

PAST EXPERIENCES, EARLY MEMORIES & CORE BELIEFS

Your core beliefs tend to be the product of past experiences. Identifying & connecting with these past experiences can be useful in helping you to better understand the nature of your core beliefs as well as more fully appreciate their origins.

1. Close your eyes & take a few deep breaths
2. Focus on your core belief e.g. "I am not good enough; I am unlovable; People cannot be trusted; I need people to like me to feel worthwhile; I need to be perfect & make no mistakes; I must be in control at all times; The world is a dangerous place; People will leave me; I cannot cope on my own" etc
3. Focus on the belief & get in touch with the thoughts & feelings that are generated. Really focus on these thoughts & feelings. Make them as real & intense as you can.
4. Try to recall a time in the past, preferably from your childhood, when you felt these same thoughts & feelings. Recreate the scene in your mind:
 - a. Where are you?
 - b. When did this happen?
 - c. How old are you?
 - d. What is happening?
 - e. Who is there?
 - f. What do you see, hear, smell, taste, feel?
 - g. Where do you feel what you are feeling?
 - h. What are you thinking, saying to yourself?
 - i. Get in touch with what you think & feel as a child. This relates to what "feels" true about your core belief. Allow yourself to experience these feelings...the pain, suffering, hurt, anger, fear, sadness, shame, guilt, frustration, confusion...whatever it is you felt as a child
 - j. Once you have completed this exercise open your eyes & bring yourself back to the present moment

Use the worksheet below to record the outcome of this exercise. The objective is to help you better understand & connect with the thoughts, feelings of your core beliefs as well as develop a greater appreciation & connection with their origins.

Core Belief	Past experience or memory	Thoughts, feelings, physical sensations & behaviours that accompany this experience
<i>"I am not good enough"</i>	<i>Aged 9. At school during morning recess. I am sitting on the bench watching the other kids play. I am alone with no one to play with.</i>	<i>I feel sad & alone. I feel a heaviness in my chest. I want to cry but don't want anyone to see me get upset. I am thinking to myself "What is wrong with me? I'm a bad person; No one cares about me; I wish I had a friend: I wish I could fit in with the others"</i>