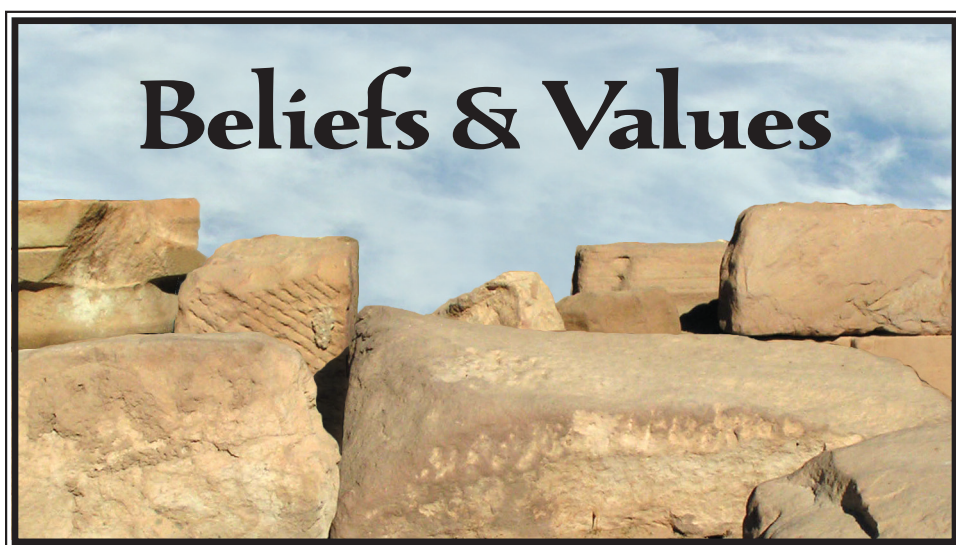


- Journey 1 -



Your life should stand for something. Does it? Do you stand on a strong foundation? Do you have a moral compass that steers you on your life journey? When people say one thing but do another, we call them two-faced or hypocritical. When they do as they say, we consider them genuine and authentic. Which are you?

Defining the beliefs that define you

Beliefs express our individual theories about how people and the world work. They are developed through our experiences over time and therefore vary from person to person. These core beliefs determine what we value—what we think is important and worthwhile. And these beliefs and values essentially dictate our behavior. They make us who we are.

Your beliefs and values will not necessarily agree with those of the authors. We will obviously reveal ours, because we could not write this book otherwise. We are not asserting that they are the only ones or the right ones to hold. Rather, we believe that every individual should and must discover, develop, and live by his or her own beliefs and values—that this is the secret to a life lived well.

When we say that someone has integrity, we mean that their actions align with their values. They do not experience the dissonance and discomfort of saying one thing and doing another. Instead, their lives are relatively

harmonious and much less troubled by guilt or regret. They have no more ultimate control over what happens to them than anyone else, but they handle the things that are under their control well. This allows them more peace and satisfaction than those who only “talk the talk.”

**There is a reason why living with integrity is not more common:
most people do not actually know what they believe and value.**

The very first journey on the path to a more satisfying and purposeful life must be an exploration inward to discover exactly what you believe about life, human behavior, and the way the world works. In fact, our actions usually *do* demonstrate our beliefs and values—just not the ones we consciously *think* we hold.

This is because our brains work on two tracks, the conscious and the unconscious. We are under the impression that our conscious mind is like a conductor orchestrating our lives. In reality, though, the unconscious mind is in charge. It is the source of all our instinctive reactions. Whenever we “act without thinking,” it is calling the shots.

Uncovering your secret world view



It is almost as if we are two people in one: the powerful secret partner who makes things happen and the fast talker who tries to explain those actions after the fact. The premise of this book is that the fast-talking conscious mind can—with deep introspection—uncover secret beliefs and values, understand their origins, and actually choose to change them. But they can only be changed after you have discovered what they are.

Just as babies construct theories about physical laws through experience—comprehending gravity through repeatedly dropping things, for example—they also build elaborate models of what they can expect from human behavior. This world view will often remain taken for granted and below the level of conscious awareness, just like our assumptions about the physical world. We have another set of more conscious beliefs that we can easily express in words, but these may be unrelated to the core beliefs on the basis of which we instinctively behave.

The task before you, and the point of this book, is to align both sets of beliefs and values. You should never be “of two minds” about such important things. Most of us struggle to articulate our beliefs and values, yet these should form the bedrock upon which we build our lives. They are both our foundation and our compass for navigating through life while remaining true to ourselves.

No one can identify your beliefs and values but you!

There is no cookbook or shortcut to defining who you are and want to become; it takes time and effort. Begin by noting how you act every day, because your actions reveal your personal values. Are you rude to clerks and cashiers because you think them unworthy of your consideration? Are you kind to strangers in need because you believe a cooperative society is a stronger one? Do you sabotage relationships because you assume people will abandon you or let you down? Does your manner and tone of voice at home show that you care about family members’ concerns? Do you treat others with disdain because you believe you are much smarter or more important? Beliefs underlie what we choose to say to and do around others throughout the day. Beliefs are reflected in the attitudes we display toward them. These beliefs and attitudes are *choices*.

Others subconsciously pick up on the attitudes we express, the behaviors we exhibit, and how we handle difficult situations and people. Our actions embody our beliefs. Everyone sees who we really are and what beliefs we stand on by noting our words and actions.

ENTRY 8

What beliefs do you want to have? Choose one and write it down. Underneath, write down specific actions, thoughts, or words that would be “proof” of this belief. For example:

Belief: *I believe I can become more than I am today.*

ACTIONS:

I am committed to reading widely and often, because I value learning; I belong to a public library and am willing to spend my money on books.

I am open to trying and learning new things. I go to new places, ask people to teach me their special skill, and listen to those unlike me with an open mind.

I deliberately expose myself to many viewpoints — through a variety of websites, television programs, newspapers, magazines, and books. I make time for stimulating conversation.

I regularly push myself to do and learn and read things that are difficult for me, because I won't grow unless challenged.

Your Chosen Belief:

ACTIONS:

ENTRY 12

[illegible]

What We Have Learned

A lifetime of experiences has laid down patterns in our minds. We have absorbed and adapted beliefs and values through repeated experiences. We may not always be aware of these patterns, since they are now automatic.

Just as an experienced driver can get from work to home “on autopilot,” we no longer have to grapple with what to do and how throughout our day. We act without thinking. A practiced athlete or musician has very sophisticated physical skill sets developed through repetition. He no longer has to think about where to place his fingers or feet; he performs better but actually works at it less than when he was a beginner.

Our brains take similar shortcuts all the time with thinking skills. We recognize faces in a way computers could never hope to emulate. We grasp very complex concepts, not just by generalizing but by capturing their essence. We effortlessly recognize the “cup-ness” of a coffee mug, a crystal champagne flute, a tin cup, a beer stein, a sippy cup, a shot glass, even a novelty mug shaped like an animal — and do it in milliseconds with no conscious thought.

Our inner model of how the world works, how people can and should behave, and how we should react and interact is equally hidden from our conscious view. We have unconsciously mapped the world, and our behavior flows from the assumptions of that map. If our control of our behavior is imperfect, that is likely because we do not appreciate the underlying beliefs and values that drive it. Changing behavior without changing beliefs and values is very hard.

