medical insurance companies refuse to support non-medical treatment methods or reimburse therapists for working with anything less than the most severe PTSD cases. You can find out more about this project at [www.expandingenterprises.com](http://www.expandingenterprises.com).

## Changing Generalizations about People and Groups

Whenever you hear strong emotional negative beliefs about groups of people coming from someone, remember to stay calm, and comment on their emotional state, **not their belief**. You want to help people separate out their emotions from the belief. If their emotional state is extremely strong, just work to stay in a loving state within yourself. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is “stand in the face of hate” and just let it blow past you like wind. You don’t have to do anything else. You do not have to have a good comeback, solve their problem, or otherwise change their hate. Sometimes, just letting them fester in their negative emotions makes them more aware of their emotions. Many people just like to be fired up emotionally about something. I believe this is the purpose of sports – to offer people

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a reason to scream and cheer and get excited, about an activity they are just observing passively! So for many people, talking about things that anger them is actually a very pleasant experience. Again, staying calm makes their extreme state a mismatch for your interaction, and by not following their lead, you are leading them back into a calmer state.

Next, you may want to discover their “meta-outcome.” The meta-outcome is, “What they want behind what they want.” For example, let’s say a person has decided they hate Martians, and they want all the Martians out of the world. You simply ask them, “What’s important to you about having all the Martians gone?” Or, you can ask, “What would having all the Martians gone do for you?” They might reply, “There would be fewer lazy people in the world.” You then respond, “So what you really want is to have fewer lazy people in the world.” You could even explore, “Well, how does Martian laziness impact you in YOUR world? Do you work with a lot of these lazy Martians? Is your daughter dating one? How is this a problem for you?” This is shrinking the frame from a generalization about “all Martians” to just the Martians in their world.

If you know them at all, you may know the location in which they store not-true beliefs, and you can repeat their belief back to them, while gesturing moving the belief toward the “not-true zone.” You can also gently but carefully challenge their belief by using the sleight-of-mouth patterns listed in this book.

Another fabulously powerful way for people to overcome prejudice is to work with people of other cultures, races and groups on projects. When people work together as equals or peers on a common goal, the cooperative experiences they have during the interactions with the other people become examples for new generalizations about the members of that group. Even one living counter-example to a generalization begins to shift the extent of their “commitment” to particular prejudices about “those types of people.”

And always remember, when we divide the world into “People we call Us” and “People we call Them,” we are missing the bottom line. We are all people, with our own likes, dislikes, behaviors, qualities and lives. People have an amazing number of things in common, yet somehow we prefer to focus on what is “different.” This emphasis tends to create separateness, and separateness is the Great Illusion. As the world becomes more and more interconnected, and because of our ability to communicate with each other, it is important that we develop skills and techniques that lead to better understanding and increased tolerance. That way, we can pool our resources, share our resources and thus make the world a better place for everyone on the planet.

## Creating Positive People Beliefs

While it would be nice to have absolutely no prejudice in the world and have people just meet each other “being to being,” this is a major change for the world to move toward, and I don’t think we are quite there yet. I think it might be quite useful in the meantime to search for “positive prejudices.” I would like different groups and cultures to “brag” about what they value most – what they would like to be “known for.” Every culture has things they

value that are slightly different than other cultures. Cultural groups should be able to proudly state what they want to be known for! That way, the “name” or label of a group would call-up images and ideas they want, in addition to (and maybe even instead of) other negative things with which they didn’t want to be associated.

## **How to Teach and Practice Tolerance**

There are two important distinctions people need to learn. The first is between feelings or attitudes, and behavior. When I worked with the criminally insane, some of the people had done things I believed were absolutely horrific! I absolutely hated what some of them had done. As a professional therapist, I had to keep my feelings about their past behavior to myself, and interact with them in the present, without much regard for what they had done in the past. Most of all, I had to search for and support any type of kindness, any type of “insight” into their own behavior, and any type of growth in their own ability to take responsibility. If I had my attention inside, I would “miss” those opportunities for growth. I may feel angry and resentful toward someone, but if I can maintain my behavior, I am helping the world be a more loving place by not expressing my negative feelings. This does not mean in any way that I deny the feelings – I feel them, I accept them and I acknowledge them. I just choose in that moment to very, very carefully monitor and control my behavior, to make sure it is not influenced by my internal state. In order to do that, I need to rely more on my thinking and less on my feelings. That way, I keep my feelings from taking control of my behavior. My feelings happen on the inside, and are my personal business. My behavior happens on the outside, and affects or influences everyone around me. I am hoping you have guessed that I could disassociate in order to lessen my intense feelings while I interact with the person.

The second thing we need to learn is that while they may feel absolutely certain that something is true, other people may not accept that truth. You may argue well, may be absolutely right, and may present a thousand reasons why another person should agree with you. If they do not, we need to learn to simply “drop it” and move on with our lives. Just because other people agree with you does not make you right. And just because other people disagree with you does not make you wrong. We need to learn to be comfortable in both of those situations. The American culture in which I live places such an incredibly high value on “the right answer,” that we often shut out very good ideas and very correct ideas because they are not the “accepted” idea.

## Final Thoughts on How to Identify “Good” Beliefs

1. Measure or evaluate beliefs with the rule: “If everyone believed this, would the world be a better place for all of us to live together, or a nastier place for some?”
2. You don’t have to change major beliefs in order to get major changes. Sometimes you can make a little change, and the effect or impact ripples throughout the person’s life. If you help a person believe, “I am a worthwhile person,” you have had an incredible influence in their life.
3. You don’t have to change a belief in order to change a person’s relationship with the belief. Sometimes fighting with them about their belief simply makes them take that stand more strongly. If instead, you just listen to their belief with very little emotional reaction, you cause them to very deeply examine the belief. They may “put on a show” and have intense emotional reactions. But if you just stand in the face of that, you are forcing them to re-evaluate the belief.
4. Be cautious of believing “experts.” I have worked with people who had very advanced degrees who were quite frankly, incredibly stupid. I have also met people who had 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade educations who were incredible fountains of wisdom! Some of my most tangled problems were solved by Ellen, the lady who cuts my hair.
5. Be nice (or at least neutral) to people by default. It doesn’t cost you anything. It at least reduces the likelihood that they will be nasty to you. And if they are carrying a gun and intending to just randomly shoot people, they just might exclude you.
6. Remember, you can use the patterns and questions and presuppositions in this book to change your own beliefs as well. If you want to claim you know how to do conversational hypnosis, then I expect that you would have installed at least 100 different hypnotic changes into yourself already.
7. Remember – to remember things for which you are grateful before you fall asleep each night. It really does work!