

Belief Window

Kurt originated the concept of Belief Window in the 1980s. He wrote and illustrated this material a few years later, experimenting with the integration of visual and written elements around a central metaphor.

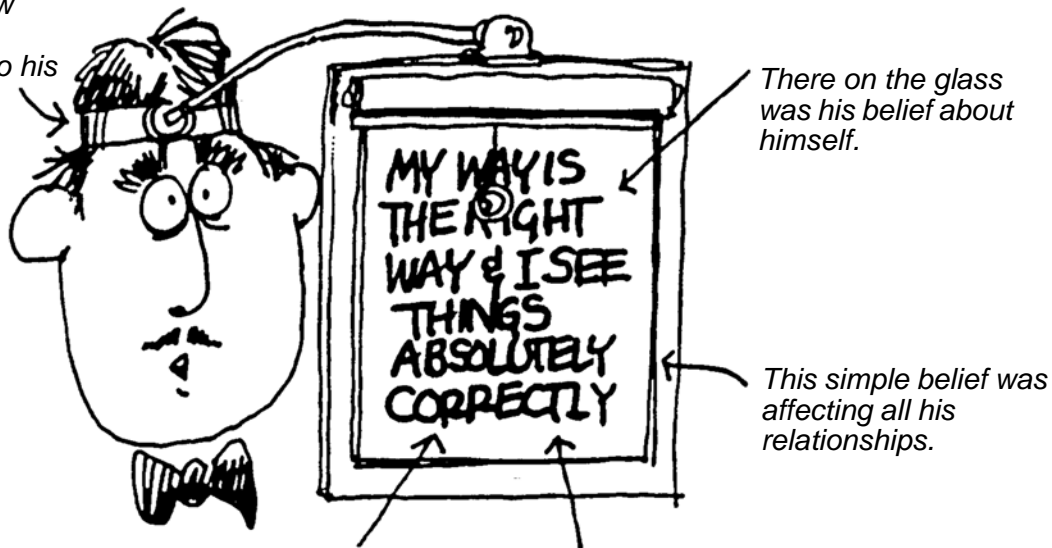
We're including it here because it is such a central tenet of discernment.

I made a unique discovery during a time when I was associated with a certain multimillionaire. I had worked with him on an occasional basis for years. Over all this time, he had exhibited a lot of very strange behavior. In the early years, before he made his money, his associates thought he was weird, but after he became rich, he was “eccentric.” With a laugh and a shrug, people would explain his sometimes odd conduct as sunspot activity or tight shorts.

Then, while attending a meeting with this man, I saw the reason for his strange behavior. It was a meeting where I didn't have to do anything but be there; my body needed to fill a chair, but my mind could be on the back side of the moon. As the meeting progressed, I suddenly had a flash of insight. I could see this man's beliefs about himself just as if they were written on a window hanging in front of his face.

I could also see one of the principles written on the window: “MY way is the RIGHT way, and I see things absolutely correctly.”

The window was firmly fastened to his head.



This primary belief was also affecting most of his choices.

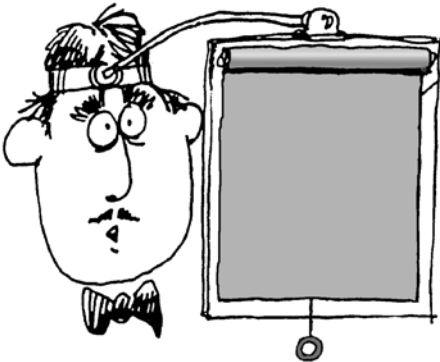
He just naturally assumed that this belief was correct.

THE INVISIBLE SUDDENLY BECAME VISIBLE

With a flash of insight, I saw the future and the disasters that would be mine if I continued to work with this man. I could also see the past, and the thread that tied those years of erratic behavior together into a coherent pattern.

Put yourself in my shoes, and you can see the power of understanding that single principle on a person's belief window: If someone who has bought into that principle were to join you in a business venture, and the business failed, whose fault would he insist it has to be—his, or yours? In a disagreement over management or marketing directions, who would have the only correct view? As long as that principle is written on his belief window, could you ever have an equitable exchange with him?

By reading the principle on his belief window, I saved myself from financial disaster.



Seeing and accepting the pattern behind the choices makes the blind go up, and the writing on the window becomes visible.

Having that insight was a lifesaver for me economically. After realizing that the patterns of his behavior were all consistent with his governing principle, I broke off my business association with him. Later, I warned others who were involved with this person. Several said: "Don't get all worked up; things are going to be just fine. You've got to be crazy not to go in with us."

Half a year later I heard: "How I wish I had listened to you! I thought you were nuts, but I was the one who was crazy." It's one thing to lose a lot of money if you're wealthy like him, but it is another if you are not.

Since I first discovered the belief window, I've seen them on just about everyone. Being aware of other people's windows (and my own) has proven to be a great tool in my dealings.

WHAT'S WRITTEN ON THE WINDOW IS EASY TO READ

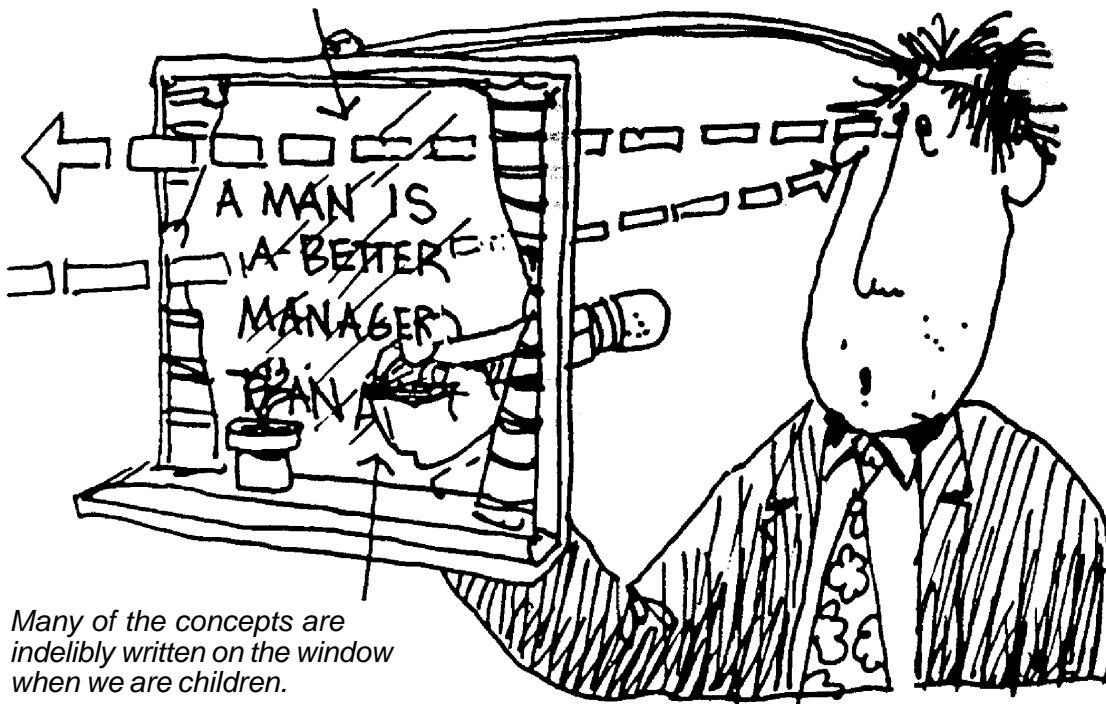
To determine what a person's beliefs are, notice the patterns in their interactions with others. *A proclamation of belief* does not show the governing principles that dominate a person's life; their *actions* do.

With my rich friend, all I had to do was watch how he acted in a myriad of situations. His responses were all congruent with his governing belief.

Hanging out in front of every person is a large window through which he or she sees the world. It is invisible to all but the trained eye. And written on each window (by its owner) are a series of explanations, guides or principles which direct the owner's behavior.

The better you can see what is written on an individual's belief window, the more you can predict future responses, explain past actions, and encourage needed changes.

Principles you have bought into are located right here

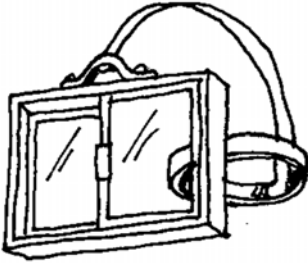


Many of the concepts are indelibly written on the window when we are children.

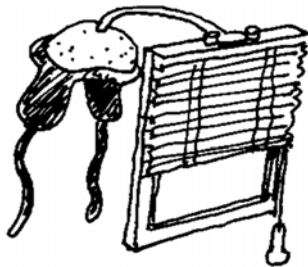
The belief window is a naturally-occurring phenomenon for all humans. Everyone, from your nephew to the president of the United States, has an individually-constructed window in front of them. And their lives are consistent with what they have written on the panes of glass.

RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS NOW MAKE SENSE

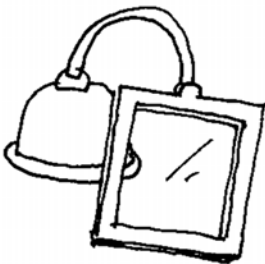
I've found people to be actually quite logical. Even when something makes no sense to an outsider, it will make sense to them. By understanding the simple concept of Belief



Everyone has an individually-constructed window.



*Those principles we have bought into and continue to invest attention, time or money in are our **Governing Beliefs**.*



*Our **Guiding Principles** are written on the window.*

Window, you have a powerful tool that will help you deal with people more effectively. This tool will help you see the fundamental consistency most people exhibit. What you thought was crazy, now will have an underlying reason. It often isn't rational, but it usually has an odd logic.

A person who discovers this tool may say things like:

- After 30 years of marriage, I can finally explain why she has been acting that way all these years.
- The other members of the team couldn't believe my foresight when I accurately predicted what each of them would do in the meeting.
- I used to feel like I was talking to the wind, but now I seem to have much more impact with my teenagers.
- It gave me some incredible insights into my company's problems—it has even caused changes in my own thinking.
- I can clearly see now the difference between the sales I closed and those I didn't.

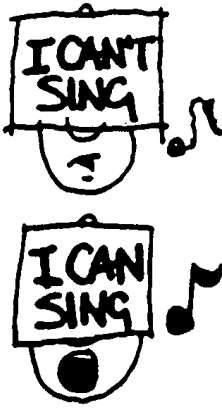
MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT BELIEF WINDOWS:

- A belief window limits what we see or don't see, and therefore what we do or don't do.
- Our individual needs provide the power, and the principles written on our window direct that power.
- We are constantly scanning our environment through the window for ways to satisfy our needs.
- The things written on the glass include our prejudices.
- We cannot behave inconsistently with our belief window; it controls our decisions.
- We consider what is written on our glass to be absolutely true, with no possible alternative.

The three stories below illustrate how our windows define our behavior, influence how we make decisions and relate to other people.

THE HYPNOTIZED SINGER

A few years ago, I was astonished by what I saw at one of those traveling hypnotist shows. One particular little man who had volunteered to be hypnotized was brought on stage and asked to sing before he was put under. His voice was raspy, and he hesitantly got through the song even with the laughter of the crowd.



The contrast between the two tries at singing was dramatic. The only difference was the writing on the man's belief window.

He was then hypnotized by the expert and told he was a world-famous singer about to give one of his finest performances—that he was before a huge audience who had paid over \$50 each to hear him. He was then asked to sing again.

The difference was dramatic. This time, he was quite good, and very pleasing to hear—not fifty dollars worth, but still much better than I had anticipated.

ROBERT'S POSSESSIONS GIVE HIM AWAY

My friend Robert has the appearance of being a person of substance and means. He drives a BMW, wears British suits and Italian shoes, and just got back from a European vacation with his Swedish wife.

Robert's consistent behavior allows us to read some of the principles on his belief window. One of them seems to be: "My value as a person is shown by the high-class possessions I own." Another is: "European culture and products are of the highest quality."

By knowing these principles Robert has bought into, I can better understand why he does what he does without letting these things (that don't really matter to me) get in the way of our friendship.

JOHN LOVES MARY LOVES JOHN

John learned love from a family where love was given unconditionally and freely. No matter what he did, his parents still loved him. His father once said, "Even if you killed someone, we would still love you when you're on the electric chair."

Mary learned love from a family where love was given conditionally. These words, even if never said out loud, were always present in family relationships: "We love you if you do what we want, but we don't love you if you go against what we feel is best for you."

John and Mary got together, fell in love, and were married. They often told each other "I love you," but John was puzzled by Mary's rejection of him when he didn't behave in the exact manner she prescribed. Their loving words were identical, but the beliefs written on their windows were different.

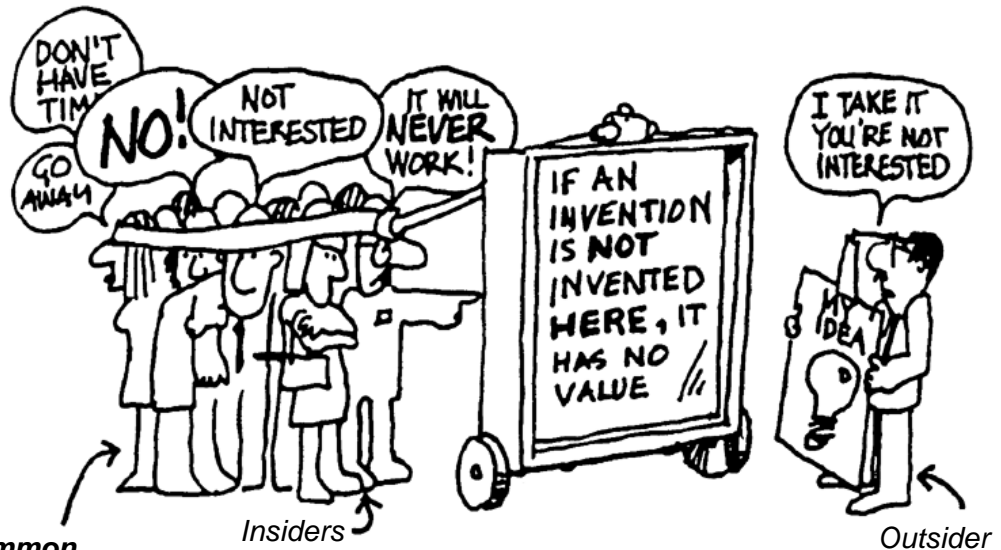


One statement, different messages.

GROUP BELIEF WINDOW

People can often share the same window when they come together in groups. A shared window is the commonality that binds them into a cohesive unit. Such groups can be formal or informal, and can consist of families, unions, companies, churches, or even nations.

Here is an example of a shared belief window that seems to be common in many businesses:



People who share a common window act, look and think alike.

EXAMPLES OF GROUP WINDOW SHARING:

- GROUP:** *Nazi Germany*
BELIEF: *Man is a creature to be bred for quality to rule the world for a thousand-year reign.*
RESULT: During the final battles of World War II, troop trains were stopped so that trains carrying “subhumans” to the concentration camps could get through.
- GROUP:** *Muslim Fundamentalists*
BELIEF: *Allah will eventually triumph over all, and dying for the cause will take you directly to heaven.*
RESULT: Devoted people willingly die with bombs strapped to the bodies.
- GROUP:** *The Smith-Jones Family*
BELIEF: *Our family is more righteous and correct than anyone else.*
RESULT: Bad things that happen in our family are someone else’s fault.
- GROUP:** *Acme Computer Company*
BELIEF: *Customer service is our primary goal.*
RESULT: Satisfied client: “It cost more for their equipment, but their service made the difference in getting our inventory control system on line.”

HOW TO CHANGE WHAT'S ON THE WINDOW

We humans are always striving for consistency and order, and nowhere is this more important to us than in what is written on our belief window. When two opposing principles written there conflict with each other, we can't rest until the harmony and consistency is restored. Something just has to be combined, refined or dropped from the window to restore the order.

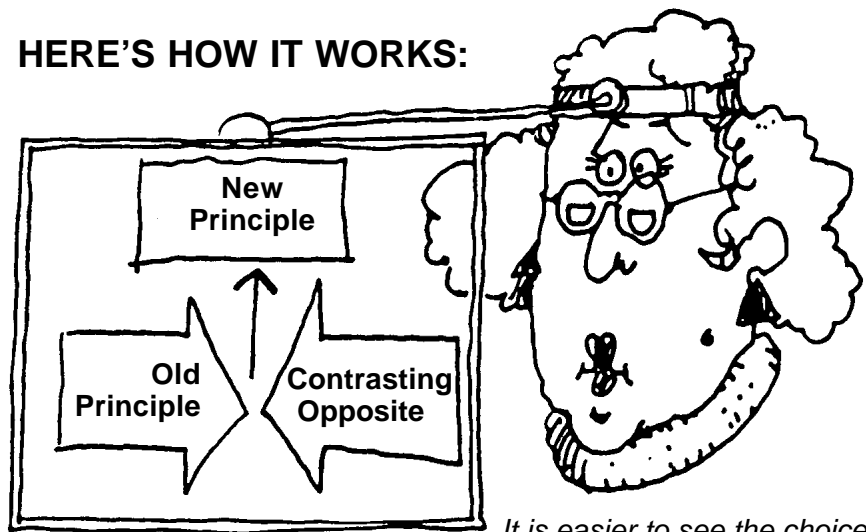
Often, the simple act of seeing and comparing two opposing principles will help us choose the more expedient belief, or make up a new one. *(This doesn't necessarily mean it is a better or higher principle.)*

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

The psychological term for the effects of juxtaposing opposite principles is called **cognitive dissonance**.

Steps to resolve cog dis:

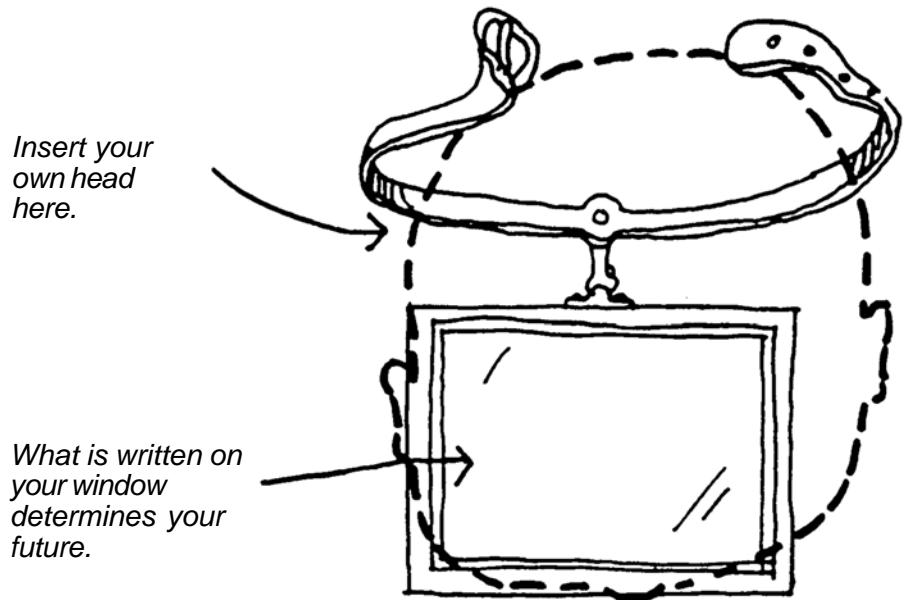
1. See the old principle. Show an opposite principle, situation or new context.
2. Choose a new principle that is consistent and not in conflict.



It is easier to see the choice when you see both the old principle and the opposite idea in one total view

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| Old Principle: | I'm homely! |
| Contrasting Opposite: | Someone says, "You're the most beautiful woman I have even seen." |
| New Principle: | I am nice looking. |
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| Old Principle: | The government should help the poor. |
| Contrasting Opposite: | Your obnoxious neighbor who hasn't worked for years says: "Why work, buddy? I can make more by doing nothing than being silly like you and going to work every day." |
| New Principle: | The government should only help those in real need who can't work. |
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| Old Principle: | Thou shall not steal, and you are to always follow the rules. |
| Contrasting Opposite: | You're fired from a company for exposing its dishonesty. |
| New Principle: | Taking from the company as you leave isn't stealing. |
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| Old Principle: | God will heal me. |
| Contrasting Opposite: | I'm really dying. |
| New Principle: | There is no God. |

WHAT IS WRITTEN ON YOUR BELIEF WINDOW?



We have all bought into certain principles and written them on our individual belief windows.

We all have a belief window in front of our faces. We look through it to see the world and make sense of it. Just knowing that fact can give us a considerable amount of power—both over our own actions and in understanding the actions of others. Seeing our own principles and the degree to which they dictate who we are and how we act can be both a severe shock and a life-changing experience.

In examining my own belief window and trying to identify the principles I've written on it, I have discovered that more than half of my principles were incorrect. My conversations with others show that percentage to be fairly consistent across the board.



Some people even have this written on their window.

What is written on our window defines who we are, how we act, and what we may become. Our individual and group successes in life depend upon seeing life through a belief window that has effective, useful principles written on it. Faulty principles leave us mired in the muck and can bring us face-to-face with our worst nightmares. The ones that display accurate statements can go a long way toward enabling us to reach our dreams.