

## Ep #6: How to Change Your Beliefs



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Heather Branscombe**

## Ep #6: How to Change Your Beliefs

Episode six, what if I don't believe it?

Welcome to *Clinicians Creating Impact*, a show for physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists looking to take the next step in their careers and make a real difference in the lives of their clients. If you're looking to improve the lives of neurodiverse children and families with neurological-based challenges, grow your own business, or simply show up to help clients, this is the show for you.

I'm Heather Branscombe, Therapist, Certified Coach, Clinical Director, and Owner of Abilities Neurological Rehabilitation. I have over 25 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, and I'm here to help you become the therapist you want to be, supporting people to work towards their dreams and live their best lives. You ready to dive in? Let's go.

Welcome to the podcast. I'm recording this episode in the beginning of February. And just to follow up with last week's podcast, my house is literally a disaster zone right now. If you follow me on social media, which if you haven't yet, you can. It's @HeatherBranscombe.Coaching. I've been sharing a bit more in real time.

But just to let you know, my house is super dusty, super messy, and usually super loud during the weekends. It's so loud that I decided earlier this week that I needed to change my normal podcast recording, which I typically do at home, from a time on a weekday to a Saturday morning.

So one of the things that we're doing in this reno is moving our fireplace. It used to be right in the corner. Remember those corner fireplaces with the top in the early 2000s? If you never saw one, it's okay, but we had one until earlier this week. But now we're moving the fireplace to a new wall. One super fun thing that happened this week is that my contractor literally sketched out what the fireplace would look like using painter's tape so that I could visualize what the new fireplace could actually look like on the new wall.

Now, he didn't just outline the outer dimensions. He outlined where the insert for the fireplace would be. Then he proceeded to make an outline of where the

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mantel would be and even where our new beautiful TV would go over top of the mantel. I know it's a design choice, and I'm happy to make it. What I loved about this is that it gave me an amazing understanding of what my new living room could really look like when it was finished.

I had an idea of what I wanted when we started the project. But as we continue, what I love about working with my amazing contractor Jonathan and his team, is that we continue to refine the vision. I'm gaining more and more evidence that this reno is going to turn out amazing, even while I live in the middle of the mess.

So I've been thinking a lot about this, about how this relates to us as clinicians. So far on this podcast, I've been talking about the often overlooked, and yet what I believe is the critical role of our own beliefs in both what we do and the results that we create at work. If you haven't yet listened, I'd recommend going to episode four, What We Believe as Therapists And Why It's A Problem, to learn more.

One question I hear, though, and in truth, I've also actually asked this question to myself, goes something like this. Okay, this all sounds amazing. But what if I don't believe what I think I need to believe to make things better at work? What if I just don't believe it? First, I want to say I love that question. And I think it's so important to ask these kinds of questions.

It can feel really easy to listen to some kind of external source, be it a journal article, a respected clinician, or some other guru, and get swept away with their own perceived certainty of answers to our questions. I like to think of the kinds of questions like, "What if I just don't believe it," or "Is this actually real," these are kinds of questions that demonstrate not only important critical thinking but also an opportunity to really check in with yourself to decide what ultimately feels true to you.

So whether or not you're questioning it consciously or less consciously through your actions, I really see this as an amazing opportunity to reflect on your practice. So, as a good clinician, there are some ways that I've noticed that our current beliefs can get in our way. So let's see if this works or shows up for you.

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Number one, we don't believe that we're a good therapist. Number two, we don't believe that we can help a client. Or, number three, we don't believe we have control over a given work situation.

Now, if you see yourself in any or all of them, take heart, so do I. Noticing our beliefs, which is, again, just the thought that we're thinking over and over, and becoming more aware of them is the first step to deciding if we think that these beliefs or thoughts are helping us or whether they're hurting us. If we want to believe something different, there are some steps that we can do to start the process. It really is possible to believe something we can't yet believe.

There's a simple three-step process that I want to share with you next. So, step one is to gain awareness of what the story is that your brain is telling you. And again, that is usually an automatic story, and it's an unconscious story. Step two is to distinguish between the facts in your story and the thoughts in your story. And if you want to learn more about that or to review that, you can go back to episode two, which is *The Model and Why It Matters As a Therapist*.

And then step three is the critical next step. It's that you want to base your belief on your future. And what I mean by your future is the future that you deliberately and consciously want to create. And this is where we distinguish between a simple three-step process and an easy three-step process. This is simple but not always easy.

Many of us, as adults, base our beliefs, especially when it comes to believing that we are capable of something, on the past. I often like to think about this as like drinking out of a cup. I have a core belief that I can successfully drink out of a cup. I am a good drinker out of a cup person. I don't know what you would really call that, but you kind of get what I mean. And you might have that same belief yourself.

So I've gained that belief based on X number of years of drinking successfully through a cup. Now, it doesn't mean that I have successfully drunk from a cup every single time. Have I spilled when I've been bringing the cup to my mouth? Absolutely, I have. But when I do that, I notice that that's not a problem. It doesn't change my core belief that I'm not a good cup drinker outer. I just chalk

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that up to something that happened, maybe inattention, maybe something else, and then I continue with my core belief that I am a good cup drinker.

So what's interesting about this is when I was thinking about how often I do spill, I was like, oh, how often do I really spill? I just noticed that my brain doesn't focus on how often I spill; it's how often that I didn't spill. But when I really did try and think about how often I spilled, again, it's not a problem, but I noticed that I actually probably spilled more than I first thought. Like maybe not once a week, but probably once a month.

Now, again, no need to diagnose me. I'm okay. There are no other underlying neurological challenges. I'm healthy. I'm fine. But I just noticed that I don't notice when I spill. That doesn't stay in my conscious story of who I am as somebody who can successfully drink a cup of water. So let's think about our brains, though, when we're children. And I think for many of us, especially those of us who actually work with children, and even more specifically babies, it's really interesting to think about what they might be thinking as they're gaining skills.

When babies start learning to move or communicate or eat, they really have no past evidence that they can do it, right? They have nothing. They come to the world with nothing. Well, maybe they come with some things, but not necessarily the belief that they can move, or that they can communicate, or that they can eat. If they used their past-based belief like we do, they would have no business believing that they could do anything that they tried to do.

I find that so interesting to think about because at least one time in the past six months, I can literally remember where I had the thought I had no business doing something that I was about to do. And yet, when you think about babies, for example, learning to walk, you can just see them falling and getting right back up again. They do it over and over and over and over. And if they don't, then they get referred to someone like us.

So while I haven't done the research to know when our thinking actually changes, and if you know this or if you find out, please let me know, that would be super amazing to find out, But what I do know is that there is a time that our brain changes from our stories about our beliefs focusing on our future, and then

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instead focusing on our past to decide if we're capable or not. Isn't that interesting to think about?

So we begin choosing thoughts like, I've never done it before, so I'm not sure I can do it. Or I've always been bad at charting. It's just who I am. Or I'm not a good clinician because I'm new. Do any of those sound familiar? We limit our future potential based on who we've been and what we've accomplished so far. And it doesn't have to be that way.

Focusing on the future means that we should recognize our limiting beliefs, let them go, and replace them with beliefs that actually help us achieve what we're trying to achieve. It means focusing on the road ahead and getting excited about the future. And it means that to create a different future, we need to create something that didn't exist in our past. We must start to believe something that we actually don't currently believe because if we already believed it, we would have created the result that we don't yet have.

Isn't that interesting? Think about that. In order to create a different future, we need to create something that didn't exist in our past. We have to start believing something that we don't currently believe because if we already believed it, we would have created the result we don't yet have. So this is where my background in neuroplasticity has helped me to kind of ground myself and understand this a little bit better.

So this process of neuroplasticity allows you to redirect the brain to thoughts that you have consciously and purposely decided will help you in advance. It's similar to the learning opportunities that we create when we work with our clients. So as we create those opportunities for the brain to think new thoughts, the brain will find evidence of that thought through your reticular activating system for you fellow neurodiversity geeks out there.

Or it's that part of the brain that helps you to notice all the same cars on the road that you purchased are on the road after you made that purchase, right? You have a blue car, and now all of a sudden, you see all the blue cars on the road. That's that same part of the brain.

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So, if you're interested in doing a little more work in this area, here are some questions that can help you along the three steps to believing new things. So number one, notice as you go through your workday, especially in the more challenging parts of your workday, notice where you are past focused. Just gain that awareness.

The second thing you can ask yourself, and it can be helpful to journal about that if that helps you or to talk this out with someone else if that works for you better. How do you let things from your past define or limit you at work? How is that true? And maybe how that isn't true. And then, finally, what beliefs do you have that aren't helping you to achieve your goals?

So this is your invitation to rewire your own brain to prime yourself for greater success at work. And again, you do this by, number one, gaining awareness of what the story your brain is telling you. Step two is distinguishing between the facts in your story and the thoughts in your story. And then step three is deciding to base your belief based on the future that you actually want to create.

Now, the alternative to doing this is to let the stories that your brain is telling you because the brain is telling you stories whether you like it or not. The alternative is to let the stories that your brain is telling you run your life and become potentially larger barriers to your success and your happiness at work. And really, that just sucks, and it really just doesn't have to be that way.

I just want to share, first of all, that this is a journey that I'm on myself. I am not the guru at the top of the mountain here preaching to you. I am on this journey myself. It's not something that I've mastered, nor do I even expect to master this over the course of my career and maybe even the course of my life. This is a skill. And like any other skill, my mastery is going to be based on how much I'm willing to practice, and so will your skill.

So this is me out here practicing, hey. And I want to share my own small success story if nothing but to be a little bit of inspiration to help you get started. So last year, from a circumstantial point of view, was a much less certain year than any other year in my professional career. Now, this had nothing to do with

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me personally or my personal circumstances, or even the circumstances in Abilities. If you are a clinician in BC, you may well know the details of it.

The specific details don't really matter to the purpose of the story. But for the purpose of this story, I'll just share there was an announcement of a significant funding change that affected our clients and our business. And while I still choose to believe that this change does need to happen, and it really does come with good intentions, I really want to believe that.

The start of the execution of this change, and more specifically, the lack of clear communication of what the change meant for both clients and clinicians, created a lot of thoughts and feelings. There were a lot of stories that our brains were creating in response to this circumstance.

So for myself, this announcement came probably about three months after opening the first new clinic that we had opened in seven years. So we went from four locations to five locations. And we also doubled the size of an existing location. So it was, in a way, the way that my brain looked at it, it was a way of almost opening two locations with only really opening one.

So if you were to ask me a year ago if I would have expanded our company like I did, and remember this was post-pandemic as well, knowing that this announcement was coming, I would have said, no, I wouldn't have done that.

And yet, last year was one of the most successful years yet on so many levels. For me, for our clients, and for the people that I work with, it was so successful. And it was successful because, first and foremost, I like to believe I work with some of the most amazing humans I know. Again, it's my thought, and I love it. And I see this work as something that we can use to create an impossible goal.

Now, when I say that I had this impossible goal, it seemed impossible. It legitimately to my brain seemed impossible at the time. And I actually embraced the impossibility of that, and if you're interested, we can talk about what that looks like in a further podcast. But I really set this like out there goal, what I thought.



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And you know what? We ended up achieving that goal in less than six months from the time I said it. It's almost embarrassing for me to say because it's like, how could that be so impossible if you do it? But the time really, I mean, while that can be spectacular, especially for the context of a story, it's really not about the time. It's really that we were able to achieve the goal and what I learned from it.

If I were to look at the belief that helped us, and more specifically helped me as the leader to get there, and more specifically, what I believed that helped us to get there and that I continue to use as I work on my next goal, it's the belief that I can trust the team that I work with. Now, again, I've always believed that I work with amazing humans, but I really just leaned into this belief.

And what I noticed is as I continue to live into that belief, I really get out of the way of the amazing humans that I work with. And then, together, we create amazing things. So while it doesn't mean that everything at Abilities is sunshine and roses, I can say that, and anyone else that I've worked with you talk to will also, if they're being honest, will say that as well. But it directed my brain into this belief that not only served me, but it served my team in ways that allowed us to just act in a way that created much more success. It allowed us to be so much more successful.

So, again, what I want to invite you to do is, number one, gain awareness of the story that your brain is telling you, especially around those challenge areas or growth opportunities at work. Step two, distinguish between the facts in your story and the thoughts in your story. And then, step three, decide to base your belief based on the future that you want to create. I just can't wait to see the impact that you create with this. See you soon.

To celebrate the launch of the show, I'm going to be giving away a \$100 gift card and two \$50 gift cards to Amazon. I'm going to be giving them away to three lucky listeners who follow, rate, and review the show.

Now, it doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I sure hope that you love the show. I really want your honest feedback, so I can create an awesome show that provides tons of value for you. So visit

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abilitiesrehabilitation.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter. And I'll be announcing the winners on the show in episode ten. Thanks so much.

Thanks for joining me this week on the *Clinicians Creating Impact* podcast. Want to learn more about the work I'm doing with Abilities Rehabilitation? Head on over to [abilitiesrehabilitation.com](http://abilitiesrehabilitation.com). See you next week.