

Our Beliefs Determine our Success

“Whether you think you can or think you can’t, you’re generally correct.”

-Henry Ford

Duke University Head Men’s Basketball Coach Mike Krzyzewski (Coach K.) is arguably the best coach at any level at any sport. Legend has it that one year, just before the start of the NCAA National Championship Tournament, Coach K pulled his team together. He gave the team a copy of the tournament bracket along with a challenge. The challenge was to take the bracket and decide how many of the 64 tournament teams truly believed that they could win it all. With the challenge still hanging in the air, Coach K and his staff left his team to think.

Ever heard of a belief window? Hyrum W. Smith is co-founder and Vice Chairman of the Board of Franklin Covey; an organization training and motivating over 40,000 people each year. Smith says a belief window is a small invisible lens about three inches from ones eyes. “If you’re human,” he says, “you have one.”

Everything we see is viewed through this belief window. For example, what comes to mind when we see a pit bull? How about a Wal-mart store? A teacher? Trash Collector? Priest? Actress? Mercedes? SUV? The thoughts, feelings and emotions are our beliefs. We have beliefs on each and everything we see because we see everything through this belief window.

Some of the time, these beliefs are ‘just there’. Coming from our youth through our family, community, church etc. These are beliefs that we don’t think about. We just accept them as truths. Other times, the beliefs on our belief windows are from personal experiences. All of the time, these beliefs determine how we see the world.

You may be interested to know that after some time, a team captain pulled Coach K. and the coaching staff back in the room. The team had looked at the bracket and was somewhat astonished. Of the 64 teams, they reasoned, there were probably only about a half a dozen who really believed they had a chance to win it all! I agree with them, it seems that some teams are just happy to have made the tournament. Others would consider success a first round win. Still other teams have their sights set on making it to the sweet sixteen or even the elite-eight. But of the 64 teams, there are but a handful who truly believe they can win it all.

I think that we sometimes get these types of single eliminate, winner-take-all type events confused with life. While there can be only one national champion, unless we’re talking football, each of use can reach our personal goals. In life, it’s not about competing against the field but about excelling to be the best person we can be. Being that best person often means having to closely scrutinize the lens through which we see the world. The process of changing beliefs on a belief window, Hyrum Smith says, “is personal growth.”

Years ago Henry Ford coined a phrase, “Whether you think you can or think you can’t you’re generally correct.” Whether we believe that or not probably has something to do with a small invisible lens about three inches from our eyes...

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