



# Beliefs Drive Our Behaviours

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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When a baby elephant is born, those in charge use a chain around one of its legs and a stake in the ground to limit its ability to roam. Over time, even though the elephant grows to more than 5,000 pounds and has considerable strength, it has a belief that it cannot move beyond what the length of the chain allows. It has been conditioned.

As humans, we also are conditioned. In childhood we are influenced by our parents who may pass on ideas that aren't even rational – yet we believe what they say – even into adulthood at times.

And growing older does not necessarily mean that we are wiser. We tend to cling to what we know and not change our behaviours even if we could do better. Our fear and the belief that we are safe doing what we know limits us and prevents change.

Sometimes others challenge us or try to convince us that they have a better plan for our lives. After serving more than 8,000 clients, I have accepted the fact that people do not change until they reach a point of belief that life isn't working for them! From the outside, it might not look like it is working but that opinion doesn't hold much weight.

Being angry or trying to force your beliefs and ideas on someone else might cause them to be more determined than ever to resist. In fact, they may even conclude that you are the one with the problem because you present as someone who is arrogant and narrow minded. Your insistence that you have the best or only answer can come across as judgmental and your passion may be viewed as obsessive. Let it go!

There is an old expression that states, "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar".

Unless a person truly believes that his or her life will be better and it will be worth the effort, they will not attempt change. And even if they attempt to change, it might not work for them.

Most of us have the attitude that we will believe things when we see them. We want evidence or proof that something is true and not just a conspiracy theory. Even when another person is totally convinced and passionate about something, we tend to stay in our comfort zone and not jump on board right away. That doesn't mean we aren't open to the concept. We just want to carry on and see what will happen.

One of the difficult things for people to understand is the idea that our beliefs drive our behaviours. It is not just what happens to us that causes consequences. It is how we interpret through our belief systems that make the difference.

Changing what happens to us might not be possible but disputing the beliefs that we hold through self-talk makes all the difference. For example, if you believe that the pandemic will destroy you and your family, you will likely experience high anxiety, sleep problems and fear of leaving your home. On the other hand, if you believe that you can take reasonable health precautions and depend on strengths gained through past experiences, you will likely enjoy peace and blessings despite the situation.

You don't have to be like the elephant who is conditioned to being a victim and lacking confidence to choose how he will live.

Don't let this pandemic be a chain and stake that restrict your ability to live a happy life that is full of blessings!