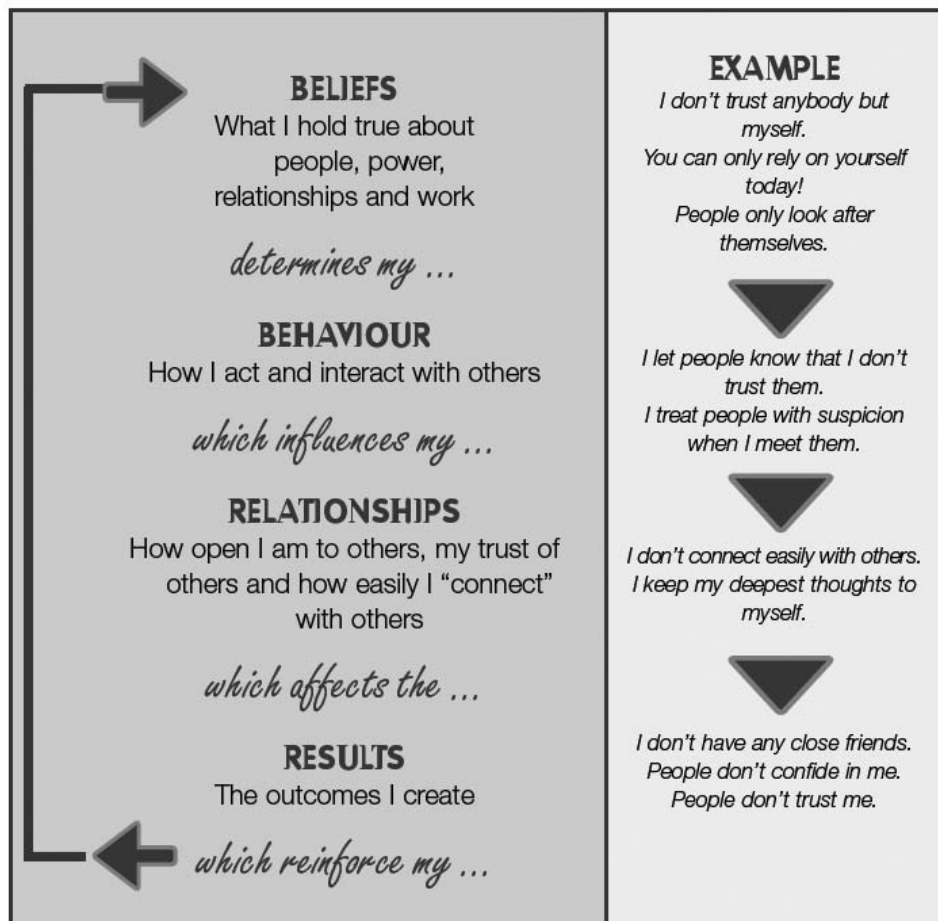


Imagine if you knew yourself so well that you could acquire valuable and marketable skills, choose exciting and stimulating jobs throughout your career, and even be paid to do something you enjoy! Imagine if, through self-knowledge, you could plan and guarantee a bright future. Sounds great, doesn't it? Well, you can do it!

Self-knowledge is exactly what it sounds like: knowledge, understanding and awareness of the self. And it's hugely important because it affects the image you have of yourself (yes, your self-image). A good, positive self-image allows you to have faith in the future, believe in who you are and believe in what you can achieve. It makes you self-confident and assertive. It empowers you to be self-assured about your abilities, while remaining humble enough to want to learn more throughout your lifetime.

The bottom line is that beliefs really do have the power to affect your behaviour, your relationships and the results of both. Let's look at the belief cycle:



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Moving forward, different questionnaires will help you to learn more about your interests, personality, abilities, talents and values. The insight you'll gain will guide you through the career research and career choice processes. As a result, you'll make decisions that are right for you and you'll steer yourself towards greatness!

Let's Begin!

The first step is to recognise that within you, you have a special gift. Something that has to be brought out for others to see, appreciate and enjoy. Challenge yourself to find out what your gift is and what your limits are. Then exceed those limits - that's what makes Olympic champions!

Finding out what you're good at depends on certain important attitudes:

- Never be afraid to try!
- Never be afraid to fail! Perseverance (staying power) pays off.
- There's no such thing as a shortcut to achievement. Continuous effort is needed.
- There's no ultimate point of success - only stepping stones to the next achievement.

Remember though, that you can't really know yourself totally and perfectly because there are blind spots and unexplored areas in your life. In fact, self-knowledge is a process – a giftopening process in which you unwrap layers of yourself, one by one.

Explore The Layers Of Your Own Self

- Your needs. These are your requirements, like food, shelter, security, friends, recognition, a sense of belonging or a sense of pride.
- Your abilities and aptitudes. These are your natural talents. Are you good with words, selfdisciplined, responsible, punctual, clever with numbers, good with your hands, artistic orgood at sports? Be proud of your achievements and take pride in everything you do, even the least important activities, because anything worth doing, is worth doing well!
- Your personality. These are the characteristics that make you unique, like warmth, patience, kindness, sensitivity, friendliness, generosity, gratitude, enthusiasm or ambition.
- Your interpersonal skills. This is your ability to communicate with other people, the way in which you present yourself and the overall impression you make on others. Remember: a smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks!
- Your values. These are the things that you believe in and that are extremely important to you, like status, knowledge, fame, independence or religion. Be true to your values and you'll develop a healthy self-image.
- Your interests. These are the hobbies and activities you enjoy, like being with people, reading, painting, cooking, gardening, playing sport, listening to music or dancing.
- Your aspirations. These are the goals that you want to achieve.
- Your shortcomings. These are the areas inwhich you could improve. Are you bossy, judgmental, impatient, untidy or lazy?

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Identifying and recognising these will enable you to make informed career choices:

- that are in line with your personal competencies;
- that suit your preferences;
and
- for which you are eligible (suitable).
- You can then choose a career by matching your layers with the characteristics required in your chosen field.

But first, try to develop valuable qualities like:

- **Motivation.** Motivated people are enthusiastic, willing to learn and contribute, and eager to make things happen.
- **Direction.** People with purpose and direction in their lives are usually successful. They know what they want, where they are headed and how to get there.
- **Goal orientation.** Successful people make a habit of identifying their goals and writing them down. They find ways to achieve their objectives and they commit themselves to turning dreams into reality (see Goal Setting).
- **Initiative.** Initiative is the capacity to recognise what needs to be done and to do it, without being told what to do or how to do it. People with initiative are able to work well on their own.
- **Resourcefulness.** The ability to be creative and flexible allows you to deal effectively with problems that you may not have experienced before.
- **Self-mastery.** This is achieved when you evaluate the consequences of your words and actions, and then speak and act in line with your ideals.
- **Control.** Control means that you don't blame other people or circumstances for who you are or what has happened to you. Control means taking full responsibility for your own life.
- **Courage.** Change is a major part of a dynamic and evolving world, and it often means that you have to take risks in order to grow.

**Failure is not falling down, but
staying down. It is not how many
times one falls that is important,
but how many times one stands up.**

Muhammad Ali

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