

Workbook Chapter Twenty-Two Knowing vs Believing

Self-Assessment Tools:

The SOC Inventory
Barry K. Weinhold, PhD

Note: This self-Inventory gives you a way of determining your stage of Consciousness. The higher your stage of consciousness, the more likely you are to be "knowing" rather than believing.

Directions: Place the number that represents your best response in the blank before the number of each statement. Use the following scale to determine your answers: (1= Almost Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Often, 4= Almost Always).

- __1. Conflicts just seem to happen to me and I have no idea why.
- __2. In a conflict situation, someone has to win and someone has to lose.
- __3. In a conflict situation, I feel victimized by the actions of others.
- __4. I can see the underlying patterns in my recurring conflicts.
- __5. I have the skills to help others successfully resolve their conflicts.
- __6. If I have a conflict, I turn it over to God or my higher power.
- __7. In a conflict situation, I tend to see myself as right and the other person as wrong.
- __8. In a conflict situation, I try to "shoot down" the arguments of the other person.
- __9. As the result of resolving my conflicts I am able to better understand myself and why I got into a conflict with this person.
- __10. I have altered some of my values and beliefs as the result of my conflicts.
- __11. I wish that the people who bug me would just go away.
- __12. In a conflict situation, I end up not getting what I want and the other person does.
- __13. I lack confidence in my ability to resolve my conflicts successfully.
- __14. I can see the causes of my current conflicts stemming from similar unresolved conflicts I had as a child.
- __15. I have the ability to locate and resolve any unresolved conflicts from my past.
- __16. In a conflict situation, I am afraid that I'll lose myself if I consider the other person's position or needs.
- __17. I believe that the past is the past, you have to put it behind you and go on.
- __18. I depend on the instruction of my teachers because they have more knowledge and experience than I do.
- __19. I am able to see how the patterns of unresolved conflicts from my past are controlling my life.
- __20. I am able to change the major underlying dysfunctional patterns of behavior that have controlled my life.

Scoring: To get a score for each of the five stages of consciousness, add the numbers for the four items keyed to each stage (See below);

Stage One (Add items 1, 6, 11, and 16) = ____

Stage Two (Add items 2, 7, 12, and 17) = ____

Stage Three (Add items 3, 8, 13, and 18) = ____

Stage Four (Add items 4, 9, 14, and 19) = ____

Stage Five (Add items 5, 10, 15, and 20) = ____

Interpretation:

After receiving information about what each stage represents, you can use the following interpretation of your scores: The stages of consciousness where you had your highest scores are the ones that you are most likely to use in a conflict situation. The higher the stage of consciousness where you have your highest scores, the better chance you have of keeping any twisted beliefs from interfering with your ability to resolve your conflicts.

In each of the five stages of consciousness, a score of 10-16 = a high score, 5-9 = a medium score, and 1-4 = a low score. Now that you have taken the Self-Inventory, look below at what Kegan says about each of the stages he identified.

Stage One: Magical Beliefs.¹⁴ Individuals in this stage of consciousness lack good cause-and-effect thinking and often attribute events in their lives to magical sources or causes. They often act impulsively and engage in fantasy projections. In conflict situations, they typically blame their conflicts or problems on some unforeseen coincidence or on the other person without any awareness of how they might have participated in causing the conflict. They have very low self-awareness or self-reflection skills and almost no self-correction skills. The world around these people is a scary place and they are always on guard waiting for something bad to happen to them.

Typical twisted beliefs held by people in this stage of consciousness are as follows:

- God will protect me from harm.
- I don't know why conflicts always seem to happen to me.
- I have trouble deciding what I want or need in a conflict situation.
- Unseen forces are causing my conflicts.
- Taking care of myself is being selfish.
- I can't seem to think clearly when I am forced to deal with a conflict.
- I can make conflicts go away if I just don't think about them.
- Nothing that ever happened to me in the past is related to how I am today.
- From time to time I just seem to have a run of bad luck.

Stage Two: Concrete Beliefs Individuals in this stage of consciousness base their reality on what is visible and concrete. They are unable to grasp the meaning of abstract concepts such as "human rights" or "fairness." Everything must be quantified in concrete, visible ways for them to grasp its meaning or significance. During conflicts, they often focus on the most visible and obvious aspects of the conflict and ignore the rest. These people display very limited self-awareness and almost no self-correction skills. Their self-reflection is centered on trying to figure out what's wrong with others that causes these people to create conflicts for them. They typically feel defeated by the actions of others.

Typical twisted beliefs held by people at this stage of consciousness are as follows:

- Other people just don't treat me right.
- I don't know why people pick on me so much and cause me conflicts.

- I have to please others in order to be liked.
- In my close relationships I have trouble telling whose feelings I am feeling.
- I have to put my past behind me and just move on.
- It is best to try to avoid conflicts at all costs.
- The world seems to be filled with bad people who can cause conflicts for me.

Stage Three: Cross-Relational Beliefs. Individuals in this stage of consciousness are able to think abstractly. While they are able to see the relationships between categories of information, they tend to see the world as acting upon them. They typically think, act and feel like a victim. In conflict situations they usually feel victimized by others or the situation and believe the conflict is caused by the other person or circumstances. They also tend to victimize others for the same reason and experience conflicts as either win-lose or lose-lose. The self-reflection that occurs at this stage is focused on how they are being victimized or how to victimize others first. People at this level still do self-defeating things.

Typical twisted beliefs held by people at this stage of consciousness are as follows:

- If I have to ask for what I want from you that means you don't love me.
- I have to keep my guard up because people will get me if I let them.
- Other people just don't understand me.
- I always seem to lose when I get into a conflict with someone.
- I have to beat others to the punch or they will take advantage of me.
- Other people have it in for me for some reason.
- I have to avoid conflict at all costs because I always seem to lose.
- Asking for help from others is a sign of weakness and only invites others to take advantage of me even more.

Stage Four: Systemic Beliefs. Individuals in this stage of consciousness can think holistically and systemically. They are able to perceive the underlying patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that recycle and control their lives. In conflict situations, they are able to correlate a current conflict with similar ones from the past. They can understand how and why a current conflict might be caused by an unresolved conflict from their past, but they usually can't figure out what to do to change this pattern or conflict. People at this level of consciousness are very self-aware, but still are not able to do much self-correction. Most of the time these people do not do stupid things.

Typical twisted beliefs held by people at this stage of consciousness are as follows:

- I say the same things to my kids that my parents said to me and I don't seem to be able to stop it.
- For some reason my spouse treats me the same way that my mother treated me.
- I cannot change the way I am, so I might as well accept the way I am and not try to change myself.
- I seem to have the same types of conflicts over and over and I don't know how to prevent them from happening.
- I keep waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Stage Five: Trans-Systemic Beliefs. Individuals in this stage of consciousness can not only see the relationships between their current conflicts and their past unresolved conflicts, but they are able to figure out how to change these life-restricting patterns. They are able to see why they have been unable to resolve past conflicts, how these unresolved conflicts are currently affecting their lives and how to resolve these intractable conflicts at their source. They can truly utilize conflict situations as opportunities to change their lives and their relationships. The people at this level of consciousness are able to self-reflect and self-correct, so they are mostly free from twisted beliefs.

Typical beliefs held by people at this stage of consciousness are as follows:

- I am no longer at fault for everything that happens in my relationship. I know what belongs to me and what belongs to the other person.
- I can accept responsibility for my part in creating a conflict.
- I am better at helping others than I am at helping myself.
- I get frustrated with having to process the past all the time. Will I ever be free of the past?

A Summary of Kegan's Research Findings. Based on his and other research findings, Robert Kegan concluded that up to 70% of the adult population of the United States operates most of the time at Stage Three or below. He calls these people "Traditionalists." This group likely suffers from the long-term effects of unrecognized and unhealed developmental traumas and operates out of a false self. People in stage four he identifies as "Moderns" and those at stage five he calls "Post-Moderns." According to his research, up to 30% of adults are entering or at Stage Four and less than 1% are entering or at Stage Five.¹⁵ These people have the consciousness needed to heal their traumas and create a fully functioning self.

Kegan claims that because of their lower stage of consciousness, many people are clearly "in over their heads" in their attempts to understand and cope with the complexity of modern life. He says this group of people with lower consciousness is not able to meet the mental challenges of modern life. I have found that these people often have twisted beliefs that help them cope with their overwhelm, but keep them from evolving. Generally, they do not have enough of a self to figure out how to meet these mental challenges.

Case Example:

DRAWING BATTLE LINES IN THE WAR BETWEEN THE SEXES

Barry K. Weinhold, PhD

The following scenario illustrates how people with co-dependent/counter-dependent issues are drawn into a relationship with each other and how their patterns interlock. It also illustrates how people are drawn together based on their prior beliefs and not on knowing.

It takes place at a singles' party where Renee notices Mark across the room. Mark is talking to several other men, and they seem to be listening intently to what he is saying. To Renee, Mark looks powerful, strong, and secure. She waits for the right moment and then approaches him cautiously. (Does this feel familiar?)

Renee: "Excuse me, I'm looking for the hostess." (*Maybe he'll notice me if I ask him a question.*)

Mark: "She just stepped into the kitchen, I believe. Hi, I'm Mark. What's your name?"

(She looks cute.)

Renee: "Ah, I'm Renee."

(He's so good-looking. I probably don't stand a chance with him.)

"You seem to know a lot of people here. I hardly know anyone."

(Maybe he'll feel sorry for me and talk to me.)

Mark: "Yeah, I do business with a lot of these people."

(She seems to think I'm important. Maybe I can impress her.)

Renee: "Really? What is your business?"

(Maybe I can get him to talk about himself so he won't ask anything about me.)

Mark: "I'm in stocks and bonds. In fact, I was just talking to the guys over there about some speculative stocks I thought that they might be interested in."

(Hmmm. She seems interested in me and she's kind of cute. I can't tell her that I'm about to lose my job. I'll have to play it cool so she doesn't see how nervous and insecure I am.)

Renee: "I don't know much about investing and those things. How did you learn about all that?" *(He seems so sure of himself. I wish I could feel that confident. He seems like he'd be an exciting person to be with. I feel a little flushed. I hope he doesn't notice.)*

Mark: "Oh, I've done a lot of things. Maybe I could tell you about it sometime and give you some stock tips. Let's have dinner some night."

(If she is really interested in me, maybe she will go out with me. And besides, a good lay would get my mind off the problems I have at work.)

Renee: "Gee, that would be great. I get so confused about financial things."

(He wants to help me. I've been so lonely and depressed. I could use someone exciting in my life.)

Mark: "How about dinner this week, say Tuesday evening?"

(She looks easy. Maybe she will invite me back to her place after dinner to talk further.)

Renee: "That sounds like a great idea. I think I'm free that night."

(He must like me and really wants to get to know me.)

Mark: "Fine. I'll come by about seven."

(Hope she doesn't back out now that I've stuck my neck out.)

Renee: "Here's my address and phone number."

(I'll have to call Laurie to reschedule our visit on Tuesday night. I wonder if he is married or has someone special.)

Mark: "Your place isn't far from where I live. I'll ring the bell for you when I get there." *(She turns me on. Maybe she will invite me in for a drink and we can make out some before we leave. I could sure use some good sex right now.)*

The next day all Renee can think about is her dinner with Mark. At work she can't concentrate and makes many more mistakes than usual. Mark is also having his problems. He worries that she may not like him and that he might accidentally reveal his insecurities. He begins rehearsing his lines so he can look confident and be in control. Then he remembers how easy it was to deceive Renee and anticipates that he can let down some of his guard with her. Finally, he begins to obsess about

having sex with her, thinking about how she might be in bed, which keeps his mind off his problems at work for the rest of the day.

You can begin to see how the attraction between Mark and Renee is one of opposites. Renee appears weak, insecure, dependent, and passive as she seeks someone important to help structure her life. Meanwhile, Mark tries to project an image of strength, aggressiveness, success, independence, and power even though he is very insecure and needy. The attraction of opposites is a very common pattern in relationships, one that can help set up a dysfunctional relationship in which two half persons come together to make one whole person.

These kinds of relationships seldom ever lead to genuine intimacy. Eventually, the passive person, who is being dominated, gets tired of playing that role and wants to change the rules. Men with counter-dependency issues often discard a relationship if they feel their partner is no longer willing to serve them and be dominated. This pattern is changing today as women in our culture tire of being dominated and demand more equal relationships. Men too are seeing that these methods are not working for them.

Historically, women have shouldered most of the responsibility for making relationships work and, therefore, have shouldered most of the blame when relationships fail. However, as more women take their power and find their own voice, they are able to speak out more clearly. They often refuse to take full blame for the failure of a relationship. This forces men to look at their own counter-dependent issues that may have contributed to their lack of intimacy or the failure of their relationships.

More and more men are taking courageous first steps, such as entering 12-step programs or therapy. Unfortunately, this still happens only after a man's wife or partner has left him or has threatened to leave him and he is in a crisis. This puts many men in a reactive position, which makes it more difficult for them to grow and change.

Additional Resources

Films: "Westside Story" (1964 & 2021)

¹⁵ Kegan, pp. 191-197.