



ACTIVE RATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Module 4. **Find Your Irrational Beliefs**

By now you have already learned a lot about your unconscious mind. You have understood the results you unconsciously attract, and beliefs you hold, that don't serve you well.

In the next Module you will get an amazing exercise to free yourself from irrational beliefs; also called limiting beliefs.

In this module though, I want to encourage you to give yourself one more opportunity to detect other ideas that block you, create tensions, that limit you, or that make you repeat mistakes.

We hold on to many limiting beliefs. Many don't create major disturbances. But others can cause various difficulties, and manifest limitations in various versions. It is normal to have a list of several irrational or limiting beliefs, but it's not necessary to live with the ones bothering you, or challenge others for no logical, or necessary reason.

This program is a self-development journey. The more you dare to look at your dark side, the more you will walk into a better place in life. As the saying goes: "the only way out is through!"

Generally speaking, irrational beliefs:

1. distort reality.
2. are illogical.
3. prevent you from reaching your goals.
4. lead to unhealthy emotions.
5. lead to self-defeating behavior.

Understand the system:

Primary beliefs are built on **demands (needs)**: They often feature phrases such as must, should, have to, need and ought.

We firm up beliefs in our early childhood. With irrational beliefs we transfer a desire into a need. Such as: "I want to be liked" into " I **need** (or must, should, have to, and ought to) be liked".

And what happens if the demand can't be satisfied? Example: "I would love to succeed and therefore I have to"; but what happens if I don't succeed?

How do I feel then? How do I deal with the situation?

If the response is: "I feel I have failed" the answer tells us the person is having this irrational belief to find confirmation in being a failure.

Yes OUCH! That's what we do to ourselves!

The irrational belief usually leads to the confirmation of the feeling of inferiority. That same feeling of inferiority was most probably felt as a child, and the **need** was created to keep the feeling of inferiority at distance.

All other Irrational Beliefs follow from the primary beliefs built on demands:

Awfulising: The word awful is in this context defined as anything that is evaluated as being worse than 100% bad. Example: "If I don't succeed in my presentation it will be awful"!

Low Frustration Tolerance (LFT): Otherwise known as I-can't-stand-it-itis, LFT beliefs feature an acknowledgement of a struggle and an assertion that the struggle is truly unbearable or cannot be stood. Example: "I cannot stand rude people!"

Conditional Self (other, life) Acceptance: Otherwise known as self-downing, this is where we define our self-based on one aspect. Example: "I'm so stupid to believe in this!"

These 3 irrational beliefs are usually the ones spoken out loud too.

Here follows a list of the **12 most common** irrational beliefs, each one in two versions. Adlerians call them "the dirty dozen"! In some cases, I will provide you with some sub-beliefs as well.

Exercise:

Read through these 12 core beliefs, and the sub-beliefs, and highlight or write down in your journal which ones you recognize are yours, or add your own version if you have uncovered one.

Belief no. 1:

- To be worthwhile as a person I must achieve, succeed at whatever I do, and make no mistakes.

or

- The idea that one should be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects if one is to consider oneself worthwhile.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I must be competent and successful.
- I must have an important skill or talent.
- I have to have importance.
- I can't fail.
- One should avoid doing mistakes.
- Mistakes are bad.

Your own version:

Belief no. 2:

- People should always do the right thing. When they behave obnoxiously, unfairly or selfishly, they must be blamed and punished.

or

- The idea that we must have certain and perfect control over things.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I must rate myself as either "good" and "worthy," or "bad" and "worthless."
- Everybody should treat everyone else (especially me) in a fair and considerate manner.
- Other people must not act incompetently or unwisely.
- Talented people must use their talent.
- Other people must not criticize me.
- If they unjustly criticize me, they are no good and don't deserve anything good to happen to them.

Your own version:

Belief no. 3:

- Every problem should have an ideal solution — and it's intolerable when one can't be found.

or

- The idea that there is invariably a right, precise, and perfect solution to human problems and that it is catastrophic if this perfect solution is not found.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I must understand the secrets of the universe.

- I cannot be happy unless I understand the nature and secrets of the universe.

- I need to understand things.

- Everything must have a reason or logic behind it.

- If something can't be explained, I don't believe in it.

Your own version:

Belief no. 4:

- I have virtually no control over my emotions and I cannot help feeling disturbed about things.

or

- The idea that one should become quite upset over other people's problems and disturbances.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I wish I could control myself, but it's just impossible.

- Emotions just come up.

- I simply am an emotional type.

- I'm controlled by my emotions.

- It's not my fault if others push my limits.

Your own version:

Belief no. 5:

- I need love and approval from those significant to me — and I must avoid disapproval from any source.

or

- The idea that it is a dire necessity for an adult human being to be loved or approved by virtually every significant other person in his community.

Possible sub beliefs:

- Others have to appreciate what I do for them.
- I must not do anything that would cause others to think less of me.
- I have to be nice to others, and others should be nice to me too.
- I can't upset others.
- I have to be here for others.
- Nobody should ever be rejected.

Your own version:

Belief no. 6:

- I must worry about things that could be dangerous, unpleasant or frightening — otherwise they might happen.

or

- The idea that if something is or may be dangerous or fearsome one should be terribly concerned about it and should keep dwelling on the possibility of its occurring.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I must avoid dangerous or life-threatening situations.
- If I do encounter such situations, I must worry about them to make them go away.
- If I think hard enough of potential dangers, I'm more prepared for them.
- I must control, avoid or change life's dilemmas.
- The world is a dangerous place.
- One should really not push his luck.

Your own version:

Belief no. 7:

- Because they are too much to bear, I must avoid life's difficulties, unpleasantness, and responsibilities.

or

- The idea that it is easier to avoid than to face life difficulties, and self-responsibilities.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I must successfully avoid unpleasant or undesirable situations.

- It should be easy.

- I can't control my emotions in difficult situations.

- I'm not strong enough.

- It's often too difficult.

- If it becomes difficult it's a sign that I'm on the wrong track.

- Things should happen naturally.

Your own version:

Belief no. 8:

- Events in my past are the cause of my problems — and they continue to influence my feelings and behaviors now.

or

- The idea that one's past history is an all-important determiner of one's present behavior and that because something once strongly affected one's life, it should indefinitely have a similar effect.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I must think, feel and act the same as I always have.

- My past has such a strong influence on me that I cannot change.

- I'm a victim of my past.

- Things always remain the same.

- I have no power.

- Hope is only for those who are born happy.

- I have all reasons to have problems.

Your own version:

Belief no. 9:

- Things and conditions absolutely must be the way I want them to be and must never be too difficult or frustrating.

or

- The idea that it is awful and catastrophic when things are not the way one would very much like them to be.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I am right, and I know why.
- I have no patience.
- Others waste my time when not doing it my way.
- Things must go the way I want them to go.
- I need what I want.
- It's my personal right to live according to my ideas.

Your own version:

Belief no. 10:

- Everyone needs to depend on someone stronger than themselves.

or

- The idea that one should be dependent on others and needs someone stronger than oneself on whom to rely.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I must depend on other people because I can't depend on myself.
- I must rely on superstition and religion especially in difficult times.
- I'm weak.
- I don't have in capabilities what others have.
- Some are simply stronger than others.
- I don't have courage.

Your own version:

This two last beliefs are not on the recording.

Belief no. 11:

- My unhappiness is caused by things that are outside my control — so there is little I can do to feel any better.

or

- The idea that human unhappiness is externally caused and that people have little or no ability to control their sorrows and disturbances.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I ought to suffer as long as the world, or the situation remains unjust.

- The world is an awful place.

- We should not have children in this world.

- I don't have the right to be happy as long as others suffer.

- We are all victims of the system.

- We have no power in this world.

Your own version:

Belief no. 12:

- I shouldn't have to feel discomfort and pain — I can't stand them and must avoid them at all costs.

or

- The idea that human happiness can be achieved by inertia and inaction.

Possible sub beliefs:

- I must never feel depressed, anxious or enraged.

- It's not right to feel bad, life is to enjoy.

- There is no point in trying too hard, or have struggles in life.

- My life must have meaning and purpose.

- If I can't create meaning or purpose for myself, the universe or something supernatural must provide it for me.

- I must avoid everything that is not for me.

Your own version:
