

# How Changing a Belief Changes What You Actually See

*Understanding Our Humanness Series Module #03*

The human brain is a powerful belief engine. It processes massive amounts of electrochemical information flowing into it from sensory receptors that connect the brain to the things in the outside world. The process is described below.

- 1. The brain searches for dots it can turn into recognizable patterns.*
- 2. It compares those patterns to belief models that are part of memories recorded in neural networks.*
- 3. If the new pattern matches a belief model, the brain assigns that meaning to whatever the sensory receptors perceive outside the body.*
- 4. If the new pattern doesn't match a belief model, it searches for the closest one that does and then distorts or reshapes the new pattern to match that belief model. In other words, the brain makes the new information fit its preconceived notions.*
- 5. If the new information conflicts with trusted belief models, the brain often filters out things that disagree – or completely screens out the new information.*
- 6. The belief model the brain chooses not only identifies the thing outside the body; it provides expectations about what the thing does and how it should react.*

Once a new belief is formed, the brain begins looking for and finds confirmatory evidence that supports it. This adds an emotional boost of further confidence in the new belief and thereby accelerates the process of increasing trust in it. Round and round the process goes creating positive feedback loops of belief confirmation. It is very important to understand this process.

- The moment the brain connects new information to a belief model we are able “to see” what the eyes are looking at.*
- The belief model tells the brain how to react to what it sees.*
- If the brain changes the belief model it is using – and the thing we are looking at doesn't change -- what we see literally changes before our eyes!*

The following demonstration will help you understand by letting you have that experience. Look at the picture of a woman below.



*Do you see a young or old woman?*

What you see influences how you think about and relate to her.

- *We treat young and old people in different ways.*
- *We have different expectations about how young and old people should act.*

People looking at this picture see two different women -- *at exactly the same time.*

- *The necklace of the young woman is the mouth of the old woman.*
- *The tip of the nose of the old woman is the chin of the young woman.*
- *The ear of the young woman is the left eye of the old woman.*
- *The chin of the old woman is the chest of the young woman.*

Once you are able to see both women in the same picture, you can switch them back and forth in your mind - *but you cannot see both women at the same time.*

*The picture does not change.*

***The only thing that changes is the belief model your brain is using.***

If you understand this, you will be able to understand why two people experiencing the same thing at the same time or at different times are able to describe it in very different ways. The people seeing different women while looking at the same picture would create very different stories about the woman they see. Arguing over who is right or wrong won't work. There is a much better option:

***Help each other explore the belief models their brains are using!  
This transforms conflicts that divide us into relationship building opportunities!***