

Self-beliefs and behaviour

Our self-beliefs; particularly our sense of power, control and value; have a major influence on our behaviour and how our life goes generally. Power, control and value drive a number of elements including how we relate to other people, our ideas of what we can make happen, the level of control we feel we have in different situations and the expectations and standards we accept and set ourselves in life.

For example, if we have secure levels of power and control, we are likely to enjoy being action and achievement focused. However, if our sense of personal value is low, then we may push our self to the point of burnout because we fail to prioritise our own wellbeing above other influences. Furthermore, personal value plays a significant part in our willingness to admit we are struggling and/or need help.

People with low levels of power, control and value can make things happen but, to them, it feels like hard work. Their insecure self-beliefs (and accompanying thought & talk), create an internal perception that they are struggling against how things should be; that progress for them is unusual and temporary.

Success is not experienced as 'genuine' and perhaps even treated as mere luck. So, despite what others would consider to be a proven track record, they feel insecure and not in control, with an expectation that normality will inevitably return in the form of problems and even failure.

To counter these feelings (which are amplified under stress), individuals can engage in overly aggressive or passive behaviours which, in turn, can be experienced by others as intimidation, bullying, negativity, resistance, underperformance, incompetence, destructive, damaging to team culture, isolating.....

An interesting thing to note is how contradictory their behaviours can be. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, some people use 'inconsistency' subconsciously as a way of controlling others by "keeping them on their toes". For example, something can be OK one day and not OK the next; laughing something off one moment then getting angry the next time. They can also treat different people very differently for no apparent reason, or change how they treat the same person from day to day.

Secondly, they can flip between aggressive and/or passive behaviours depending on the situation, mood and who they are interacting with. For example, a middle manager with low power, control and value can be overly passive

with their manager and overly aggressive with their own team members.

To exemplify this, we have provided a list of common behaviours demonstrated by people with low personal power, control and value.

- Motivated by (and sensitive to) power and position (people-competitive),
- Threatened by other people's success, put people down, spread critical gossip, talk negatively about people behind their backs while being pleasant to them in person,
- See their own role/life as better, worse, harder, busier than others,
- Take over & take credit for successful ideas and projects,
- Use position and/or intimidation to control, bully and reduce self-beliefs of others,
- Lack assertiveness, unwilling to stand their ground, keep things bottled up and can be vulnerable to deflecting their frustration and anger onto others,
- High susceptibility to stress, anxiety and depression,
- Avoid accountability, quick to blame and shift responsibility, quick to anger,
- Surround themselves with similar thinkers, create 'think alike' teams,
- Do not give or accept praise (requires acceptance of value),
- Cannot handle criticism – 'explode', strike back or collapse.

The good news is, we can modify and improve our sense of power, control and value deliberately by first doing a self-audit on these beliefs and having honest conversations with people who can reflect how we are behaving and the impact it has on them. From this awareness, we can choose to make changes in our thinking, reactions, and behaviours for the deliberate benefit of all involved.

Examples can include: active listening (shows respect), giving praise/compliments where they are due; asking/requesting – not demanding of others; acknowledging self and others' contributions and successes; using assertive communication; taking full accountability for behaviours; positive self-care and collaborative care; seeking and acknowledging different viewpoints; accepting constructive criticism as an opportunity to grow.

Modelling these behaviours will habituate them in memory to create 'a new normal' for personal and team performance.