

You... Unlimited

By Dr. Monica Vermani, C. Psych, Clinical Psychologist

Often, without realizing it, we are our own worst enemies. We believe that we're not smart enough, attractive enough, or worthy of what we want most in life. By understanding where our self-limiting beliefs come from and recognizing their negative impacts on our lives, we can start to overcome them and see our potential to attain the happiness and success we want for ourselves!

Welcome to the world of self-limiting beliefs. Most of us struggle with negative thoughts about ourselves in one form or another. *"I'll never get that promotion, so I won't even try." "My marks aren't good enough to get into the school of my choice." "I'm terrible at sports." "I'm too old to learn a new skill." "I'll never find a life partner." "I'm just bad at relationships."*

Self-limiting beliefs come in many shapes and forms. They are the negative thoughts we hold about ourselves, our abilities, our self-image, our worthiness, and our potential. They not only prevent us from attaining our potential and living our best lives — both personally and professionally — they cloud our vision of ourselves, and inhibit our ability to see ourselves as we truly are.

Where they come from

These beliefs can come from many sources, and take root very early in our lives. We are born with high self-esteem, excited to learn and grow. But the negative messages can start in early childhood. We form core beliefs about ourselves as children, up until the age of 10. We might have a parent or sibling who tells us we are not smart enough, or good enough at something we try. As we go out into the world with these core beliefs, our influences expand. We are exposed to challenging social dynamics of competitive learning, working, and playing environments. We are bombarded by images and messages through TV, movies, the nightly news, and social media. We begin to experience the good and the bad that life brings. We take it all in and try to make sense of it all.

Why we hold on to the negative

As we move through our life experiences, every event that we label as negative can contribute to and strengthen our negative, self-limiting beliefs. As we navigate the mounting complexities of the world, we interpret our experiences as good or bad and take the negative experiences as proof of our lack of ability, or talent, or attractiveness, or likeability. We hold onto the self-limiting beliefs as proven truths. And we make both significant and small choices based on these truths.

For example, a younger sibling might feel that she is not as smart as her older sister, who can read and write and play the piano. She can't do any of those things. As her parents praise her sister's many achievements, she feels less capable and begins to believe that she will never measure up to her sister. She is not smart enough to even try. Unaware of the source of her low self-esteem, this young girl moves through life feeling not good enough at sports to make the team at school, to audition for a part in the school play, to get into the university of her choice, or to follow her dream career. As a young adult, every time a new challenge comes along, this young woman's core belief shows up as an automatic thought: 'I'm not capable!'

Coming to our own defense

We are often unaware of the limitations that we have placed on ourselves and how much they influence our life choices and our courage to try. The reality of our self-limiting beliefs is that they are just that: they are beliefs, not facts. There's no time like the present to begin to examine what negative

beliefs we hold about ourselves, and start to separate fact from fiction.

Becoming you, unlimited

Here's the key to clearing out your self-limiting core beliefs. Our core beliefs are often buried deep, but they reveal themselves in our automatic thoughts! As a therapist, much of the work I do with my clients is cleaning up their automatic thoughts. Here's the good news. When you challenge your automatic thoughts, your core beliefs *automatically* begin to hold less and less value.

Here's an example of an automatic thought. A friend or colleague tells you about a dream job opportunity. The first thought that pops up in your head about your chance of landing that job is an automatic thought. Even though you have the experience and education the job requires if the thought that shows up is: "*I don't stand a chance,*" that's an automatic thought that needs to be dealt with!

When we begin to examine the truth of our negative automatic thoughts and challenge their veracity, we are reshaping and reframing our self-beliefs into healthier, more accurate,

and more positive thoughts that better serve us. We can let go of thoughts about ourselves that do not serve us, help us grow, thoughts that stand in our way of becoming a better, higher version of ourselves.

To live our highest and best life, we need to challenge ourselves and make our faith bigger than our fear. When we take the time to challenge the veracity of our automatic negative thoughts we begin the important work of clearing the obstacles that prevent us from living our highest and best lives.

Examine and Imagine

Pay attention when self-doubt and low confidence shows up

Examine negative automatic thoughts that arise. Are they true, or are they inaccurate?

Begin to see the source of your self-limiting beliefs, and let them go

Think about what you truly want from life

Imagine you, living your best life, pursuing what interests and inspires you

Begin to put in motion incremental goals to living your highest and best life



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About the author

*Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker and author on mental health and wellness. Her upcoming book, A Deeper Wellness, is scheduled for publication in 2021. <https://www.drmonicavermani.com/> Dr. Vermani has recently launched an exciting online self-help program, *A Deeper Wellness*, delivering powerful mental-health guidance, life skills, and knowledge that employees can access anywhere, anytime. <https://www.adeeperwellness.com/>*

