



Breaking the Chains of Belief: Chris Lonsdale

Chris: Good morning. I want to start with a couple of questions. First, if you are perfectly 100 percent satisfied with the track that your life is on, raise your hands. Okay, about half a dozen people. Fantastic! Everyone else had a little bit of work to do. Second question: if you have to perform at something in your life, some area of your life, and you find that you have hit a limit that you can't break through, raise your hands. Okay, so a few people and everyone else seems to be doing great.

Well, for those of you who are stuck at a limit, I want you to consider an idea that your limit is not your limit. I say this because people very often quit right here just below a perceived limit. But your real limit is way, way beyond that perceived limit. This happens because we all have switches inside us. Very often, these switches are flipped the wrong way. So if you flip the switches the right way, you can break through those performance limits.

For instance, a few years ago, I worked with a guy. We'll call him Sebastian. He was a very, very good amateur golfer. However, he could not win any tournaments. He was 60 years old, and he thought that he had hit a limit and he couldn't go through that. Well, we did some work together. That year, after he flipped the switch, he went on to win the amateur golf tournament in Hong Kong.

Now, these switches don't just apply to performance. They apply to every aspect of our lives. So for instance, if you have difficulty with people, if you have relationship challenges, well, there are switches for that, too. You find them, you flip them, and you can actually then move on and have great relationships with people. You see, we all these switches. So, you can change a relationship by flipping these switches.

Maybe—and I'll just talk about a story here briefly. I worked with a school a few years ago and the school had two boards. The upper board and the lower board had a massive conflict going on between them that was causing massive stress. The members of the two boards couldn't even talk to each other. Well, there was a switch in that situation as well and once they flipped it, the relationship was healed and they were able to move the school forward.

Maybe you're just having a terrible year. Maybe you feel at the mercy of events around you. Well, I want you to consider for a moment that the world is not as it seems. Consider the possibility that you have more choices and more influence over your own life than you might imagine it's possible. All you have to do is find the right switches.

For the last 30 years, I've worked with thousands of people individually and in groups, helping them to improve their lives, helping them to build better businesses, helping



them to break through performance barriers. In every single situation, every single time, there was at least one switch, sometimes more than one switch.

I'm talking about beliefs. If you want to change your life, change your beliefs. If you want to master your life, you've got to become a master of your beliefs because beliefs determine our actions and they filter our perceptions. In that situation with the school boards, we see that happening. Because the upper board had a veto role and everybody on the lower board believed very intensely that one person on that upper board was always using the veto to block things that the lower board wanted to do.

While in the middle of a facilitated conflict resolutions process that I designed, one man on the upper board was complaining about the school. He was saying, "You know what? The school has too many amenities. It's too cushy. It's making the students soft." Somebody on the lower board was very, very angry with him and said, "Look, the way the school is today is completely a result of decisions that you guys made on the upper board, so how can you say this?"

The man on the upper board simply said, "I never used the veto. In fact, none of us ever did." You could hear a pin drop. You look around the room and you could see the faces changing as that belief dissolved. The belief was filled in every communication between the board and the minute the belief dissolved, the communication changed. They were able to solve their problem.

See, beliefs are not reality but they absolutely do create our reality. Even when you're learning, beliefs affect it. Very often, people give up learning something because they don't see themselves making any progress. Who's had that situation? I'm sure lots of people. Right. You start to believe that this is too hard for me. This is something—I don't have the genes for this.

However, these beliefs themselves are actually causing the problem. Because you see, when you're learning anything, progress is happening but it's incremental. It's small. If you believe that you're not good enough or that you're stupid or that you're a slow learner, your belief blocks the perception of the incremental change. So, literally, your belief stops you from perceiving your improvement and that is what causes you to give up even though progress is happening.

Now, these are beliefs that we can talk to. "I can't." "I'm a slow learner." "I don't have the genes for it." "Those people are evil." All of these things actually don't matter. I call them big beliefs. What matters is the beliefs that control us are small. They're subtle. They are feelings. They're unconscious. They're granular inside us. They are the cause and the big beliefs are the effect.



With Sebastian and his golf game, it was very interesting because Sebastian would lose in tournaments because he copied his opponents' errors. So if an opponent put a shot into the water, Sebastian would put his next shot into the water. If an opponent put a shot into the rough, his next shot would be on to the rough and all of this was being caused by a belief. He would swing his club. A belief would fire in his nervous system. This would cause his muscle to twitch. His shot would be deflected.

So you had a belief which is an idea that was operating as a feeling directly on his muscles. You're probably wondering what sort of belief would do that. See, Sebastian believed he had to be the perfect gentleman. In his mind, the gentleman always goes second. This was all operating outside conscious awareness. The minute the belief became conscious, he was able to edit it.

That's right. We can edit our beliefs. Our beliefs are like code, like computer code, but in our nervous system and we can edit this. I'm going to, in a minute, tell you how you can go ahead and edit your beliefs. But before I do so, we need to understand one more thing about beliefs. Beliefs directly affect our biology.

If you want to get to the science of this, I recommend you read some of the work of Bruce Lipton. In one of his books, Bruce Lipton talked about fire walking. Now, if you, in the middle of a fire walk, if you absolutely believe that you can walk barefoot across burning hot coals and be unharmed, you will be fine. If you hesitate in that belief, if you are skeptical, you will get burned. I can personally vouch for this. I've done two fire walks in my life. The second one was fine. The first one, I got burned. Because halfway through the fire walk, one side of me got skeptical and one side of me got burned. I've seen it with all the clients that I've worked with. Very often, you have beliefs directly affecting the biology of a person.

So one woman I've worked with a few years ago had a new role—a very important role in a multinational in Hong Kong. She was struggling with her role. But not only that, she had health problems. She had insomnia. She had acid reflux. She couldn't get pregnant. A whole lot of stuff going on for her. When we started working, her big belief was, "I'm not fit for the role." But deep inside her, she felt that she would be punished for every decision that she made. That came from trauma that happened to her in the classroom when she was a child. Once we healed the trauma, she went on to absolutely enjoy her role. She did a fantastic job. She can meet all of her challenges. Her acid reflux disappeared. A year later, I got a lovely letter from her with a photo of her new baby.

So beliefs fundamentally filter our perceptions. They dictate our actions and they directly influence our biology. So if you want to master your life, you have to master your beliefs. Don't get me wrong. A lot of beliefs are good beliefs and they help us create the lives that we want. But at the same time, all of us carry around a whole lot of limiting



beliefs and these limiting beliefs are like chains on our brains. They make things hard. They make things impossible for us. So if you want to live the life that you choose, you absolutely have to break these chains.

And then the question is, well, where do I focus? What belief should I be editing? Well, I have three simple rules of thumb. If you have a belief that limits you in any way, especially if other people can do something and you can't yet—so it's doable—then you should look at editing your belief. If you have a belief that causes you to harm yourself in any way, you should look at editing that belief and if you have a belief that causes you to harm other people in any way, you absolutely should look at changing that belief.

How do you do it? Actually, it's a simple four-step process. Number one: identify what the unconscious beliefs are. Number two: do an ecology check. Number three: find out where the beliefs come from and number four: edit them. When you identify an unconscious belief, you simply look at the situation that challenges you and you ask the question.

In this situation, what am I believing? And something will pop up. Sometimes you're lucky, you get there straight away. But more often than not, you have to dig down a few levels. See, when you hit the belief that's making the impact on you, you know it. Intuitively, you sense it and sometimes you get a very strong emotional reaction when you find it. Once you found it, the next thing you do is an ecology check which really just means check for unintended consequences.

You ask the question, if I change this belief, am I going to lose anything of value in my life? Sometimes the answer is, yeah, be careful. But more often than not, it's like, nah, it's an old belief. It's no longer useful. It probably never was. You can get rid of it. You can change it. Which is, you ask yourself, why do I believe this? Where does this come from? The answer will come from one of two directions. Either it's going to be a life event that happened to you or it's going to be indoctrination. Just those two, that's it.

In Sebastian's case with his golf, it was indoctrination because he grew up in a family and a world where being the gentleman was important. So from early childhood, he just absorbed this idea into himself without questioned by osmosis. We get a lot of our beliefs this way. We never think about them. We just absorb them and we think that that's the way the world is. Life events are a little more interesting and a little more complicated.

I want to share a story about a man I worked with. We'll call him Alfred. He was the CEO of a major company in Hong Kong. A very high profile role. He came to spend a little bit of time with me and we talked through an issue he was facing. You see, everyone around him thought he was doing a really, really, really good job. Alfred felt he was failing. In



fact, he felt he was going to do things that demonstrated for the whole world to see just how bad a failure he was.

You're probably wondering how on earth could a successful CEO have this sort of a feeling? Well, it turned out that when he was three years old, he failed his kindergarten entrance exam. Why on Earth anybody would think that a kindergarten entrance exam is a good idea, I do not know. But somebody did, and he failed his. He went through his whole life actually believing he was a failure. Every role he did, he was fantastic at the role and every role he did, he believed he was a failure. But we healed this and he went on to have a balanced and really successful life going forward.

So, once you know what the belief is, you need to move to editing it. Now, if it's an indoctrinated belief, generally, it's quite simple. Because as soon as you know what it is and where it came from, most of the time, it just looks very, very, very silly. That silliness, that humor of the situation makes you go, "Hang on a minute. This is bullshit," and you change the belief.

Sometime you need to do a reframe. So, when Paul came to me, one of his beliefs was, "Well, I've never learned a foreign language before so I can't learn a foreign language." I simply said, "So how did you learn English, your mother tongue? Because when you were a baby, it was a foreign language." That change in perspective is all it took to change the belief. Very simple.

When you get into emotionally charged events that happened throughout your life, you actually need some special tools. I tend to like using NLP and EFT but there are a lot of really good tools in the world. So if you meet these sort of challenges, go find the tools or find people who are skilled at using these tools to help you through it.

So that's really it. The four-step change process. You identify the beliefs. You do an ecology check. You find out where they come from. And then, you edit them out. If you think that your beliefs are sacred and that they should not be touched, that's fine but you need to accept your life the way it is without complaining. However, I don't buy that personally. I think that we have massive potential as human beings and part of the process of achieving our potential is to master our beliefs.

So let me share one final story. This is Brian. He came to see me in Hong Kong when he was 81. His memory was failing terribly. He had no muscle strength. His muscles were so weak, he couldn't get up out of a chair without assistance. He couldn't put a power adaptor plugged together for an Apple computer. This is a man who worked most of his life as a hands-on mechanic and engineer. He believed he had seen all dementia and that his life was soon to be over.



When he was 84, he was doing weekly 50-kilometer endurance bike rides. Every day, he would send me his heart rate monitor graphs from the short interval aerobic training that he was doing. He could problem solve software issues on his computer. He could do online research. So what happened?

When he came to me, he had a number of bad beliefs. He believed that his life had no value. He believed that this rapid decline was his destiny and he believed that doctors were responsible for his health. He changed that belief to, "I am responsible for my own health and for the quality of my death." He decided to die well rather than fade away like a vegetable.

Based on that, he did two things. He took himself off some very strong medication that he was taking. This medication was a major reason for a lot of the problems that he had. Side effects. But he also started doing short interval aerobic training because the other problem was lack of oxygen to the brain. And so, he did those two things.

Three months later, his muscle strength was back. He was problem solving on the computer. He was doing a whole lot of things and this led to a new belief being formed which was, "I can reverse this process of decline." So he kept doing that and he did some other things as well. He started doing emotional healing and a whole bunch of things. At a year out, his doctor at his annual checkup gave him a clean bill of health. At age 83, he re-qualified for his driver's license. How do I know all of these about Brian? Well, actually, he's my dad.

So, you can change your life trajectory. If you have performance barriers, if you have health challenges, if you have learning difficulties, if you have problems with relationships, start flipping some switches. Turn off your bad beliefs. Turn on some good ones. Re-code your nervous system and reset your life. Take those chains that limit you. Break them. Break those chains of belief that limit your life and create the life that you really want. The power is in your hands. Thank you.