



Episode 45: How to Shift Limiting Self-Beliefs

Welcome to In the Right Direction podcast, where we believe you get to choose what's on your plate, you can manage the overwhelm, and that change is possible. I'm your host, Deb Elbaum, and I'm here to share insights and strategies to increase your happiness, one baby step at a time. Let's dive in.

Hi everyone, it's Deb. Here's my question today: What deeply held beliefs do you have about yourself? If you were playing the icebreaker game of share two things you are and one thing you're not, what would you say?

We all have self-narratives we've created in our mind about who we are and what we can do, and who we are not and what we can't do. These beliefs are prevalent in our self-talk, and they also show up when we describe ourselves to others.

Sometimes our self-beliefs are empowering. Like, I am someone who can take risks. I am a great listener. I can easily use data to solve problems. These empowering beliefs build up our inner leader and help us live more fully and purposefully.

Other times, though, our self-beliefs are negative and limiting. They are old stories we've bought into, from our inner critic or from others' critical feedback.

Like, I'm not confident. I can't speak up to my boss. I'm not comfortable with ambiguity.

Negative self-talk harms us, because even though it's not the truth, we say and think these limiting self-beliefs like they are 100% true.

Negative self-beliefs can undermine our happiness and personal growth. They reinforce old habits and patterns. They can talk us out of taking on stretch roles or trying out new ways of thinking or communicating.

Because when we make a definite negative statement about ourselves, it makes it harder for us to evolve, grow, or try something different. It makes it harder to edit or rewrite our self-narrative.

Limiting self-beliefs keep us in a fixed mindset.

And what most of us want is to be in a growth mindset. I know that you – my listeners - are committed to your personal and professional development, to learning and growing.

So today is all about helping you break free more easily from negative and limiting self-beliefs. Today is about shifting your old self-narratives to stories that are more generous, positive, and growth-mindset oriented.

Today's coaching strategy will help you start creating new self-perceptions and more empowering self-beliefs, so that you can be courageous and try new ways of leading and communicating, and new ways of being in relationship with yourself and with others.

Today, I'll share two powerful phrases that can help you shift the story of what you believe about yourself, who you are, and what you're capable of. These phrases are a brain strategy that can make it easier on your brain to edit and rewrite the story of you.

Here they are:

The first phrase is: Up until now...

The second phrase is: Starting now...

Up until now....and Starting now.

Let's talk through an example, so you see how they can shift your thinking.

A client and I were talking about the next steps in her career, and her process for exploring options and gathering data. Knowing how important networking is in the process, I asked her about her networking.

I am not good at networking, she said. She said it definitively, like there was no room for disagreement. That's how it was. It was a fixed limiting belief.

And here's the thing you've probably heard me say before. Our thoughts are powerful, and our thoughts create our reality. What we think – the perspective we're in – lets us say some things and not other things, think some things and not other things, and do some things and not other things.

This fixed limiting belief of hers had a strong impact on her behavior. Not only was it keeping her from reaching out to people, it was keeping her from even giving herself permission to think about different people she could reach out to.

It was time to update her limiting self-belief to a new set of beliefs that were more helpful, more allowing, and also true.

I invited her to try out the phrase Up until now, and we created some up until now statements.

Up until now...I think of networking as taking too much effort. Up until now, I'm scared of reaching out to certain people. Up until now, I see networking as being pushy.

I asked her what was helpful about that phrase, and she said that when she adds the phrase up until now, it helps her see those beliefs as being in the past. That phrase helped her separate those thoughts from where she is right now.

The gift of up until now is that it creates space in your thinking, and when there's space in your thinking, you can be intentional about where to focus your thoughts next.

We then added the phrase Starting now to see how that might allow her brain to think differently.

Starting now, she said, I can think of people I might be curious to reach out to. Starting now, I can think of two questions I might ask people. Starting now, I give myself permission to be uncomfortable with networking.

Starting now is an incredibly powerful phrase. It's about possibility. It's about telling a new story. Going in a new direction. Charting a new path.

Starting now is about giving ourselves permission to think, say, or do something different. It's about taking baby steps.

The key to successfully using the phrase starting now is that you have to create statements that feel true in your body when you say them. All of the statements my client said felt true; they felt like things she could think and try.

It would not have worked for her to say something like, starting now, I'm going to be the best networker in the world! Because that wouldn't have felt true.

Starting now statements require agreement of the body and mind. Starting now, I will think a bit more about networking. Starting now, I can ask other people their best networking tips. You see?

For this client, using starting now allowed her to create action steps to explore different roles and organizations more easily. And after our coaching, she was ready to make a list of potential people to reach out to. She felt more confident, productive, and forward thinking.

That's the impact of up until now and starting now. These phrases give us an opportunity to let go of limiting self-beliefs to start writing a new chapter in the book of our life, step into growth mindset, and create new brain pathways.

Let's bring this to you.

I invite you to try out this strategy.

Call to mind a limiting belief that feels like it keeps you stuck. One that starts with "I'm not a ..."

Then add these phrases to your thinking and say the statements out loud. For example, you might say:

Up until now, it's been hard for me to do this...or, I have shied away from doing this...or, I am confused about how to do this.

After you amend your belief to add up until now, add the phrase starting now.

Starting now: I give myself permission to think about this...to try this...to harness my courage for this.

See how your thinking shifts and what you might be able to feel, say, and do more easily, and with more clarity and confidence. Because, after all, you have challenges to take on, conversations to be had, and goals to achieve.

Thank you so much for listening and being part of my community. If you found today's episode inspiring and want to shift your limiting beliefs, please reach out. Email me at deb@debelbaum.com or go to my website debelbaum.com to schedule a complimentary consult. I look forward to it. I'm here to help you create your best self at home and at work, so that you're confident you're moving in the right direction for you.

Until next time!