

Understanding Limiting Beliefs

A ProFriends guide to noticing the beliefs that may be influencing your choices - with curiosity rather than judgement.

What are limiting beliefs?

Limiting beliefs are ideas or assumptions we hold about ourselves, other people or what is possible for us. They can feel like facts because they may have been repeated for a long time, but that does not mean they are always accurate or helpful.

They may influence the choices we make, the opportunities we pursue, the boundaries we set and the way we speak to ourselves.

A belief can be understandable and still be worth questioning. The aim is not to blame yourself for having it, but to notice whether it is helping you now.

What might a limiting belief sound like?

- "I am not good enough."
- "I do not deserve success."
- "I cannot change."
- "People will judge me."
- "I always get things wrong."
- "It is too late for me."

Where can beliefs come from?

Beliefs can develop for many reasons. They may be influenced by early experiences, messages from other people, culture and expectations, difficult experiences, repeated setbacks or conclusions we made about ourselves at a particular point in life.

Understanding where a belief may have come from can be useful, but coaching does not require you to uncover or analyse every past experience. Sometimes it is enough to notice what you believe now and consider whether it still fits.

Recognising a limiting belief

A useful place to begin is to listen for repeated phrases in your own thinking - particularly around situations where you feel stuck, avoid something, doubt yourself or assume an outcome before it has happened.

Listen for words such as "always", "never", "cannot", "should", "must" and "everyone". They can sometimes point towards a belief worth exploring.

Pause • Reflect • Act

PAUSE

Notice the belief or thought before automatically accepting it or acting on it.

REFLECT

Ask yourself: Where might this belief have come from? What evidence supports it? What evidence does not? Is it a fact, an assumption, or an old story I have carried forward?

ACT

Choose one small response that is more aligned with what you want now. You do not have to completely change the belief before you take a different step.

You are not trying to replace every difficult belief with a positive one. A more realistic, balanced belief is often much more useful.

For example

Limiting belief	A more balanced perspective
I cannot do this.	I may not know how to do this yet, but I can learn, ask for help or take one step.
People will judge me.	Some people may have opinions, but I cannot know what everyone thinks and I can choose what matters to me.
I should have sorted this by now.	There is no fixed timetable. I can start from where I am today.

Exploring one of your beliefs

Choose one belief that feels relevant to you at the moment. There are no right answers here. Give yourself permission to be curious rather than trying to produce the 'correct' response.

1. What is a belief or thought you often have about yourself that feels limiting or holds you back?

2. How does this belief show up in your daily life?

For example: at work, in relationships, when making decisions, or when trying something new.

3. How true does this belief feel to you right now?

1 = Not true at all | 10 = Completely true

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. When did you first become aware of this belief?

You do not need to search for a deep explanation. Simply note anything that comes to mind.

5. What experiences or evidence seem to support this belief?

6. What evidence suggests the belief may not always be true?

Consider exceptions, successes, feedback, or times when you responded differently.

7. How much does this belief hold you back?

1 = Not at all | 10 = A great deal

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. What do you notice when this belief shows up?

You might notice feelings, physical sensations, urges or changes in your behaviour.

9. What impact has this belief had on your decisions or actions?

10. If this belief had less influence over you, what might be different?

Think about what you might do, say, try or allow yourself to consider.

11. How confident do you feel about questioning this belief?

1 = Not confident yet | 10 = Very confident

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

12. What is a more balanced belief you could practise?

Aim for something believable and fair - not forced positivity.

Turning reflection into action

13. What small step could you take that gently challenges the old belief?

Keep it realistic. Small evidence-building actions can matter.

14. What support, reminder or resource might help you take that step?

Pause • Reflect • Act

PAUSE - notice the old belief.

REFLECT - ask whether it is the whole story.

ACT - choose one small step based on what you want now.

You may want to revisit the 1-10 scales after taking your small step. Has the belief changed at all? Has your confidence shifted? Even a small movement can be useful information.

Reflection

Take a moment to review your answers. You do not need to have 'overcome' the belief. The purpose of this exercise is to understand it a little better and notice where you may have more choice than you first thought.

What stands out to you most from completing this workbook?

What have you learned about the belief - and about yourself?

What would you like to remember the next time this belief appears?



A gentle reminder

Beliefs can be powerful, but they are not necessarily permanent and they are not the whole of who you are. Change is rarely about suddenly believing the opposite. It can begin with noticing, questioning and creating new evidence through small actions.

How ProFriends can support you

Limiting beliefs, self-doubt, confidence and feeling stuck are common themes in coaching. At ProFriends, we can explore what is happening for you, what may be getting in the way and what realistic steps could help you move forward.

If you would like to explore whether coaching feels right for you, you can book a free 30-minute discovery call. There is no obligation to continue.

Supporting your goals, one step at a time.

Important note

This resource is for general information and personal reflection. It is not a diagnostic tool and does not replace medical, psychological or other professional mental-health support. If exploring these beliefs brings up significant distress, difficult memories or concerns about your wellbeing, please pause the exercise and seek appropriate support from a qualified health professional.