



# EXPECTATIONS

The good and not so good

# Core beliefs and Values



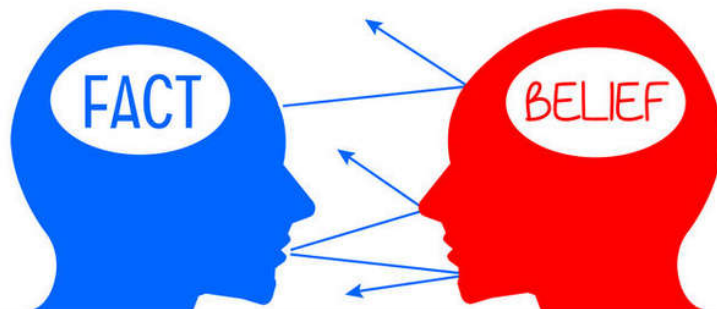
Are you going down hill, is there an old story playing, is it time to make changes?



# Beliefs

*"For some of our most important beliefs, we have no evidence at all, except that people we love and trust hold these beliefs. Considering how little we know, the confidence we have in our beliefs is preposterous—and it is also essential."*

—2002 Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman<sup>1</sup>



Source: Source: Alain Lacroix/Dreamstime

- **Definition of belief**
- 1 : a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing her belief in God a belief in democracy I bought the table in the belief that it was an antique. contrary to popular belief
- 2 : something that is accepted, considered to be true, or held as an opinion : something believed an individual's religious or political beliefs especially.
- 3 : conviction of the truth of some statement or the reality of some being or phenomenon especially when based on examination of evidence belief in the validity of scientific statements .

## Learning from our core values

- Authenticity
- Achievement
- Adventure
- Authority
- Autonomy
- Balance
- Beauty
- Boldness
- Compassion
- Challenge
- Citizenship
- Community
- Competency
- Contribution
- Creativity
- Curiosity

- Determination
- Fairness
- Faith
- Fame
- Friendships
- Fun
- Growth
- Happiness
- Honesty
- Humor
- Influence
- Inner Harmony
- Justice
- Kindness
- Knowledge

- Leadership
- Learning
- Love
- Loyalty
- Meaningful Work
- Openness
- Optimism
- Peace
- Pleasure
- Poise
- Popularity
- Recognition
- Religion
- Reputation
- Respect
- Responsibility

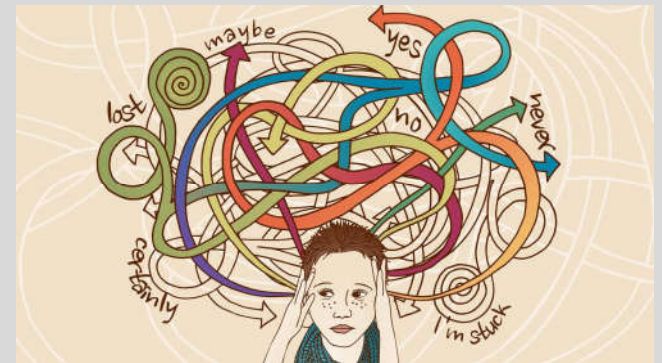
- Security
- Self-Respect
- Service
- Spirituality
- Stability
- Success
- Status
- Trustworthiness
- Wealth
- Wisdom



Consider a yearly ritual that forces you to think about how you are living out your core values in real life.

# No wonder is it so hard to change our cherished and entrenched beliefs

- Beliefs are our brain's way of making sense of and navigating our complex world. They are mental representations of the ways our brains expect things in our environment to behave, and how things should be related to each other—the patterns our brain expects the world to conform to. Beliefs are templates for efficient learning and are often essential for survival.
- Another important factor accounting for resistance to changing our beliefs is the way our beliefs are so often intertwined with how we define ourselves as people—our self-concept. Indeed, beliefs are associated with a part of the brain integrally involved in self-representation—the ventromedial prefrontal cortex.<sup>4</sup> We want to feel that we are consistent, with our behavior aligning with our beliefs. We constantly try to rationalize our own actions and beliefs and try to preserve a consistent self-image. It's embarrassing and quite often costly in a variety of ways to admit that we are fundamentally wrong.



# The Tyranny of Expectations

- Without noticing it, you too may be suffering from the myriad ways in which *expectations can undermine your life*. I call it the tyranny of expectations. They plague your daily life, causing you to be irritable, disappointed, and disillusioned. Many times, they lead you to say unkind words, act unskillfully, or make poor decisions. Expectations are so insidious that you can persist in maintaining them even after you have clear evidence that they are unfounded.
- What is most amazing is that despite the suffering caused by your expectations, you hardly notice them most of the time. Sure, there may be a few big ones you are somewhat aware of, but even so, you only sort of notice them; you do not act to free yourself from their tyranny. Plus, there are countless smaller ones you never notice at all. *It is only when you feel acute disappointment that you have any awareness of having been possessed by expectations*. But for each of these moments of acute disappointment, you've experienced many hours of dissatisfaction, impatience, and tension that you never realized arose from your expectations.
- *Expectations turn up in many forms – from what we expect of ourselves to what others expect of us and we of them*. You may have high, low, or even negative expectations. You also have large expectations and thousands of small expectations that arise in your life every day. Your large expectations have their own unique expression but are the result of the common strivings every human undergoes. As you learn to free yourself from these larger expectations, you can start to notice the smaller ones and not allow them to define your daily experience. *You may expect that certain efforts will yield desired results or believe you can be in control of your life or be totally convinced that the so-called good life must have components*. You may be enslaved by your expectations of what defines a good marriage, a good person, or success. More than likely, you expect to behave in a manner you know is right, and you expect to be treated similarly. Left unnoticed, these expectations become all-powerful. Just think of the amount of suffering – yours and the suffering of others – that comes from these unrecognized expectations; **it is a call for mindfulness and for choosing not to be defined by expectations.**

# The wanting mind



- The “wanting mind.” This wanting mind is driven by desire, aversion, and anxiety; it creates an illusion of solidity and control in a world that is constantly changing and unfolds independently of how we believe it should. Knowing this, how do you proceed? How can you free yourself from expectations? In mindfulness meditation, you always start with what is true in the present moment. You use discernment to know what is true, but you do not fall into judgment, which is yet another form of expectation and one of the most tyrannical.
- Expectations assume a certain result and are future- based. They narrow your options, retard your imagination, and blind you to possibilities. They create pressure in your life and hold your present sense of wellbeing hostage to a future that may or may not happen. Expectations create rigidity in your life and cause you to react impulsively to any perceived threat to that future you believe you deserve.
- possibilities are based in the present moment, where you're alive to the mystery of life. You live as fully as you can in the present moment based on your values, which reflect your preferences for the future, but you do not assume that the future will come to pass, because you realize that the future is unknown. *Being open to possibilities acknowledges that what you may think you want changes with time, or that there is another future that will bring you equal or more happiness, or that the future may turn bleak, or that you may die before any future can unfold. Real joy, then, is that which is available to you right now.*



# What can letting go and detachment teach us.

- You may be surprised when you discover how much choice you have in letting go of expectations. As you have seen, there is nothing to be gained from a mind filled with expectation. But there is much to be gained by living out of your values with real effort and discipline. When you do this, you are showing up for what you value and discovering a sense of joy and ease that is independent of the conditions in your life.
- It is an acknowledgment that you cannot know the mysteries of how life unfolds or even if a certain outcome that seems desirable would, if it occurred, truly be beneficial. At the same time, it is a declaration that you can attune yourself to that which is loving and benevolent in life. What else would you choose to align yourself with? Do these values not offer the best prospects for any possible future?



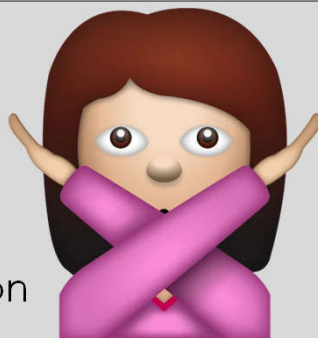
***Many of us hesitate to say no to others. With mindful tips, saying no is an emotionally intelligent skill anyone can master — really!***

- Thinking you are a bad person for saying no is a symptom of "the disease to please." "Saying yes when you need to say no causes burnout. You do yourself and the person making the request a disservice by saying yes all of the time," says author Duke Robinson. Here's how to do the right thing—for yourself and others—common scenarios where you know that opting out is your best option. Don't feel guilty. Take a cue from your favorite two-year-old—and say no.
- A. As social creatures who want to be part of the herd, we also want to preserve our relationships. So, we might blurt out yes because we don't want to be seen as difficult
- B. While growing up, you might've not learned to advocate for yourself.
- C. We think declining makes us look incompetent.
- D. We are misguided that good people say yes, bad people say no.

# What are the benefits of a no and how does it translate into a yes.

- **Why saying no is a good — no, great — thing**
  - When you struggle with saying no in personal or professional situations, it helps to remember the self-preservation in passing things up.
  - “Saying no is one of the best forms of self-care we can engage in,” Washington says. She notes that saying no supports us in:
    - creating space in our schedules to rest and recharge
    - engaging in activities that align with our current goals
    - setting boundaries with loved ones and colleagues
  - Ultimately, saying no gives us greater navigation over our lives, says Anhalt. This grants us the opportunity to build a fulfilling, meaningful life on our own terms.
  - After all, we can only have power over ourselves — so, let’s exercise that power.
- **ASK yourself and Think... take time to know!**
  - Will saying yes prevent me from focusing on something that’s more important?
  - Does this potential project, opportunity, or activity align with my values, beliefs, and goals?
  - What are my core values, beliefs, and current goals?
  - Will saying yes make me even more tired or burnt out?
  - Will saying yes be good for my mental health? Or will it worsen my symptoms?
  - In the past, when have I said yes and then ended up regretting it?
  - When am I more likely to accept a request, I’d rather decline? How can I reduce these challenges?

“Be clear with your no, so that nobody is left wondering what you are trying to say,”



- **Clear, kind ways to decline**

- “Unfortunately, I’ll need to pass on this.”
- “I’m sorry, my friend, but I’m not able to.”
- “Sadly, I can’t.”
- “Thanks, but that’s not going to work for me.”
- “No, I’m not able to do that.”
- Your request does not align with my business model, or personal goals.

- **Phrases to avoid**

- “Umm, I don’t know.”
- “I’m not sure.”
- “It’s tough to say.”
- “Well, maybe I could do it. But...”

**Expressing your gratitude**

- “Thank you for thinking of me!”
- “I’m honored!”
- “I greatly appreciate you asking.”
- “You coming to me really means a lot.”
- “I’m immensely grateful.”
- “Rain check? Please don’t stop inviting me! I might be able to connect another time.”

*But being transparent about our feelings, needs, and limits leads to healthier, more authentic relationships, she says.*

*And saying no and honoring your feelings, needs, and limits also leads to a healthier you.*

# Redesigning our core values and expectations



- **Checking your expectations**
- Curious where your expectations fall?
- These key signs can help you recognize patterns of unrealistic expectations:
  - You feel stressed and upset when things don't go as planned or your routine deviates slightly.
  - You find plenty to criticize in yourself and others.
  - You fixate on small details and find it very important to get everything right.
  - When things go wrong, even in minor ways, you feel let down and frustrated.
  - You have very specific visions and find it difficult to accept other possible outcomes.
  - When others don't fall in line with your plans, you feel irritated and resentful.
- It's normal to feel all of these things from time to time, but if they play a recurring role in your life, it may be time to rethink your expectations.

# How much are you juggling? Time to find balance?



- **Remember: You can only control yourself**

- When setting an expectation, it can help to first ask yourself whether you have any control over the situation.
- People through the ages have tried and failed to predict the whims of life. Similarly, expectations centered on what you want others to do often fall flat.
- For more realistic, achievable outcomes, try keeping your focus on the areas inside your control — your own actions and choices.

- **Keep a flexible mindset**

- Here's one thing to remember about unrealistic expectations: They tend to be fairly rigid.
- Circumstances can change rapidly, without any warning. These changes may open some doors even as they slam others shut. The more flexible you are with your goals, the better they can accommodate life's unpredictability.

- **Know your limits**

- Even with the best intentions and the willingness to put in maximum effort, you may not find it possible to improve every situation or meet every expectation.
- Effort can get you closer to fulfilling your dreams, but you might need additional resources you just don't have access to, like unlimited energy or more hours in the day. That doesn't make you a failure, it makes you a human being with normal physical and emotional limitations.
- If you fail to meet an expectation, acknowledge that you did your best and offer yourself compassion instead of blame. Don't forget to extend this compassion to others who happen to fall short of your expectations, too.
- Advice like "dream big" or "reach for the stars" comes from a good place, but it can lead to expectations that fall short of what's realistically possible.
- You don't have to scrap all your dreams, but it's worth exploring what you really want from those goals. You never know — perhaps you've already achieved it.