

Why Beliefs Matter

By: Alan Tutt

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Why Beliefs Matter

We all have many different beliefs about many different things. We have beliefs about ourselves, about what we 'deserve' and what we are capable of. We have beliefs about other people and whether we can trust them or not. We have beliefs about the world in general and what we can expect to happen in various situations. We have beliefs about specific situations, such as the Tuesday morning meeting with an important client, our next vacation, and about the first time we fell in love. We also have beliefs about the ultimate nature of the universe and where we fit in.

All of these beliefs influence the way we live our lives and the decisions we make. And beyond that, there is also substantial evidence that suggests that our beliefs are so powerful, they shape the events that happen in the world around us.

Let's take a look at a few examples that demonstrate the true power of beliefs in our world. I think you might be surprised to find that you have far more potential than you once thought.

Practical Examples

One of the easiest places to see the power of our beliefs is in the effect they have on the decisions we make.

For our first example, let's say that you've been offered a new job with 2 different companies, and that you currently make \$25,000 per year. The first job is with a local company and offers a \$35,000 per year salary. The other job is with a company in another state and offers \$50,000 per year. *(If these numbers don't fit your particular situation, just adjust them as necessary.)*

When making this kind of decision, most of us will weigh the

pros and cons of each choice. The factors we look at in making these decisions are based on what we *believe* are the important factors to consider.

For instance, do we really believe that the clothes we happen to be wearing when we get the news of the job offer makes any difference in our decision? Probably not. But the location of the company, the salary offered, and the chances for promotion are usually believed to be important, so we take those into consideration.

If we believe that the personalities of our potential co-workers are important factors, or the alignment of the stars on the proposed starting day, then we would consider that information before making a final decision.

So we've already found evidence that our beliefs influence our lives, even if only in the information we choose to evaluate before making decisions.

If you're like most people, you believe you're worth more than you're currently being paid, but also have trouble believing that you're worth twice as much. This incongruity might cause you to back away from such an offer, thinking that "it's too good to be true".

Also involved here are your beliefs about your ability to succeed and thrive in new experiences. If you believe it's likely for you to fail in the new job, then you'll be less likely to take the job in the other state, and will probably choose the one with the local company. That way, it wouldn't do as much damage if you fail. But if you feel confident in your ability to rise to the challenge (*i.e. - if you believed that you would be successful*), then that's another matter entirely.

Whether we feel good or bad about moving to a new state and leaving friends and family behind comes from our beliefs about those specific relationships and the beliefs we have regarding

relationships in general.

If you've had difficult people in your life, do you believe that it will be good to leave them behind, or do you believe that it's important to resolve those differences before moving on? These kinds of "universal beliefs" affect just about every decision we make.

And when considering the possibility of joining a new community, do you believe that the people there will accept you, or do you believe that they might reject you instead? Do you believe that it's easy to make new friends, or do you believe that true friends are hard to find?

Many of these same beliefs influence our decisions in other areas of life as well. Our beliefs about whether or not it's easy to make new friends usually influence our decisions about romantic relationships too. If you believe that it's easy to make new connections with other people, then you'll approach your love relationships differently than someone who believes that it's hard to make new connections.

Someone who believes relationships are a matter of fate or destiny will behave differently than someone who believes relationships are like "ships that pass in the night".

Someone who believes that intense relationships never last may back away from an intensely enjoyable relationship simply because they believe it will end quickly and don't want to be hurt in the process.

Most of us have a belief about what is 'normal' in a relationship. This tends to make us suspicious when a relationship is "too good to be true". Even though we may be getting everything we ever dreamed of and more, we start looking for the problems we believe MUST be there, subconsciously sabotaging the relationship because we don't believe it can be that good.

So here again we have practical evidence that our beliefs affect all areas of our life through the influence they have over our decisions. If we've been happy with the decisions we've made over the course of our life, then we can be satisfied with the beliefs that have supported them. But if our decisions have left a trail of causalities in our wake, with bridges burned and opportunities lost, then choosing a new set of beliefs seems to be a worthwhile endeavor.

And this is just the beginning!

Support From Science

In today's global society, we've almost made a religion of science. We're tired of the BS claims from all the "snake oil" salesmen coming to our door and promising fame and riches if we only accept their word and use their product. Before we accept any new theory nowadays, we check to see what science has to say about it.

And those of us with a "critical eye" even look upon science itself with suspicion. After all, how far can you trust a group of people who claim to know how the universe began 14 billion years ago after only 200 years of quality observation from a single viewpoint (Earth)? That's like watching a car for 2 seconds then claiming to know where it was 4 years ago! It may have been moving in a straight line during that whole time, but you really don't know what happened yesterday.

At one time, all respectable scientists 'knew' that the Earth was flat and that the sun revolved around it. Today, we consider such theories nonsense, and forgive the old scientists because of their lack of knowledge. However, we must always remember that there may still be vast areas of knowledge of which modern science is completely unaware.

But in general, the processes of science usually produce reliable results. On a fundamental level, the scientific process is one of observation, logic, hypothesis, and experimentation. If you start with verifiable evidence and proceed with logic, you can create a hypothesis (educated guess) about what is causing the things you observed, and from there you can construct an experiment to verify whether your hypothesis was correct or not.

The scientific principle of leverage is one example of what can come out of this process. We all learned in school that with a lever, you can lift a ten pound object using only one pound of force, but in exchange, you have to move the lever ten inches in order to move the object only one. Depending on the size of the lever, you can get more or less amplification of force, but the principle is the same regardless of the type of lever.

This leverage principle was used to build Stonehenge, the pyramids around the world, and to erect the stone statues on Easter Island. It's also used today in all modern construction. Who knew that one little principle could produce such magnificent results?

Quantum Physics

Science continues to study all aspects of the universe, from the very big (astrophysics) to the very small (quantum physics). At both of these extremes, science stretches beyond the limits of technology and their ability to measure things into the realm of theories and pure logic. This means that they can't actually PROVE that what they say is true, but it certainly sounds good. Some theories are proven over time, others are shown to be inaccurate.

Early scientists from ancient Greece proposed the idea that if you were to divide something into smaller and smaller particles, you would eventually get something that could not be subdivided

any further, which they called the 'atom'. Each type of material, such as iron, calcium, or oxygen, had it's own unique atom, which was stable and unchangeable.

Over time, that belief changed, and scientists eventually found a way to subdivide the atom into electrons, protons, and neutrons. Today, scientists are discussing so many new subatomic particles, it's like there's a whole other universe in there.

We don't need to get too far into this, but the thing that has really captured the attention of the public lately is the unpredictable nature of these new quantum particles. It seems that scientific experiments have proven that these particles can do things once believed impossible, such as being in two places at the same time, going backwards in time, and displaying a sort of 'synchronicity', suggesting that two particles are connected even when separated by vast distances. For more information on the experiments that led to these findings, I recommend you read Micheal Talbot's "The Holographic Universe".

One of the basic concepts that has arisen out of quantum physics research is that subatomic particles are not really particles at all. A true particle would be something solid, fixed, and always the same. Sometimes these subatomic things *appear* to be particles, and other times they *appear* to be some sort of wave, like sound, or a wave on an ocean. One way to visualize this would be to think of a single stone moving in many directions at once. Because of this dual nature of things, subatomic particles are called 'quanta' (plural for 'quantum') instead of particles.

What is astounding scientists is that these quanta only appear to be particles when they are being observed. Otherwise, they seem to be a type of wave. This has happened so often that it even has a name. It's called the "Observer Effect". The only way to explain this is to say that on a fundamental level, physical matter responds to consciousness!

Science loves mathematical formulae, since they help to predict what will happen in various situations. In the case of quantum physics, those formulae might be familiar to a professional gambler because they are based on '*probabilities*'. Scientists have no way to predict exactly where a quantum particle will be at any given time. And according to the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, it's *impossible*.

What this means to us is that the old belief about the universe being a stable, predictable system is no longer a valid assumption. If everything you see is made up of these tiny particles, and the particles themselves can go anywhere at any time, then what's to stop your chair from jumping to the ceiling? Or a fancy new watch showing up on your wrist?

Are these quantum irregularities responsible for the various miracles and paranormal events that have been reported throughout history? And what directs the course of these subatomic particles and their unpredictable motions, and consequently the world we see around us?

The current theory believed by most scientists is that all of the unpredictable events on the quantum (subatomic) level balance each other out to form the (more or less) predictable universe we see around us. Only time and experimentation will prove whether this theory is true or not.

In the meantime, many scientists are proposing theories that sound an awful lot like ancient mysticism. Concepts like "we are all connected on a fundamental level" and "the universe responds to thought" have been around for thousands of years, and now science is starting to give serious consideration to the validity of these ideas. Maybe the mystics and spiritual seekers who were more intuitively inclined simply knew things that science is only now beginning to confirm.

One such theory centers around something called "The Zero

Point Field", which is supposedly a vast field of energy that fills every point of space. According to the scientists, if you used Einstein's Mass=Energy formula ($E=MC^2$) to convert all of the matter in the entire known universe into energy (much more than any atomic bomb), the Zero Point Field would match that in every single cubic inch of space. Many ancient mystical texts refer to the universe as "a vibrating sea of energy".

Now try to imagine that much energy in every inch of your body. They say that the only reason we don't notice this is because it's always there and we have nothing less powerful to compare it to. This is easy to understand when you think about trying to determine how high up an object is, like a shelf on the wall. Unless you know how high up the floor is, you have no way of knowing how high the shelf *really* is.

One of the most respected scientists in the field of quantum physics, David Bohm, describes the universe as a continuum, with everything connected like your hand is connected to your arm. One example he uses is a whirlpool in a river. It may appear to be a separate thing, but it's still the same water, just moving in a different way.

Bohm also claims that consciousness and matter are simply two forms of the same thing, that there is no fundamental difference between your mind and the world around you, and that they are interconnected into a unified whole. Just about every mystical and religious text to date has said in one way or another that "we are all one with God".

One of the main problems with quantum physics research is that we cannot really know what's happening on that level of reality. Despite our many technological advances, we still do not have any equipment that can take a picture of an atom, nor do we have any equipment that can measure the energy of a single particle.

Quantum physicists themselves will agree that their theories are only that – theories. What makes them useful is the fact that the theories have been able to explain certain phenomenon, and have helped in the production of extremely small computer circuits and other technological advances.

But the implications suggested by quantum research are staggering! Maybe there is something to the old mystical teachings, and that our minds really do have an influence on the world around us. If it is actually possible for us to direct the course of our lives using our minds alone, then the only question left is “*How?*”.

Molecular Biology

What happens inside an atom will never be as fascinating as what happens within our own bodies. And yet, the field of molecular biology (the biology *inside* a living cell) bridges the gap between the two sciences.

Molecular biologists study the way that living cells perform the activities that sustain life. To do that, they study proteins and other molecules, which are collections of atoms. The relatively new science of quantum physics has opened up a whole new way of thinking about the life inside a cell, which in turn opens up a new way of thinking about life itself.

One of the leading scientists in the field of molecular biology is Bruce Lipton, who has written “*The Biology of Belief*”. In that book, Dr. Lipton provides a very clear and easy to understand description of what happens within living cells and how that translates to life as we know it.

Quantum physics tells us that the atoms within our cells are tiny energy systems that form a continuous whole rather than discrete particles interacting with each other. When molecular

biologists consider this, they realize that the processes responsible for producing life are not a series of individual activities that can be manipulated by chemistry, but a beautifully choreographed symphony, where everything responds to everything else.

As an example, when the body is dealing with an infection, it releases specific chemicals to trigger a healing response. These same chemicals may have different functions in different areas of the body, yet they are only released where they are needed. When prescription drugs are taken, they are released throughout the body. Although these drugs do produce the desired result, many times they produce side effects because of the indiscriminate release in areas of the body where they are not needed. In most cases, the side effects are minimal, but not always.

The Journal of the American Medical Association published the results of a study in 2000 conservatively estimating that prescription drugs accounted for more than 120,000 deaths in the United States and was the third leading cause of death. In 2003, another study found that prescription drugs were responsible for more deaths in the USA than anything else, including cancer and AIDS, causing more than 300,000 deaths per year.

With statistics like these, it's a wonder that the medical profession is able to help as many people as they do.

Dr. Lipton further explains why our DNA does not *'control'* our lives the way that many scientists would have you believe. Research experiments have proven that DNA is only a collection of potentials, and the environment in which we grow and live determines which of those potentials are actually realized or not.

It was the Human Genome Project that discovered that we have far too few genes to account for the many complexities within us. In fact, we have about the same number of genes as your average rodent, and not many more than a microscopic worm.

This realization led to the conclusion that there are many

different factors that determine exactly how our bodies grow and behave. Heredity is only one factor among many that helps to determine what will happen to us during our lifetimes, and even how long that lifetime will be.

At least one author has taken these concepts and surmised that it may be possible to stop the aging process altogether and extend life indefinitely. Anet Paulina, in her book "Transcend the Aging Process" combines the concepts taught by Dr. Lipton and others with theories from quantum physics in a very intriguing presentation.

This has profound implications, especially if some quantum physicists are right in saying that our thoughts are intimately connected to the rest of the universe.

The Placebo Effect

While all this information about the foundations of life and the universe is nice to know, the question that we are intensely interested in answering is how do these microscopic events translate to real world experiences? Does the unpredictable nature of things on the quantum level lead to any unpredictability on the level in which we live? And more specifically, can we choose to activate specific changes?

In medical research, it is common to test the effectiveness of a new treatment by comparing it to an inert, functionally worthless placebo. A placebo may be a sugar pill, a bread capsule, an injection of distilled water, a physical manipulation, or anything that resembles the new treatment being tested. Even surgery has been used as a placebo, where surgeons simply open up the area being 'treated' and sew the patient back up again.

In any given research study, the people participating as test patients (the subjects) are given either the real treatment or a

placebo by the medical staff. The subjects are never told whether they are receiving the real treatment or the placebo. In a "double blind" study, the medical staff themselves do not know which they are administering to the patients. In all cases, the researchers that set up the studies always know which is which, and tally the results afterwards.

In some cases, a research study is set up to find out how often the condition being treated goes into a natural spontaneous remission, by including a test group that receives absolutely no treatment whatever. This usually provides us with information on how effective the placebo itself is in treating the condition.

Over the years, it has been found that placebos are very effective in treating many types of conditions, especially pain. Other conditions where placebos have been proven to be effective include allergies, arthritis, asthma, cancer, the common cold, depression, diabetes, motion sickness, multiple sclerosis, Parkinsonism, ulcers, and warts. Regardless of condition, including those not mentioned, an average of 35% of all patients receiving placebos have reported just as much relief from their conditions as patients who received traditional treatment. This healing response to placebos is called "the placebo effect."

The effectiveness of any placebo depends on the beliefs of both the medical personnel giving the placebo and the patient receiving it. If the doctor giving the placebo believes it will be effective, the patient is more likely to believe in it as well. When the patient believes that the placebo will produce dramatic changes, it does, and when the patient is uncertain about the promised cure, the results are equally dismal.

In general, the form in which the placebo is given has a great deal to do with its effectiveness. Injections are generally perceived to be more effective than capsules, which in turn are perceived to be more effective than pills. Surgery is perceived to be the most effective form of treatment, and produces the

strongest placebo effect.

There have been many cases reported where a doctor prescribed what he/she thought was a miracle drug to a patient in need, only to find out later that the new drug proved ineffective for treating the condition for which it was administered. Regardless, the patients in these cases usually respond with dramatic healing results.

One such case, as published in the *Journal of Prospective Techniques* in 1957, illustrates the power of the placebo effect.

The patient, Wright, had an advanced cancer of the lymph nodes. Tumors the size of oranges filled his neck, armpits, chest, abdomen, and groin. Two quarts of milky fluid were being drained out of his chest on a daily basis. All of the standard treatments had been used, yet Wright was not expected to live much longer.

Obviously, Wright didn't want to die, and when he heard about a new experimental drug called Krebiozen, he begged his doctor to try it. Even though the drug was being limited to patients with at least 3 months to live, Dr. Klopfer eventually relented and gave Wright an injection of the experimental drug. This was on a Friday, and Klopfer honestly did not expect Wright to live out the weekend.

By the following Monday, Wright was out of bed and on his feet. Upon examination, Dr. Klopfer found the tumors to be half their original size. Ten days later, Wright left the hospital apparently free of the cancer.

Several months later, research reports were being published that revealed Krebiozen had absolutely no effect on cancer of the lymph nodes. When Wright read the reports, he immediately had a relapse and was readmitted to the hospital.

At this point, Dr. Klopfer decided to try an experiment. He explained to Wright that the reports were in error and that some

of the earlier supplies of the experimental drug had lost their potency in transit. He went on to say that he had a newer batch that was highly concentrated and so strong they had to take precautions before administering it. In actual fact, Klopfer was bluffing and intended to inject Wright with distilled water – a placebo.

Despite the bluff, the healing response was real. Once again the tumors in Wright's body vanished in record time.

Wright remained cancer-free for another two months, until the American Medical Association announced that Krebiozen was completely ineffective in the treatment of cancer. At that point, Wright's tumors came back with renewed vigor and he died two days later.

Suggestion has a powerful influence on the effect of any treatment. One study even found that a person can be given a stimulant with the suggestion that it was a sedative and the person would become drowsy and fall asleep. The same study showed that a person could be given a sedative with the suggestion that it was a stimulant and the person would perk up just as if the drug were a real stimulant. There have been other studies that have confirmed this phenomenon.

Faith Healing

Since we have found that the effectiveness of placebos depends on the faith a patient has in them, and that a patient's faith in a drug has more of an impact than the drug itself, then what does science have to say about faith healing in general?

When scientists set up a new research study, they attempt to eliminate all variables from the process except for the ones for which they are testing. This is to produce a clear picture of the impact those variables have on the thing being tested.

For instance, when science has tested the effect placebos have on healing, they eliminated all variables that they could not control, such as the personality or reputations of different healers, and the environment in which healing may take place. They do this by making sure these variables are the same in all cases.

The result is that science only tests healing done in a hospital-type setting, using medical personnel with no outstanding reputations and very little charisma. Dull, bland, and boring. Nothing to get excited about.

There's nothing wrong with this, but it does limit the information that science can collect. Some studies show dramatic evidence for the effect of faith on healing, and yet other studies have shown no correlation between the two. The only conclusion that science can make with the current information is that there's a good chance that faith healing is real, and that there are other variables involved that have not yet been accounted for.

Medical science has come under attack for not adequately studying the effects of faith healing, with many claims of self-interest and too much attention to the financial bottom-line. This may be true, but the honest truth is that science doesn't have the resources to study everything, and faith healing just hasn't risen to the top of the list.

Just as some people believe that taking time to warm up before exercise is a waste of time, science in general doesn't consider faith healing to be an important subject to study.

Luckily for us, this isn't true about all scientists. There have been a few brave scientists who have spent significant time sifting through the charlatans and false healers, and collected information on authentic faith healers that can be used for future research.

Scientists like Jeanne Achterberg, author of "Imagery in Healing", who has devoted herself to the study of shamanic healers

in more primitive cultures. And scientists like Alfred Stelter, author of "Psi-Healing", who has collected substantial evidence on genuine faith healers across the globe. Other scientists who have studied faith healing and miracle workers include Max Freedom Long, author of "The Secret Science Behind Miracles", and Erlendur Haraldsson, Ph.D., author of "Modern Miracles". All of these provide good solid evidence proving the reality of faith healing and "mind over matter".

Some of the most dramatic evidence for the true power of belief can be found in cases of "instant healing", where a major condition of the physical body is transformed into healthy tissues within seconds. One such case is reported by Max Freedom Long in his book, "The Secret Science Behind Miracles".

In this case, a man attending a small beach party fell and broke his left leg, just above the ankle. In the group was a man who had seen similar breaks before and recognized the seriousness of the injury. Also in the group was a healer who gracefully took over the situation.

Kneeling next to the injured man, she pressed her hands gently on the place where the break occurred and chanted softly for a few moments, after which she became quiet. Minutes later she got up and announced that the healing was complete.

To the amazement of everyone there, the injured man rose to his feet and was able to walk normally. There was no indication that the leg had ever been broken.

Many of us have seen programs on television exposing certain psychic surgeons as frauds, but it wasn't until I read Alfred Stelter's "Psi-Healing" that I realized just how prejudiced the scientific community can be in this area.

As an example, during an investigation of Antonio Agpaoa, a psychic surgeon in the Philippines, a Dr. Seymour Wanderman was offered to place his hands inside the opening of a patient's

body to verify it's reality, and later was offered the removed tissues for analysis. Both offers were refused, yet Dr. Wanderman later announced that the surgery was a hoax.

Unfortunately, this is not a rare case, and many scientists refuse to acknowledge the reality of evidence that stares them in the face, preferring to believe in a universe of perfect order and simple rules. Because we trust their intelligence, many of us have been misled by such scientists to believe that these things can't possibly happen.

And yet, as we've already seen, the discoveries of quantum physics, molecular biology, and medical research have already proven that the universe is not quite so simple, and many things *do* happen that defy the old, and now outdated laws of science. What we need to do is to acknowledge their reality and find out what causes them.

Mind Over Matter

Closely related to faith healing is the phenomenon known as telekinesis, psychokinesis (PK), or more commonly, "mind over matter". This is where a person is able to move physical objects using mental powers alone.

Some of the most famous experiments in this area were conducted by a scientist named J.B. Rhine at Duke University. Besides telekinesis, Rhine also studied many other areas of what is generally called the paranormal, including ESP, telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. His work conclusively proved that everyone has some degree of psychic ability, although various factors alter the degree of success in any given situation.

In the various experiments conducted by Rhine, a positive result was recorded as a 'hit', and a negative result was recorded as a 'miss'. Tallied together, the percentage of hits to misses became

each subject's 'score'. After many thousands of trials, the data was analyzed for statistical significance and the real truth became clear.

Rhine found that his subject's motivation affected the scores they achieved, as did their interest level in the experiments. Thus, the more 'connected' the subject was with the experiment, the better they performed.

Whether a subject believed in the reality of psychic abilities or not was the most telling factor. Rhine called this the 'sheep-goat' effect. Those who accepted psychic abilities as a natural occurrence performed much better than those who thought the subject was a waste of time.

Some of the strongest criticisms of Rhine's work revolve around the concept of chance. After all, even a broken clock is right twice a day. Statistically, a random series of guesses would be correct a certain percentage of times. In the experiments where a subject tries to sense which one of five cards his or her partner is holding, a random guess would be right about 20% of the time.

Over the course of Rhine's research, the average scores achieved by his subjects were only a small degree better than chance. However, this can easily be explained when you realize that Rhine himself believed that the results would not show anything dramatic.

The main thing we want to notice about these experiments is that they prove scientifically that our consciousness extends outside of our bodies and can affect the world around us, according to the belief we have in the process. They also demonstrate that we are all connected on a level beyond the physical level.

In situations where belief is stronger, the results of such activity are proportionally more sensational. Take, for instance, the case of Sathya Sai Baba, an Indian mystic who is famous for

the unending flow of materializations he produces "out of thin air".

A scientific investigation of Sathya Sai Baba as reported in "Modern Miracles" by Erlendur Haraldsson, Ph.D. reveals that practically everyone who has come into contact with Saytha Sai Baba has observed materializations of some kind, and most have a locket or ring that was given to them by the miracle-worker himself.

There are several factors that tend to prove the validity of the materializations produced by Sai Baba. First is the continuous flow of gifts given since the 1940's, many of which are composed of precious metals. Second is the fact that no-one has yet detected any fraud in his presence. It stands to reason that of the many scientists who sought to disprove the claims of miracles, at least one of them would have found some evidence of fraud if it existed. Since no-one has, then we can confidently conclude that the miracles are real.

The third point is the fact that he performs his miracles openly for all to see, with no restriction of any kind regarding photography of the events. In all cases, the cameras have recorded exactly what observers saw, proving that no type of 'mass hypnosis' was involved.

A fourth factor tending to prove the reality of Sathya Sai Baba's materializations is his apparent ability to produce objects that are requested of him, including fruits that are out of season and difficult to obtain in India. Of the foods that Sai Baba is reported to produce, many of them are baked sweets that are very hot to the touch when they are given, as if they had just come out of an oven.

When asked how he produces these miracles, his answer is that he merely thinks of what he wants, imagines it, and then it appears. In this process, he does not need to imagine all of the minor details, just the overall form of the object.

One example of this is when he pulled a statue of Krishna out of the sand for some visitors. During a drive along the seashore, the group stopped at a beach and begun to discuss their visit to a local temple, where they had hoped to see a famous statue of Krishna. Sai Baba offered to show it to them, whereupon he drew a figure in the sand, and then reached in with both hands and pulled out a magnificent golden statue. One of the visitors asked how it was done, to which Sai Baba replied, "I said to myself, let that image of Krishna which is traditionally present in the minds of all these people appear in the form of a golden statue."

Sathya Sai Baba performs many more types of miracles than just materializations. Reports of instant healing abound, as do reports of bilocation (appearing in 2 places at the same time), teleportation (the instantaneous movement from one location to another, usually separated by great distances), ESP, and telepathy. These reports have been followed up by responsible scientists and the claims hold up even under intense scrutiny.

There have been legends of others with similar abilities, not the least of which was Jesus Christ. With modern proof that such miracles do indeed happen, perhaps we have good reason to believe once more in the miracles of the Bible. If the miracles of Christ were accurately recorded, and not the product of exaggeration over time, then there's a good chance that his message was recorded accurately as well.

If this is true, then we may want to take a fresh look at the quotes where Christ tells us that "whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have receive it, and it will be yours".

Religion

Science hasn't always been considered the most reliable source of information. For many years, religious leaders were regarded as the ones with the "inside scoop" on the nature of the universe.

Perhaps this is why science is only now starting to propose theories that support spiritual teachings that have been around for thousands of years.

Currently available in the Christian Bible are some of the most widely available spiritual texts of ancient times. While there is much debate about how much the material has been edited over the many years, and whether translations have given us the "true meaning" of the original languages, we can still see a very important message in the text we have today.

One message that is clearly evident in today's New Testament is Christ's repeated quote that "according to your faith is it done unto you." This quote appears in practically every case of a healing miracle.

There are many other quotes mentioning the value of faith, especially as it relates to prayer. For instance, when the disciples were afraid of the stormy sea, Christ rebuked them for having weak faith and then commanded the wind and waves to be still. And in several passages, Christ is quoted to have said (*slightly paraphrased*) "If you commanded this mountain to cast itself into the sea, and did not doubt that it would happen, it would be done for you."

Overall, the two most repeated messages attributed to the founder of today's Christian religion are about Faith and Love. This coincides very neatly with the discoveries of modern science as the core principles leading to a full and satisfying life. Other religions also have a strong emphasis on faith as an active mechanism for receiving abundant blessings from God.

The development of religion is a vast and interesting topic. At its foundation, religion developed as a way for humanity to relate to the world around them. In some cases it sought to provide meaning and guidance for living, but in many cases it was a call for help from spiritual sources.

Before organized religion, everyone had their own idea of how to gain this assistance. Some believed that there was one great God responsible for everything. Others believed that there were many gods and goddesses, as well as innumerable nature spirits that shared the responsibility of keeping the universe running smoothly. Some people believed that God required a great sacrifice before assistance would be granted, and others believed that God required the petitioner to meet some mysterious standard of purity. Still others believed that assistance could be obtained through the studious use of substances, such as oils, incense, and "magic potions".

When we step back and analyze all of the various processes that have been used throughout history for gaining spiritual assistance, we find that the single thread running through all of them is the thread of faith. Faith that a prayer will be answered, or faith in a process of working with spiritual forces.

Popular Literature

In 1926, an intellectual by the name of Ernest Holmes wrote a textbook that formed a bridge between science and religion. That textbook was rewritten in 1938 and has been in continuous publication ever since. Countless other books refer to it and the philosophy it teaches. In fact, it became so popular, a religious movement called Religious Science formed around it. That textbook is "The Science of Mind".

If a book's value can be measured by the number of lives it changes for the better, then "The Science of Mind" can legitimately be called one of the most valuable books of the 20th century. Within it, Holmes presents a semi-scientific description of faith and the means by which it works. He also presents a very simple technique for altering faith in order to change circumstances for the better.

The core technique used by practitioners of "The Science of Mind" is one called '*treatment*'. This is a process of altering your faith about a situation by affirming what you would like experience, as if it were the current reality. Many people describe this as using '*affirmations*', or '*affirmative prayer*'.

In 1948, a newspaper reporter named Claude Bristol wrote a much smaller book about the power of belief called "The Magic of Believing", also in continuous publication.

As a newspaper reporter, Bristol never took anything at face value and sought to find proof of any claim before giving it any value whatsoever. During his career, Bristol investigated many religious and spiritual events, as well as people in all walks of life.

He noticed that two people could do the exact same thing and get two completely different results. His conclusion was that it was the belief that these people had that produced whatever results they experienced. One person believed in success and the other believed in failure.

In "The Magic of Believing", Bristol offers several techniques for changing beliefs in order to change outcomes. One of these techniques involved writing down your desired outcome on an index card and visualizing yourself experiencing that outcome every morning and evening. Through continued exposure to the idea, your mind naturally adapts and begins to expect that outcome more than any other. Once you believe it, you'll see it manifest in your life.

Visualization has been written about in much of the popular literature of the last 50 years. A famous book that focuses on this almost exclusively was "Creative Visualization" by Shakti Gawain. This works on the same basic principle of conditioning your mind to believe that your desired reality is likely to manifest.

In the last several decades, there has been a resurgence of new material based on very old ideas. Most of the material focuses on

using spiritual forces to create or alter circumstances, and reminds us of the old myths and legends about magic and wizards. And yet with the new discoveries of quantum physics and the fundamental nature of our physical universe, the idea of magic seems plausible again.

Recently, many authors have been writing about something called the "Law of Attraction". In essence, the "Law of Attraction" is a way of presenting the same concepts we've discussed here in this chapter, and will continue to discuss throughout this book. Some authors claim that the concepts have been kept secret from the masses, yet as we've seen here, that hasn't been the case.

Conclusions

Everywhere we look, we find evidence that supports the idea that our beliefs affect the world around us, and that they may even change physical reality itself. Whether this is actually the case or not remains to be seen, but it is certainly an interesting hypothesis to test.

Regardless of the extreme possibilities that this chapter has presented, it is clear that we can radically change our lives by choosing what beliefs we allow into our minds. Even if the only effect of choosing a new set of beliefs is that we begin to make a different set of choices, this alone will enhance our lives in countless ways.

But what if it really is possible to produce changes in the world around us merely by thinking about them and believing that the changes will happen? And what if the process of choosing a new set of beliefs can be quick and easy?