

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs



Regina L. Ross

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

"Your beliefs stick - even when they don't serve you well"

— Amy Morin



Where They Come From

Our self-image has been shaped over the years by a variety of sources — what our parents, teachers and bosses said to and/or about us; performance feedback via test scores; school grades or job appraisal ratings; and how we've been treated by peers. As a result of these experiences, we've developed some faulty beliefs about ourselves and the world around us which might not be serving us on the path to being the best that we can be.

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

Let me get personal. I somehow developed the notion that I had to consistently perform and produce at a high level in order to be liked, valued and accepted. As a straight-A student, I recall being placed on punishment in the 7th grade when I got a 'B' on my report card. Although my young mind saw this as reinforcement of my belief that anything less than excellent wasn't valued, I think my performance-driven view of the world began long before that incident.

Some examples of limiting beliefs are listed below.

I'm not not good enough	Making money is a struggle	I must produce and perform to be of value
I can't show emotion; that's a sign of weakness	I'm not smart enough	I have no time for rest or a social life if I want success
I'm too old / too young	Bad luck always follows me	You have to know the right people to get ahead
Loving, faithful marriages are extinct; everyone cheats	It's a dog-eat-dog world. I must do whatever it takes to get mine.	I don't deserve it

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

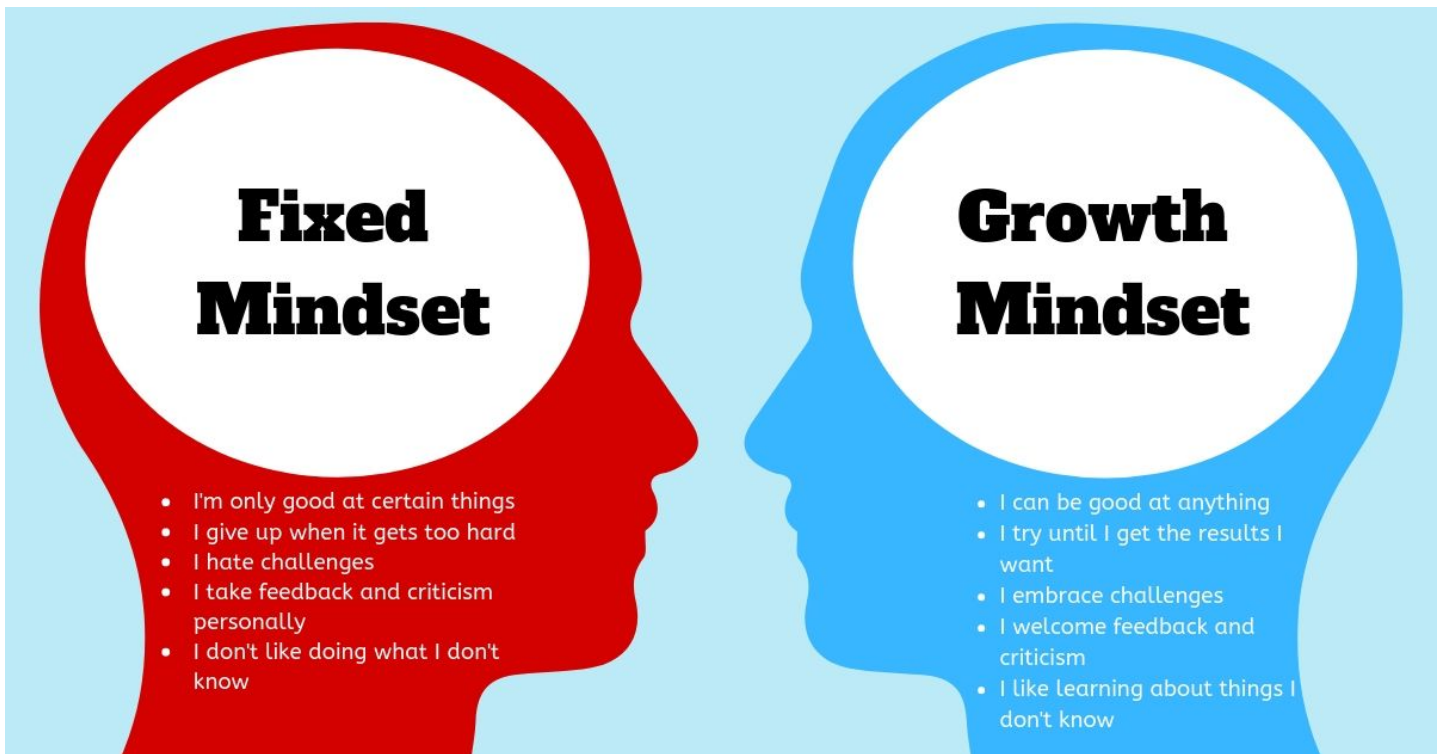
How They Show Up

Since these tricky beliefs operate in our subconscious, they often remain hidden from our awareness. They run in the background and trigger automatic reactions based on our distorted view through these faulty filters. For example, a friend of mine automatically dismissed the notion of applying for a promotion opportunity because of the limiting belief *“I don’t want to set myself up for disappointment – I know I won’t get it”*. Although he absolutely had the capability to perform and contribute at a higher level, his lack of confidence kept him from even trying. I’m also reminded of my initial coaching session with a newly promoted “high-potential” leader and inquiring about his career aspirations. He exclaimed *“I never thought I would get this far! I haven’t even thought about what’s next.”* His limited view of his potential prevented him from reaching for greater opportunities. In my own life, the limiting belief that my *self-worth and sense of value is tied to being ‘productive’* has caused me to rob myself of the space to just relax, reflect & rejuvenate. I’ve sacrificed quality time being *fully present* with loved ones because I felt compelled to multitask so I could get that one more thing done. I’ve avoided trying new things because I feared not being able to do ‘it’ exceptionally well.

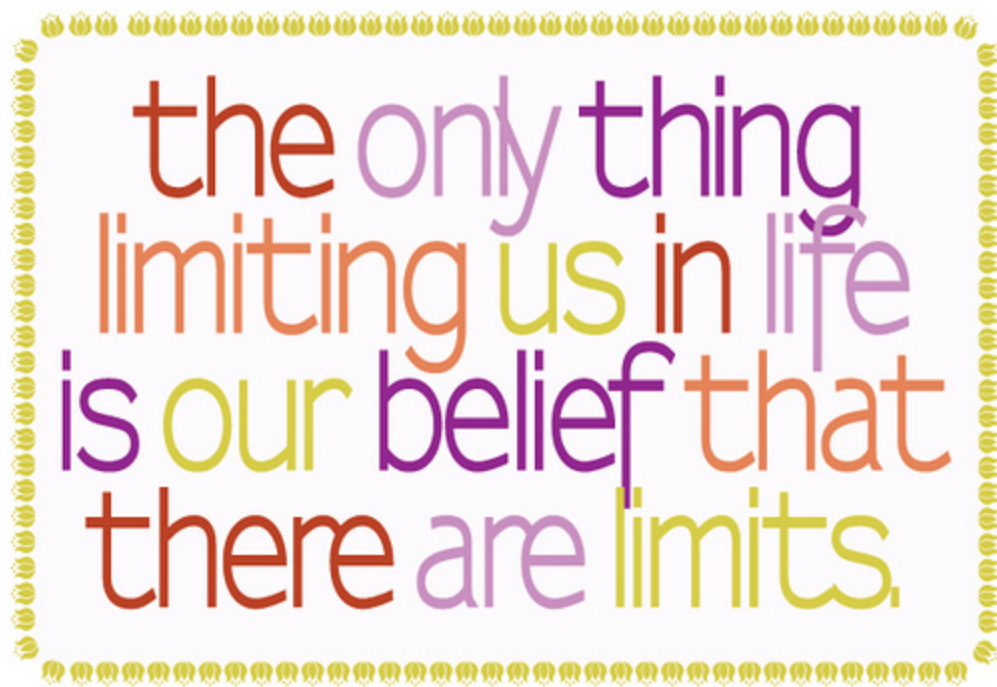
4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

What to do About Them

Thank God that I'm finally coming to realize the value of simply **being** instead of always **doing**; the freedom of **experiencing** instead of **performing**. I've conquered some other limiting beliefs and would like to share with you how I've done so. I believe the key to squashing these pesky limiting beliefs is to first recognize them and then to choose to employ a *Growth Mindset* instead of a *Fixed Mindset*.



4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs



Making the conscious choice to re-program thoughts that operate in your subconscious reminds me of the quote from Martin Luther: *"You cannot keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair!"* The point is that when a negative, unproductive thought periodically flits across your mind, identify it as the "stinking thinking" that it is and take the action needed to stop it in its tracks. This may sound easier than it actually is. No worries. I've researched methods for conquering limiting beliefs and incorporated the most common themes into this 4-step guide. I've included an example of my own personal struggle with the limiting belief around performance-based self-worth to demonstrate how to walk through this exercise:

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

4 Steps to Eliminate Limiting Beliefs:

1. **Identify It**

Brainstorm and write out these limiting beliefs. Think of all the instances where each belief worked against you. Recall times these beliefs kept you away from taking action towards something you wanted or negatively affected you emotionally and thus affected other areas of your life – relationships, health, etc. How has this belief hurt you in the past? Write it down. As you become aware of them, you can choose to work on overcoming them.

2. **Examine It**

Dig deep into memories from your past – childhood, teenage years, early twenties or even last year – what instance(s) brought you to this conclusion? Be specific and write them down using as many words as needed to describe them.

3. **Challenge It**

For your belief, look for one specific example where the statement is not actually true. Remember a time where you did something or experienced something – even through someone else – that was not in alignment with your belief. This step introduces the possibility that there are flaws in this belief.

4. **Reframe It**

The external event you identified as the source wasn't necessarily responsible, on it's own, for the formation of your limiting belief. Nothing has any meaning, unless we give it a meaning. The only power we can give to any external event or scenario is the power we allow **it** to have on us. **It** might feel like truth. But it's not. It's a perception. Reframe it as such. Brainstorm for other perspectives to apply to the source of your limiting belief.

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

My personal example

Identify It	Examine It	Challenge It	Reframe It
<p><i>My value and self-worth are tied to my performance.</i></p> <p><i>This belief has caused me to strive to make things 'perfect' instead of being content with doing my best. I've avoided trying new things because I feared not being able to do 'it' exceptionally well.</i></p>	<p>I was a straight-A student who got punished the 1st time I got a 'B' on my 7th grade report card. I felt that anything less than Excellent or Perfect wasn't good enough. This pressure to perform felt heavy and exhausting.</p>	<p>As I grew in my Christian faith, I learned how to receive God's unconditional love and acceptance just as I am, flaws & all. My college campus ministry mentor shared a scripture with me that helped me shift my perspective:</p> <p><i>"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me."</i></p> <p>I Corinthians 15:10</p>	<p>I got punished for making a 'B' in Physical Education because I didn't dress out and participate in sports / activities in which I didn't think I could perform well. The punishment wasn't tied to my performance being less than excellent, but was a result of my deliberate decisions to not participate in class activities. The consequences that result from my actions and life choices do not diminish my value and worth as a person.</p>

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

Before you take your turn at this exercise, let me share a few examples of how to reframe the limiting beliefs listed in the table above. I firmly believe that God's authority is higher than any other authority and what He says about me supersedes any other thought or opinion that has been formed about me. I've therefore challenged each of these limiting beliefs with the Word of God.

I'm not good enough

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." Psalm 139:14

"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession" 1 Peter 2:9a

Making money is a struggle

"But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth." Deuteronomy 8:18

"Beloved, I pray that in every way you may prosper and enjoy good health, as your soul also prospers." 3 John 1:2

I must produce and perform to be of value

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

I can't show emotion; that's a sign of weakness

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7

"For when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:10b

I'm not smart enough

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" James 1:5

I have no time for rest or a social life if I want success

"It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones." Psalm 127:2

Loving, faithful marriages are extinct; everyone cheats

"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." Mark 10:6-9

It's a dog-eat-dog world. I must do whatever it takes to get mine.

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Mark 8:36
"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Matthew 6:33

I don't deserve it

"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities." Psalm 103:10
"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

Now Your Turn...

Identify It

Examine It

Challenge It

Reframe It

4 Steps to Breaking Limiting Beliefs

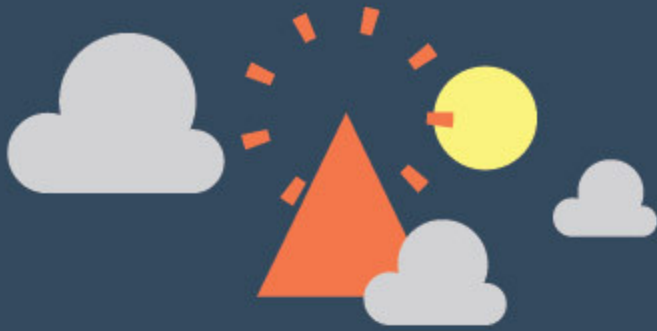
This exercise may be difficult, so I encourage you to enlist the support of a trusted confidant or [professional coach](#) to help you fully identify, examine, challenge and reframe your most debilitating limiting beliefs. You are worth the investment!

Let's Continue the Journey

I'd love to support you in your journey through the next stage of your personal transformation. Continue working with me through:

- * *Maximum Impact with Margin* online program**
- * *Fortify Your Foundation* group coaching program**
- * *1:1 Coaching***

Learn more



Congratulations! Let's stay connected

Thanks for purchasing this guide and making the investment in breaking your limiting beliefs. Click below to download your BONUS resource: "[Tolerations - Clear Your Mind](#)" checklist. Subscribe to my mailing list to receive free monthly resources.

Regina Ross is a certified HR & Change Management Practitioner and ICF-credentialed Executive Coach who helps leaders successfully navigate organizational and personal transformations. Contact Regina at reginaross@walkonpurpose.com, 203-701-9546, or www.walkonpurpose.com/contact.

