

The Work

Underlying Beliefs

Our stressful emotions and reactions often come from the stories we tell about what is happening, rather than from the happening itself. We experience, see or hear something, then we add our own interpretations and assumptions in our thinking, and our emotions and reactions follow our thinking. We experience stressful emotions and try to control or problem solve what is happening on the surface, rather than looking at and working with, the underlying thinking. When the situation is not responding to problem solving or a solution is not possible, we can find ourselves stuck in reactivity, feeling frustrated and powerless.

The Work gives us a powerful way to gain more awareness of our own assumptions and underlying beliefs, and a tool to inquire into our own thinking in a way that can give new insight and learning. Engaging our own thinking with The Work can help us to shift our own mindset and patterns of reaction and reconnect us with our capacity for clear thinking and wise response.

You can access your own underlying beliefs by focussing on a specific, stressful situation, writing down the stressful 'fact' as you see it, and then adding the phrase "and that means..." and reflecting by making a list of all stressful thoughts, assumptions, and beliefs that come to mind about the situation.

Example:

Part 1 of The Work: IDENTIFY your thoughts

FACT: He didn't reply to my email

And that means that:

- *He doesn't care about me*
- *He doesn't value my work*
- *I did something wrong*
- *He doesn't respect me*

Part 2 of The Work: INQUIRE

Choose one belief from your "and that means that..." list and do The Work on that belief using the Four Questions and Turnarounds (holding the situation of your original belief.)

Example – *He didn't reply to my email and that means "He doesn't value my work"*

Apply the 4 Questions and Turnarounds of The Work to the belief: "*He doesn't value my work*"

Underlying Beliefs Exercise

In a situation where you are feeling stressed or stuck about something that seems to be a fact, write down the “fact” or situation in a short simple sentence, then make a list of all the stressful thoughts, beliefs and assumptions related to that thought.

FACT: _____
(Example: He was late)

and that means that:
(Make a list – short, simple, unedited sentences)

Choose one thought from your list of underlying beliefs.
Do the Work on one belief at a time with a facilitator or in writing. 4 Questions + Turnarounds
Be curious. Open your mind to what else is possible as you answer the questions.

Turnaround Guide:

Opposite #1 He didn't reply to my email and that DOESN'T mean he disrespects me.
(examples: What else could be going on here that is not about him disrespecting me...)

Opposite #2 (He didn't reply to my email and) **He respects me.**
Examples of ways that it appears he respects me even though he was late.

Other: (He didn't reply to my email and) **I disrespect him.**
How is that true? Be specific? In my thoughts and/or actions.

Self (He didn't reply to my email and) **I disrespect myself.**
How do I do that in this situation? Be specific. Thoughts and/or actions.