

Your Behavior Is Your Belief

By Rhoberta Shaler, PhD

Your behavior IS your belief. Ouch! Most folks don't want that to be true when they first hear it. How about you?

I was speaking at a conference and it was lunchtime. I was sitting at a table of participants and we shared a lovely meal. The coffee was served and we were relaxing, I thought.

The woman next to me leaned in and whispered,

"I know coffee is not good for me and I don't really drink coffee. I need a pick-me-up and just thought this was a special occasion." She was almost apologetic. I whispered back and affirmed,

"You're a coffee drinker." She protested mightily.

"Oh, no, I'm really not!" I smiled and told her that indeed she was a coffee drinker as she was indeed drinking coffee!

Her behavior was her belief. Coffee drinkers drink coffee. Non-coffee drinkers do not. It's that simple. Now, a few basic things were true aside from her behavior:

- I have no feelings, thoughts or judgments about whether or not a human being and coffee are a healthy combination. Every body is different. It was her projection that, because she thought she ought not to be drinking coffee, I shared her opinion.
- She was endeavoring to be pre-emptive and pro-active. IF, by any chance, I did care about her drinking coffee, she was going to set me straight about her usual behavior and, hopefully, remove any thoughts I might have about her caring about her health, knowing the effects of caffeine, or questioning her self-discipline.
- She was fooling herself and wasting a lot of time and energy. A simple decision was required. Either decide coffee is fine or that it is not. Behave accordingly.

Do you have any of these crooked-thinking habits? Are you pretending—especially to yourself—that you want to go in one direction while your behavior is definitely going in another? It's very common. Good intentions make great conversation and we feel better about ourselves while making it! We create our own hell by becoming impostors!

Sure, the coffee story seems harmless enough, but, it's a simple example. Lying to ourselves is a travesty. (No, it's not fibbing, telling a little white lie or stretching the truth. It's simply lying!)



We need to be able to trust ourselves. Living in alignment with what we say we believe is a wonderful way to steer clear of the anxiety, fear and chaos that living a double life creates.

*Where could you improve the alignment between your beliefs and your behavior?
Your behavior really demonstrates your belief -- even about drinking coffee!*

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