

BELIEF. Asked for the most desirable commodity in life, one is likely to opt for happiness. How is happiness achieved? There are many answers* - they may deal with the ownership of goods and assets, success, health and loving relationships. **A** great aid to happiness, though, is to have a personal belief we can trust; one that gives us peace of mind and comfort. And it is not important which belief it is - any belief will do. **H**owever, our belief must be ethical, peaceful, non-delusional and tolerant - it must not restrict other people and their beliefs.

**see also* HAPPINESS, MEANING, WHAT I BELIEVE

When deciding on a belief, it is wise to stay clear of doctrines and ready-made belief systems that are inherently rigid, authoritarian and dogmatic. One ought to study other beliefs, be open to learn about opposing truths - and question everything.

*So beware - our beliefs are often shaped by 'truthiness'**, they may be founded on irrational, biased or false concepts. It is for that reason that some teachers, some philosophies advocate against beliefs - in fact to believe or dis-believe nothing***.*

***see also* TRUTHINESS

The Buddha said: "Become aware, become conscious, become courageous - but don't hide behind belief systems and theologies. All organised beliefs are poisonous, all belief systems are barriers, since they do not allow free-thinking or doubt."

see also BUDDHISM

Thus, as regards our own personal beliefs, an issue of great importance is in play. Beliefs are just that: Personal. We may try and find solace in the various belief systems prescribed by groups and tribes ...

... but the idea that having a belief involves group activities - as the various dogmatic religious beliefs do - is false. Our own deep, true beliefs are unassailable by outside influences, just as they can't be relayed to others.

see also UNDERSTANDING

But does belief bring tangible benefits? In 2008, Professor A. Clark of the Paris School of Economics and Doctor O. Lelkes of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy conducted a vast survey of Europeans.

They found believers record less stress, can better cope with loss and divorce, are less prone to suicide, enjoy higher self-esteem and greater 'life purpose' ... and report being more happy. See also HAPPINESS

The tantalising proof that belief in God makes you happier and healthier, Tom Knox, Mail Online, 18 Feb 2011

Yet, it is known that among patients recovering from injury or illness, those who pray for relief often experience slower recovery rates - most likely due to them being more inclined to neglecting their medication, as they anticipate divine help.

Here is a curious story that shows a profound misunderstanding of the concept of belief. A pastor performed a service that included handling a rattlesnake - to demonstrate the veracity of a certain passage in the Bible.

"Anyone who believes can do it" he said. Only, he got bitten and died. You may say, that is a tragic story, what's curious about it? Well, his father - also a pastor - had died previously, performing the same stunt.

*This story is brought to you via the Fitz Files
The Sun Herald, 3 June 2012*

****Believe nothing ... ok, true. But our mind is designed for belief: beliefs are inescapable; and with so many negative, intolerant beliefs, for balance we need positive and supportive ones. Remember also: all beliefs are mind-constructs, under our control.*

see also WHAT I BELIEVE, GOD 4, 5
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