



ADVANCED LEVEL RITUALS: CULTIVATING HEALTHY BELIEFS FALSE BELIEFS (INTROJECTS)

So, how do you begin to identify your false beliefs? It starts by learning to distinguish between what's *really* true about you and the *false* beliefs you were conditioned to accept, also called introjects. *Introjects are ideas, attitudes or beliefs that are unconsciously adopted from other people such as parents, peers, teachers, social and cultural networks, or the media.* Introjects are a defense mechanism, first defined by Sigmund Freud, which occur when a person internalizes the voice of an external authority figure, such as a parent. The child will identify with that outside influence so strongly and intensely that he internalizes the introject as truth. For example, a father telling his son: “boys don’t cry” and the boy never cries again. This is an example of an introject and—I might add—a powerful and destructive one.

Introjects can also be positive and life-affirming. But when they’re negative, they can lead to experiences like Mark’s, where the psychological wounds run so deep that they impact every area of one’s life. We can heal false beliefs by swapping them for healthy beliefs that accurately reflect who we are today and strengthen our sense of self-worth. We do that through the repetition of saying what is true (or what we want to be true) about ourselves until the body and mind fully inhabit the new, healthy belief.

Swap in Healthy Beliefs

Look at the following list. As you reflect on your childhood, think about what introjects or messages are still shaping your attitudes and beliefs about yourself. Circle the ones that remain part of your present life. Divide these messages into two categories—ones you want to hold on to that serve you and the ones you want to leave behind.

WHAT MESSAGES HAVE SHAPED YOU?

Click or circle all that apply

FALSE BELIEFS - *Introjects*

SHAME

- I should have known better
- I should have done something
- I did something wrong
- I am to blame
- I cannot be trusted
- My best is not good enough

ADVERSE SOCIAL/ FAMILIAL NORMS

- Anger is bad, scary, and not safe
- Never show you're afraid
- Race/gender determine intelligence
- Emotions are meant to be hidden
- We don't talk about painful events
- Grief is painful; crying is weak
- We must be strong
- Vulnerability is weak
- You can't trust people
- People are dangerous

HEALTHY BELIEFS

CONFIDENCE

- I did the best I could
- I do/did what I can with what I've got
- I do/did my best
- I am not at fault
- I am trustworthy
- I do my very best

NOURISHING SOCIAL/ FAMILIAL NORMS

- I am angry
- I am afraid
- I am you
- I am expression
- I am in pain
- I am free to grieve
- I am delicate
- I am courageous
- I am discerning
- I am safe

FALSE BELIEFS - *Introjects*

UNCERTAINTY & ANXIETY

- I cannot trust myself
- I am not in control
- I must be perfect
- I must please everyone
- I am weak
- I am trapped
- I have no options

IMMOBILIZED

- I cannot get what I want
- I cannot handle it/stand it
- I cannot succeed
- I cannot stand up for myself
- I cannot let it out
- I am helpless

SCARCITY

- I am not good enough
- I am a bad person
- I am terrible
- I am damaged
- I am defective
- I am worthless/inadequate
- I am insignificant/unimportant
- I deserve only bad things
- I am stupid
- I am an outsider

HEALTHY BELIEFS

CHOICE & AGENCY

- I trust myself
- I am influential
- I am fluid
- I please me
- I am assertive
- I am liberated
- I am flexible

EMPOWERED

- I am assertive
- I am resilient
- I am success
- I am my voice
- I am a force
- I am powerful

ABUNDANCE

- I am more than enough
- I am good
- I am sacred
- I am whole
- I am exquisite
- I am 100% worthy
- I am significant/I matter
- I deserve abundance
- I am smart
- I belong

FALSE BELIEFS - *Introjects*

- I am different
- I am a failure
- I am alone

BODY SHAMING

- I am ugly
- My _____ is too big
- My _____ is too small
- I am too _____
- I wish I was _____
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

HEALTHY BELIEFS

- I am special
- I am success -vs- successful
- I am rooted

BEAUTY & SELF APPRECIATION

- I am exquisite
- I am just the right size
- I am stunning
- I am just right
- I am beautiful just as I am
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

First, take a few minutes to simply celebrate the ones you circled on the right—the ones you do already and want to take with you! I applaud you for acknowledging how awesome you are, as you are (big applause!). Take a bow or pat yourself on the back! Yayyyy!

Okay, we can move on now...

In each section above look at the beliefs you circled in the left column. Draw an arrow to the corresponding statements on the right (or one you prefer). Start with the mantra you most want to be true from the *right column*. We will work with it next.