

THE WORLDVIEW EXERCISE

1 HERE'S THE GIST

As we grow up, what happens to us teaches us about the world and we begin to identify patterns and rules about how the world seems to work. These patterns/rules then shape core beliefs about the world—what causes what, what happens when we do right, what happens when we do wrong, etc. One example is “good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people.”. Just like this example, when we have complex, difficult, or traumatic experiences, we can find our understanding/beliefs in conflict, causing us to resort to our natural tendency to try and make our experience make sense.



2 HOW THIS LOOKS

- Assimilation: We assimilate when we change our understanding of how things work to fit with pre-existing beliefs (“bad things happen to bad people, so I must be bad” or “that person isn’t bad, so that must not have happened the way I remember it”)
- Accommodation: we accommodate when we modify our pre-existing beliefs to make sense of experiences, which is typically healthy (“I guess sometimes bad things do happen to good people, and that doesn’t really feel fair”)
- Overaccommodation: we overaccommodate when we erase our pre-existing beliefs and replace them with generalizations that are often rooted in the negative emotions of our experiences (“no-one is faithful/everyone cheats”)



3 TIME TO REFLECT

Ask yourself these questions and write whatever comes up for you:

- Are there any examples of assimilation or overaccommodation in your life?
- What are some of your core beliefs about yourself—good, bad or neutral? Have these changed since you were a kid?
- What are some of your core beliefs about other people? Have these changed as you’ve aged or had new experiences?
- What are some of your core beliefs about your family/friends, community, and/or society overall?



4 NOW, PUT IT TO WORK

Have these beliefs changed throughout your life? For example, did you feel differently as a child than you feel now? What experiences could have shaped these beliefs? How?



5 PRO-TIPS

Give yourself plenty of time to reflect on these questions, allow brain breaks, and come back if needed. Pick times when you have privacy and are free from other pressing obligations/tasks. Allow yourself to experience any/all feelings that come up without pushing them away (this can put up barriers to understanding/reintegrating your experiences).