

What [Else] Is This Telling Me? exercise

You might find it helpful to refer to *Something's Happening Here* and *What [Else] Is It Telling Me?* Keep in mind that all the reactions we are aware of and all the actions we take are responses to our brain's interpretation of an event, not to the event itself.

Definitions:

- An *event* is something that happens (the data, if you will).
- Your *interpretation* is the meaning your brain makes of the thing that happens. (Interpretations are not assessments or judgments. A judgment doesn't help your brain determine what action to take. Any judgment you have is post-interpretation since you can't have a judgment or opinion about something until you have determined *what it is.*)
- *Beliefs* are convictions you have about the nature of reality (the way the world works).

Exercise:

1. Describe an event.
2. Describe your interpretation of the event.
3. Ask yourself, *what is this interpretation telling me* about my perception of the way the world works? And then...
4. Identify one or more beliefs that could underlie your interpretation.

5. What was your emotional response to your interpretation of the event?
6. What is your emotional response telling you?
7. What action did you take in response to your interpretation of the event?
8. What is your action telling you?
9. What was your emotional response to the action you took?
10. What is your emotional response to the action you took telling you?

11. Take another look at the event (the data), setting aside your original interpretation, and ask yourself, *what else is it telling me?* Then...
12. Describe two possible alternative interpretations based on the data (facts) of the event.
13. Optional: Identify possible beliefs that might underlie each alternative interpretation.

Our beliefs inform our interpretations. We can't access our beliefs directly because they are part of the mental model our brain maintains of what things mean and what is normal *for us*. But our beliefs affect our perceptions and therefore our interpretations of **everything** we experience. Our interpretations inform our actions. Our emotional responses to our actions indicate our satisfaction or dissatisfaction with our sense of who we are being. Our interpretations tell us who our brain thinks we are.

If you're dissatisfied with the action you took, based on your emotional response, you could:

1. Identify the action you would like to have taken.
2. Identify what interpretation your brain would have to have made in order to lead to that action as an outcome.
3. Identify possible beliefs that might underlie such an interpretation.
4. Consider what actions you could take to develop those beliefs and/or modify the beliefs that led to the action you're dissatisfied with.