

Take the Limits Off

We all have them—beliefs, even unconscious ones, that hold us back. This is a little like driving down the freeway, 70 miles an hour, with the emergency brake fully engaged. You may be getting somewhere, but you are most certainly tearing up the car. The instructions in the owner's manual should read: "Locate the beliefs that limit you to release your inner brake."

When I began speaking professionally, I learned the hard way how beliefs impact performance. One of my self-limiting beliefs was: "It's very important for people to like you—to approve of you." With practice, I could take this belief to a whole new level: "It's the most terrible thing in the whole wide world if people don't absolutely love you, and they might not."

This belief drove my performance. Above anything else I desperately needed everyone in every audience to like me. I could receive thundering applause and wonderful feedback, but if I had one mediocre evaluation or if I didn't "feel the love," I would instantly turn that into a weapon and torture myself all the way home. This is ridiculous behavior—really ridiculous and really painful behavior.

The obsessive need to be liked became the primary focus of my performance. It was like a drug. I was an approval addict, and my performance suffered. I continued to struggle with this behavior until I identified the belief driving it. Then I understood: "It's not about people liking you. In fact, it's not about you at all! This is about them. It is about making a real difference."

"All things are created twice. We create them first mentally, then physically." —Stephen Covey

With an audible sigh of relief, I mentally crossed out the

rule “It’s important to be liked” and replaced it with “It’s important to make a lasting difference.” I was free then to focus on the audience and on making a positive impact. I enjoyed my work more, and my performance improved.

How do you locate your self-limiting beliefs? Begin with what you believe about your accomplishments, strengths and abilities. What are you really good at? What achievements are you most proud of? What skills have you mastered? Start with what you believe about yourself, and then listen to what you say to yourself.

*Excerpt from A Softer Strength: Six Characteristics of a Godly Woman (CharismaHouse) by **Dondi Scumaci**.*