

Core Beliefs Worksheet

Core beliefs are a person's most central ideas about themselves, others, and the world. These beliefs act like a lens through which every situation and life experience is seen. Sometimes we can think of these core beliefs as the 'stories we tell' ourselves in our own minds. These beliefs are just beliefs, and they are not FACTS, AND THEY CAN BE CHANGED. Although people tend to experience these beliefs as FACTS- it's important to remember they are **just really strong thoughts**. They're so strong because we tend to ignore information that does not support our core beliefs, and actively look for information that does.

Our core beliefs are usually influenced by our family, our friends, our upbringings, and by big events in our lives. An event is 'big' if we experience it as big- it doesn't matter what other people would experience it as. We all have core beliefs, some are helpful and some are not. An example of a **helpful core belief** about yourself is- 'I'm really good at challenging myself'. An example of an **unhelpful core belief** about yourself is- 'I am the kind of person who needs to do things perfectly.' A related **unhelpful core belief** to that might be, 'I am the kind of person who can't handle failure or change.'

Core beliefs influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. **Unhelpful/harmful core beliefs** can lead us to believe thoughts about ourselves, others, and the world that are not true or helpful. Unhelpful core beliefs can also lead us to have difficulty tolerating certain emotions/feelings and to behave in ways that don't align with our values, wants, or needs. When we can identify some of our core beliefs, we can begin to put those beliefs on trial to determine whether they are harmful or helpful. Our brain will often want to defend (or justify) our harmful/unhelpful core beliefs- again, this is because our core beliefs are STRONG because our brain tends to ignore information that does not support our core beliefs. When we can identify our unhelpful core beliefs, we can challenge them and have more awareness of how they influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When we become more aware, we develop more power to choose- to choose our thoughts, our feelings, and our behaviors. **We can change our core beliefs** about ourselves, others, and the world.

JOURNAL/REFLECTION

1. Please complete the statements below with as many words as come to mind that represent beliefs you have. Do not spend a long time thinking about them; simply write what comes into your head for 10 seconds for each of the prompts below. It doesn't matter if they're helpful or harmful or somewhere in-between. You may write multiple words or phrases for each.

TIP: These might be beliefs about yourself, like "I am weird" or "I am smart." Put down whatever comes to mind. You can also try thinking about this as, "I am the kind of person who...", "other people are the kind of people who..."

I am _____

Other people are _____

The world is _____

2. Now think about these three statements you answered above. How do they make you feel? When did you first become aware of these beliefs? Which experiences shaped them? Who in your life may hold similar views?

3. Reflect on the following and write 1-3 sentences in response: Are these beliefs helpful for me at this point in my life? *As a tip, **helpful core beliefs** will often make you feel calm, supported, loved, kind, compassionate, inspired, proud, or at peace.*

***Unhelpful core beliefs** can make you feel stressed, sad, unloved, worried, anxious, fearful, overwhelmed, bad, or alone.*

4. Write down three HELPFUL core beliefs about yourself, other people, and the world which you would like to practice going forward. These beliefs will likely lead you to feel some of the following- KIND, COMPASSIONATE, FLEXIBLE, INSPIRED, LOVED/LOVING, HOPEFUL, RESILIENT, CAPABLE, ETC...

I am _____

Other people are _____

The world is _____

5. Now think about these three statements you answered above. How do they make you feel? Who in your life may hold similar views?