**Basement Belief Exercise**

Choose an area of your life that is important to you right now, and where you are perhaps not having the results you want.

1. Write out all the thoughts you are having about it
2. For each thought, draw an arrow underneath pointing down and ask yourself “What does this mean about me?” and after each statement that comes to you, use another arrow down and keep going downward with statements until you feel you’ve reached the core belief
3. Bring in an external set of eyes to look at that list and ask that person what they think about what you’ve written. What is their perspective?
4. Notice the feelings that are coming up for you as you do this exercise. Are there any specific feelings associated with specific statements/beliefs?
5. Go back to each belief and ask yourself “What rules do I make for myself as a result of this belief?”

**Basic Rules Checklist**. The questions below can be used as prompts to explore the kinds of rules you create *to protect yourself from having to face that belief.* You may not even be aware that you do this. Choose some that seem relevant to you, and ask them of yourself. Be honest with yourself.

* How do you deal with other people’s:
  + Anger
  + Needs, desires, or requests
  + Disappointment or sadness
  + Withdrawal from you or rejection
  + Praise or support
  + Criticism
* How do you deal with mistakes?
* How do you handle stress, problems, or losses?
* How do you handle taking risks, trying new things, and challenges?
* How do you express your:
  + Needs
  + Feelings
  + Opinions
  + Anger
  + Pain
  + Hopes, wishes, and dreams
  + Limits and saying no
* How do you ask for support and help?
* How do you manage being:
  + Alone
  + With strangers
  + With friends
  + With family
* How are you at trusting others?
* How do you make friends? Whom do you seek? How do you act?
* How do you deal with children?
* How do you manage your health or illness?
* How are you at maintaining self-care?

Example

Let’s say my core belief is “I am worthless.” I chose the following questions.

* How I deal with other people’s anger:
  + I try to keep the peace.
  + I stay quiet or withdraw.
* How I express my needs:
  + I hint rather than ask directly.
  + I don’t ask for help, but sometimes get passive aggressive when the other person doesn’t guess what I want.
* How I express my opinions:
  + I don’t disagree unless it’s someone I know really well.
* How I express anger:
  + I keep it to myself.
* How I deal with with stress / problems / losses:
  + I avoid making decisions.
  + I procrastinate taking action.

1. Now that you’re aware of some of the rules, write out the potential catastrophes you can imagine from breaking those rules. For example”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Belief | Rule | Catastrophe |
| I am a burden | I do not ask for things | I will be shamed and ostracized |
|  |  |  |

1. So now you’ve identified some core beliefs, the rules your inner self has made to protect you from facing those beliefs and you’ve acknowledged the fears these rules are meant to avoid.
2. Experiment.
   * + Choose one that is measurable and ask yourself ‘What if?”
     + Write out the rule, a way you could experiment with breaking it and the catastrophic prediction
     + Script what you Want to happen when you try the experiment. Visualize it fully.
     + Test it and gather the data
     + Record/Script the results

This is a deep process and one that can most certainly touch on long-held feelings so be kind to yourself while doing it. Have self-compassion. Allocate enough time and space to honour whatever surfaces through the exercise and most importantly, allow all your feelings to be present so they can clear and show yourself love in whatever way works for you.