

Limiting Beliefs Exercise

An NLP-Based Self-Coaching Worksheet

Purpose

Identify a belief that may be restricting your choices or actions, examine how it is constructed, challenge unhelpful assumptions, and create a more useful belief that supports purposeful action.

Important: A limiting belief is a thought or interpretation that restricts what you consider possible, safe, or appropriate. This worksheet is for reflection and coaching practice; it is not a clinical assessment or a guarantee that changing a belief will change external circumstances.

Name:		Date:	
Belief area:		Intensity (0–10):	

Coaching rule: Do not fight the belief. First understand what it is trying to protect, what evidence supports it, and what evidence does not. Then decide whether a more useful interpretation is available.

1. Identify the Limiting Belief

Choose one specific belief connected to a current goal, decision, relationship, career, business, confidence, or personal-growth area.

Complete: "I cannot / I must not / I am not able to _____ because _____."

When does this belief usually appear? What situation triggers it?

What do you fear might happen if you acted against this belief?

What do you believe this belief is trying to protect you from?

Intensity check

1 = not true for me, 5 = very true for me

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The belief feels emotionally strong.					
The belief influences my decisions.					
The belief affects my behavior or action.					
The belief feels like a fact rather than an interpretation.					
The belief still feels true even when I have evidence against it.					

2. Separate Fact from Interpretation

Use the NLP Meta Model mindset: turn vague, absolute, or assumed statements into specific information.

Belief pattern	Ask yourself
"Everyone / no one / always / never"	Who specifically? Always? Never? What exceptions exist?
"I can't"	What specifically prevents me? What have I tried? What would make it possible?
"They will..."	How do I know what they will think, feel, or do?
"I have to..."	What would happen if I did not? Who says I must?
"If X, then Y"	How exactly does X cause Y? Is there another possible explanation?
"I am..."	Is this a permanent identity, or a behavior/skill/context that can change?

Rewrite your belief as a specific claim that could actually be examined.

What facts do you know? What are you assuming or predicting?

What exceptions, counterexamples, or past successes exist?

3. Explore the Belief's Positive Intention

In NLP coaching, a belief or behavior may be explored through the idea of positive intention: what useful outcome was it attempting to provide?

What does this belief try to help you avoid?

What does it try to help you gain or protect?

When might this belief have been useful in the past?

Is the same strategy still useful in your current situation? Why or why not?

What would be a healthier or more effective way to achieve the same protective intention?

Remember: understanding the intention does not mean you must keep the belief.

4. Change the Meaning — Reframing

Generate several alternative meanings before choosing one. The goal is not forced positivity; it is flexibility.

Current interpretation: “Because _____, it means _____.”

What is another possible explanation?

What would a wise, compassionate observer say about this situation?

What could this situation teach me or invite me to practice?

If this were a challenge rather than a limitation, what would I do next?

Which new interpretation is both useful AND realistic?

5. Belief Change Through Evidence

Instead of trying to “delete” a belief, build a more balanced belief using actual evidence and experience.

Question	My evidence
What experiences seem to support the old belief?	
What experiences contradict or weaken it?	
What have I already done that proves I have some capability?	
What would I need to learn, practice, or ask for?	
What evidence would change my mind about the old belief?	

What is the most balanced conclusion you can honestly make from the evidence?

6. Submodalities Observation

Briefly notice how the belief is represented in your internal experience. You are observing, not forcing a change.

When you think of the limiting belief, what do you SEE internally? (picture, distance, size, brightness, location)

What do you HEAR internally? (voice, words, volume, tone, speed, direction)

What do you FEEL in your body? (location, pressure, temperature, movement, intensity)

What happens to the experience if you imagine it farther away, smaller, quieter, or less intense?

What representation would make the belief easier to examine rather than automatically obey?

Note: If an exercise increases distress rather than creating useful distance, stop and return to grounding, present-moment awareness, or appropriate professional support.

7. Create a More Useful Belief

A replacement belief should be believable enough to use. Avoid replacing “I can never do this” with an extreme statement you do not believe.

Old belief: _____

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New belief: “I can / I am learning to / I choose to / I am capable of _____ when _____.”

Why is this new belief more useful?

What evidence supports the new belief?

What behavior would naturally follow if I acted from this belief?

What small action can I take within 24–48 hours?

8. Future Pace & Ecology Check

Imagine using the new belief in a real future situation. Check whether it supports your wider goals, relationships, values, and responsibilities.

Imagine yourself facing the old trigger one week from now. What do you notice when you respond from the new belief?

What do you SEE, HEAR, and FEEL differently?

How might this change affect your work, relationships, time, money, or other important areas?

Is there any downside or unintended consequence you need to plan for?

What adjustment would make the new belief more balanced and sustainable?

9. Belief Integration & Action Plan

Turn insight into behavior. A belief becomes more useful when you repeatedly test it through small, appropriate actions.

Trigger / situation	New response	Action	Evidence I collect

Re-rate the belief

Rate each statement from 1 to 5.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The old belief feels like an automatic fact.					
I can now see alternative interpretations.					
I can access a more useful response.					
I am willing to test the new belief through action.					
I have evidence that supports greater flexibility.					

Old belief intensity (0–10): _____ New belief confidence (0–10): _____ Next review date: _____

10. Final Reflection

What did you discover about the belief that you did not notice before?

What part of the old belief do you want to release, and what useful intention do you want to keep?

What new choice is available to you now?

Complete: "I no longer need to believe _____ in order to _____."

My commitment for the next 7 days:

Closing reminder: You do not need to prove that every old thought is false. The aim is to become more flexible: distinguish facts from interpretations, choose useful meanings, and take actions that generate new evidence.