

## *Working Against Self-Limiting Beliefs: The A to F Model*

The A to F model is a classical model used in working with self-limiting beliefs. The model has its roots in cognitive and behavioral psychology. It is widely used in sports psychology and executive coaching. The basic idea is that all events are neutral. Only our thoughts stir reactions. For example:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Belief</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
Your boss yells	I have done a bad job	You feel angry, depressed
Your boss yells	She is overworked	You feel compassionate

Consider the following illustrative example:

### **ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE**

#### **A. Activating event or situation**

- Giving a presentation in front of colleagues

#### **B. Self-Limiting Belief(s) about the situation**

- I must perform exceptionally well or my colleagues will think that I am stupid

#### **C. Consequences of these beliefs - emotional or behavioral**

- Anxiety, poor concentration, defensiveness

#### **D. Disputing the Self-Limiting Belief(s)**

- Just because I want to perform exceptionally well, does it logically follow that I must?
- Am I being realistic? If I don't perform exceptionally well, will my colleagues really think that I am stupid?
- What use is this idea to me? How is it helping me?

### **E. Effective new beliefs**

- Although I prefer to perform exceptionally well, it does not mean that I must.
- There is no evidence that my colleagues think or will think I am stupid if I do not perform exceptionally well.
- Holding on to this idea will make me more anxious and more likely to perform badly. I can feel concerned but not anxious about the presentation

### **F. New feeling**

- I am more confident, able to feel the presentation is a challenge rather than an ordeal.

Remember, the three key questions to ask when working with self-limiting beliefs are:

1. Is it logical?
2. Is it realistic?
3. Is it helpful?

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

Fill in A, B, C, and F below. We will discuss D (dispute self-limiting beliefs) and E (determine effective new beliefs) in our next session.

- A. Describe the troubling or difficult situation/event**
- B. Detect what negative self-talk or self-limiting ideas or behaviors you are bringing to the situation**
- C. Specify your unwanted emotions. Write down what you felt like doing as well as what you did do or feel.**
- D. Dispute self limiting beliefs**
- E. Determine effective new beliefs**
- F. Nominate new effective feelings. How do you want to feel about the situation/event?**