

Are your business beliefs holding you back?

CATH VINCENT SAYS IT'S TIME TO STEP UP AND CONQUER YOUR FEARS TO OPEN UP NEW BUSINESS POSSIBILITIES.

As I approached the doorway to the coffee shop, I could see that my client had already arrived and was casually flicking through the newspaper.

"Any news?" I asked, as I smiled a greeting.

"The economy is still bad."

I looked to the article he was reading and was surprised to see the large headline "The Economy Is Improving".

(Underneath, in much smaller type, the subheading read, "But You Might Not Notice for a While.")

This was the first hint that my client's beliefs about business might be holding him back. He continued by explaining that "it's just so hard to achieve sales in this economy". Finally in an attempt to be positive, he proudly told me that he regularly kept himself on track with the mantra, "The harder the struggle, the sweeter the prize."

It became clear that no matter how much he thought he didn't want to work so hard, his inescapable belief was that he had to.

Don't get me wrong. It doesn't matter whether the belief is real, right, or true. The key point is: if you believe something, it actually becomes true.

For years it was believed impossible to break the four-minute mile until Roger Bannister achieved it in 1954. Once that psychological barrier was broken many other athletes, believing it possible, went on to achieve it too.

I was once at a seminar where everyone in the audience was challenged to face their fear and walk across broken glass bottles in bare feet. Most people in the class were understandably nervous about doing this. I have been nervous about plenty of things in my life, believe you me, but for some reason, I didn't find this daunting at all. I just figured that "we wouldn't be asked to do this if there was the slightest danger that we would get hurt."

That belief is what encouraged me to step very casually across the glass and safely reach the other side. It was only when my colleague's journey ended in a bleeding foot that I realised with shock that my 'belief' had not been accurate! By acting on a belief that served me (whether 'true' or not), I was able to get a good result.

So what business beliefs are you operating to, and are they ones that serve?

The trouble with beliefs – business beliefs or any other kind – is that they are often completely invisible to us.

Recently, I was filming an interview with a hypnotherapist. He had suggested that having me break a piece of wood in two with my bare hand would make for fun and inspiring TV, and without a second thought I agreed. However on the day of filming, when I was presented with the two-centimetre thick piece of wood and was surrounded by camera crew, my confidence started to waiver. I was confronted with the belief that it simply wasn't possible to break through wood with my bare hand. I could even hear unhelpful excuses bubbling up "I should have had a practice run", "Maybe we could edit this if it doesn't work out".

Finally I remembered the example of walking across broken glass, and I tried to persuade myself that this would be the same. ("Surely, I wouldn't be invited to break the wood if it was completely impossible?") And assured by the hypnotherapist that other people in the past – much like the four-minute mile – had successfully done this before me, I figured that I could do it too.

At the moment where the wood broke cleanly in two beneath my hand, I experienced a profound feeling of elation. Really and truly, if I am able to do this, then what else am I capable of?

So ask yourself the same question.

It may seem 'true' that the economy is bad. It may seem 'true' that it is hard to make money. It may even seem 'true' that the only way to success is by working long hours. But suppose that wasn't the case?

In just the same way that it may seem 'true' that it's impossible to break through wood with your bare hand, imagine the possibilities if you could.

The episode mentioned above aired Monday 11 May on Sky Channel 83, 7.30pm.



» Cath Vincent is an international, award-winning conference speaker and business mentor. She is the host of The Cath Vincent Show, a motivational TV show that airs on Sky TV (www.thecathvincentshow.com).