

$$E + T = R$$

## Belief Systems

We seem to be wired for belief

Like computer hardware and software

Belief can have dramatic results: expectations predict outcome, good and bad

VooDoo Death

Story of Dr. Lown

Krebiozen - cancer treatment.

Pts felt less pain, had improved appetite, lived longer than expected.

Was working until people were told that it doesn't work.

Placebo –

Up until the 1900 almost all medical treatments had no specific biological foundation. Curative mechanisms were psychological.

Placebos can produce beneficial physiological changes and can also induce side effects. They do so even though they consist of biologically inert agents.

Mechanisms underlying placebo effects are not understood.

Substantial number of people will be cured by placebo (1/3)

This means that placebo may be partially involved in any cure.

Placebo is so real that drug companies test against it in clinical trials.

We don't need facts to believe in something

Weakness of the Neurotic

“Lacking the capacity for illusion, for a creative myth about the possibilities of creation.

Unable to open the mind to the possibilities of the transcendental dimension.”

- Ernest Becker

Religion

- Positive self-talk: scripts and songs
  - “♪ Only believe, only believe, anything is possible if you on-ly be-lieve ♪”
- Use of repetition
  - Christians may pray 4x/day: meals, bedtime
- Leverages the power of belief
  - Letting go of psychological poisons (e.g. anger, fear); trust; peace in the mind
  - Protection/safety
  - Hope
  - Meaning and purpose
- People with strong positive religious belief are generally healthier than the general population. Why?
  - hope/strength for handling stress
  - rules about eating and drinking, sexual promiscuity, anger and forgiveness
  - associating with people who share their beliefs
  - frequent reminders of how they seek to live

Suppose we are designed/programmed to function with a belief system that does not necessarily have to be “true?”

WE ALL HAVE BELIEF SYSTEMS of some sort or another:

- scientism
- cynicism
- healthism
- hedonism
- patriotism
- spiritualism
- atheism
- nudism
- other isms
- People are bad
- The world is bad
- I (you) am bad
- etc.

### **Sample Belief Systems**

#### Depression

Problems will be there whether we are depressed about them or not.

We would probably be more effective in dealing with our problems if we assume a more balanced emotional state.

#### Recon Marines

It's about more than being physically tough, it's also about mental toughness, Are You Mentally Strong Enough?

“It sucks. It sucks everyday. That's OK. We like it.”

Understand that it's always gonna suck. So you're gonna have to get stronger, get harder, get faster. Have fun with it, its gonna suck anyway.

Full dedication to being here.

“You can do anything.”

“Fight thru the stress, it doesn't phase you.”

#### Special Olympics

Indominable spirit.

“Triumph of the human spirit.”

### **HOMEWORK**

What are your belief systems? Describe your belief systems related to the following topics on a sheet of paper and bring it to next group session:

Happiness;      Life;      Freedom;      Responsibility