REVERSING OUR CORE BELIEFS

This exercise extends the previous exercise and will enable you to further identify certain core beliefs that are running in the "background" of your life.

Core beliefs are hardened, rock-like thoughts and assumptions that are based on choices and decisions we make in life that are long forgotten and invisible to our awareness. Our unseen system of core beliefs guides our behavior and determines how we view ourselves, other people and the world. We have developed core beliefs in virtually every area of our life and it is these beliefs that create limits on our happiness, success and personal fulfillment. The reason that we don't "see" our beliefs is that we live "inside" them. Beliefs are like boxes that we live in and become "used to" and thus take for granted as to what reality "is" or "should be". While particular beliefs give us a certain sense of safety and security and predictability in life, they can also become our prison when our spirit is yearning for a greater freedom and expansion as to what is possible for us. Beliefs are like our inner "walls" that have no doors and restrict us from experiencing new possibilities in life.

The "Stuff" Of Which Beliefs Are Made Of

Beliefs are nothing but thoughts that we affirm to ourselves over and over and which we take to be true. A belief can consist of a very simple thought such as "Life is hard" or it can be a complex array of thoughts and statements such as in a belief *system.* Whether you are aware of it or not you are always affirming what you believe. In fact, if you really listen to yourself you are continually making a case for the 'rightness" of your beliefs even when those beliefs are detrimental to your happiness and well-being! Your "inner lawyer" is continually justifying and being "right" while making other beliefs "wrong". The way to keep a belief system going is to continually affirm it and justify it and *never* question it.

One of the reasons that certain beliefs are so difficult to let go of is that they have become the basis of our identity, who we take ourselves to be. To *not* have a certain belief would feel as if you are nothing and this would naturally feel terrifying to you. But when you can truly "take a risk" and release your negative and limiting beliefs, you will discover that "who you are" is still around but a much happier human being.

A belief is an attempt to say what something "is" or "should be" or what something "is not" or "should not" be. You have literally "made up" or "taken on" your beliefs. You did not come into this world with a set of beliefs about yourself and life. You formed your beliefs out of your experiences and, given the nature of certain experiences, the beliefs you formed were the only ones that made sense to you. As children we

naturally conclude that certain things are "true" about ourselves, about life and about relationships. And it is these beliefs that we carry into our present situation and relationships.

In this exercise, you will have an opportunity to identify certain core beliefs that you have taken to be "true". It is an exercise in being truly honest with yourself. You cannot change any belief that you first don't "own" as something that is "yours". When you can own your beliefs, however negative or limiting they may be, you open up the possibility of discovering new possibilities that are in accord with reality.

Look over the core beliefs below and check the ones that seem familiar or at least somewhat familiar to you. These core beliefs are certainly not the only ones that exist in the world. Feel free to write down any other ones that appear to "fit" for you. After checking off the ones you can relate to, then consider the impact that these beliefs have had on your life and personal happiness.

Then experiment with *reversing* the belief. For example, "I must hide my true feelings" try reversing it by saying, "It's okay to express my true feelings". Or, "I must control my partner" to "I could accept my partner". There are many different ways that you could reverse a belief or express its opposite. Just play with various ways and then ask yourself if the reverse is, or could be, more true than the original.

What are my core beliefs?
What is the impact on my life of having these beliefs?
How could I reverse these beliefs?
Is the opposite belief true, or truer than the original?

Beliefs About Yourself	Beliefs About Relationships	About Life
❏I don't deserve love ❏I must earn love to deserve it ❏I'm not lovable ❏To be loveable I must always agree ❏I'm not important ❏I'm not creative ❏I must please others to be worthy ❏I don't fit in ❏I'm not capable ❏I'm not a worthwhile person ❏My opinions aren't wanted ❏My thoughts are dumb ❏I'm a bad person ❏Bad things I've done are not forgivable ❏I can't do it ❏I'm stupid ❏I'm not as smart as others so I am no good ❏I'm clumsy ❏I'm ugly ❏I fail no matter how hard I try ❏I don't deserve pleasure ❏I have to yell to get anyone to listen ❏I'm boring ❏I'm not supposed to have fun ❏It's bad to grow up ❏I'm not respected ❏I can't have what I want ❏It's not okay to feel good ❏I don't deserve happiness ❏I'm not a loving person ❏I must hide my true feelings ❏I have to suffer in some way to receive love ❏I'll never live up to my parents expectations ❏I can't live up to my self image	❏I don't have what it takes to make a relationship work ❏A relationship will only work with the right person ❏I'll never do it right ❏I'll never find the right person ❏If I love I will be hurt ❏I'll get hurt if I get too close in a relationship ❏All the good people are already in relationships ❏I can't attract/keep a good person with my body looking like this ❏I'm a loser ❏I have to take what I can get ❏I need my partner ❏My partner can't get by without me ❏S/he is just after my money ❏Men/women want only one thing ❏Women/men can't be trusted ❏We should enjoy doing the same things ❏S/he should support me ❏S/he is supposed to take care of me ❏It is my job to improve my partner ❏I have to protect/defend my partner ❏It means something about me if my partner is attractive/unattractive ❏S/he doesn't understand me ❏S/he doesn't accept me for who I am ❏What my partner says/does means something about me ❏Relationships are hard ❏Relationships don't last ❏People I depend on will let me down ❏I take away the energy of the person I am with ❏The one I love will abandon me ❏It means something about me if my relationship doesn't last ❏Divorce is a sin/a failure ❏I can't win so I might as well get even ❏I'm not meant to have a relationship ❏My family must approve of my relationship ❏Even if I try to explain I won't be heard ❏I must control my partner ❏Marriage is a trap ❏If s/he really know me, s/he wouldn't be interested ❏I have to have a beautiful/muscular body to be desirable ❏Romance is only for the young	❏People don't want to listen to me ❏The world isn't a safe place ❏The world is an unhappy place ❏The world won't survive and neither will I ❏Life is unfair ❏Life is hard ❏Life is full of stress and overload ❏Men are tough, scary and angry ❏Women are tough, scary and angry ❏people are out to get me ❏The world owes me a living ❏The government always lies to us