

sort **your** life out

# What do you **know** you **know**?

**"Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."**

*The White Queen – Alice Through The Looking Glass – Lewis Carroll*

**Do you have** people in your life who are always telling you what to do, happy to dispense opinions whether you want to hear it or not? Do you seek guidance from friends, colleagues, books or magazines and then apply them to your own life? If so, have you ever been so confident in using that advice that you would pass it on to your friends and relations? Indeed, have you drawn upon that advice to form your own belief?

Beliefs form the cornerstone of our lives, they thread through our being, discreetly guiding us through life's ups and downs allowing us to us to make sense of the world and to function in it.

We learned our beliefs about ourselves and the world in which we live, when we were very young. Our understanding of ourselves and our world derived through whatever versions were presented to us by the most influential adult figures in our lives.

Without question we absorbed and believed all the messages which were relayed in our environment. These may have been spoken words which criticized or appreciated us or they may have been more subtle thought and behavior patterns which influenced our home life. Once a belief is formed, we will tend to persevere with that belief and use it secure us to our understanding of the world around us. In fact we will be insistent not simply on believing, but to believing just what we do believe.

**A simple definition of a belief, is an assumed truth, thus, everything can be a belief — including this statement.**

Often, my father would return home from work with a small gem of information that had been conveyed to him throughout his day. This nugget of knowledge was then relayed to the family over the evening meal, but how could he be so sure that all that was said was true. How could we be confident enough to apply it to our own life? Just like the news that we read in the newspaper, can we be

convinced in accepting it as true and consent to it to reinforcing our beliefs.

**"Believe nothing just because a so-called wise person said it. Believe nothing just because a belief is generally held. Believe nothing just because it is said in ancient books. Believe nothing just because it is said to be of divine origin. Believe nothing just because someone else believes it. Believe only what you yourself test and judge to be true"**

*[paraphrased] Buddha*

Beliefs hold power, they have the potential to divide a nation, and they can create turmoil and unrest. You only have to switch on the TV and give a brief glance at the world news, to see how beliefs divide countries and lead to war. But what are your beliefs, what do you hold be true to you? This is not a question of religion; this is more an enquiry into what makes you tick. In 1951 a radio show entitled, '**This I Believe**' by Edward R. Murrow, invited people from all walks of life to present their personal philosophies

“people of all kinds who need have nothing more in common than integrity, a real honesty, will write about the rules they live by, the things they have found to be the basic values in their lives”. The radio shows presenter forewarned his audience that this would not provide an answer for the problems of life and help overcome the issues of the time. And yet in talking to people, in listening to them, I have come to realize that I don't have a monopoly on the world's problems. Others have their share, often far bigger than mine. This has helped me to see my own in truer perspective: and in learning how others have faced their problems—this has given me fresh ideas about how to tackle mine”

*Edward R Murrow*

**TASK – What do you Believe**

A friend of mine, was so inspired to write his own I believe by a quote from the movie Bull Durham, that he set about writing to a whole host of people, including celebrities for their “I believes”. In the film Kevin Costner plays an aging baseball player, who after several years as a journeyman player has developed his own bar room philosophy e.g. “I believe in the small of a woman's back, the hanging curve ball, high fiber, good scotch.....” Neither scholarly nor esoteric, but a simple code that made sense for him and the complexity of his life.

On that basis, we invite you to write down your I believes, the simple things that make your life better, here are some examples to get you started

**I believe in a firm handshake and looking people in the eye**  
**I believe that it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.**  
**I believe that you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.**  
**I believe that you can keep going long after you think you can't.**

*Anon*

The task is meant to be for you, not necessarily to share, but for you to find truths that resonate with you. There may well come a point when you wish to divulge those beliefs to others, but before you do, re read them again and ask yourself what do you know you know?

I recall a story from a seminar I attended several years ago. It told of a distraught mother who was worried that her young son was eating too much sugar, so she



decided to consult the local wise man. After a journey of several hours, she arrived at the wise mans village and was ushered into his hut. There she told of her son and asked for his help. The sage pondered and instructed her to return in two weeks with her son. Two weeks passed and again they embarked on the long journey to the wise mans village. Excited that a miracle cure had been prepared they sat anxiously waiting for the sage to enter. The guru sat in front of the child and said “don't eat sugar!” disappointed the mother and son left.

**The moral?** How could the sage tell the young boy to do something if he hadn't tried it himself? The sage now knew what it was like to give up sugar so therefore he could pass on his wisdom without restraint. In short, he knew he knew, as he had first hand experience

As we examined at the beginning of this article, all too often people are happy to dispense of advice and more often than not we are happy to accept that guidance at face value. Those more astute amongst us may already be practicing a higher degree of restraint in accepting second hand advice. But what about passing on advice? I'm sure those of you with children, or those who work in education are pretty au fait with dispensing advice, even though it may be directives from above. But what infinite wisdom would you wish to convey to your kith and kin if given the chance?

We all have little nuggets of worthwhile advice from experiences and people we have encountered. They can remain locked away in our psyche for eternity, or they can be used rather like a manual to help us and others navigate our course through our being.

With your list of 'I believes' and your knowledge of what you know consider the advice you would wish to bestow to those you love to help guide them through life's ups and downs. You may recall a song entitled Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen) by the movie director Baz Lurhman. The song was based upon a valedictory speech to graduates of the

class of '97', but the advice that's dispensed proves entertaining, informative and constructive. (see below)

**Advice, like youth, is probably just wasted on the young**

*Mary Schmich*

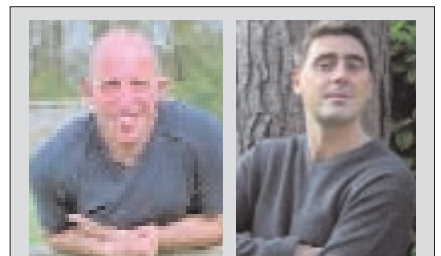
**Do one thing every day that scares you.**

**Don't waste your time on jealousy; sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind. The race is long, and in the end, it's only with yourself.**

**Remember compliments you receive, forget the insults; if you succeed in doing this, tell me how. Keep your old love letters, throw away your old bank statements.**

Have fun writing your manual for life and feel free to share your thoughts with us, we would love to read your 'I Believe' e mails.

For details of our events and workshops and to receive our free monthly news letter, visit [www.sortyourlifeout.com](http://www.sortyourlifeout.com) or phone **01323 635030** for more details



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