

The Structure Of A Belief

As you have learned, a social anxiety disorder consists of all sorts of negative limiting beliefs about yourself, others and the world.

A belief is a thought you believe to be true because it FEELS true to you. It's a feeling of certainty you have about a certain thought. That thought is an idea or conviction that you have been thinking over and over again.

Common examples of limiting or negative beliefs can be:

- I'm not good enough
- People are out to get me
- Nobody likes me
- The world is a dangerous place
- I can't trust myself
- People can't be trusted
- I'm an outside/I'm different
- I must be perfect or else people won't like me

Through your beliefs you filter the outside world. By doing this you end up filtering the world in a specific way unique to you. When you have positive beliefs such as:

“I'm good enough”,
“I'm safe in the world”, and
“people are nice and friendly”

... you have a totally different experience walking into a social gathering than when you have negative limiting beliefs such as:

“I'm not good enough”
“The world is a dangerous place for me”
“People are mean and out to get me”

In order to overcome your social anxiety, you need to find the negative limiting beliefs responsible for you feeling unsafe socially, and change these beliefs to positive ones. This way your subconscious mind no longer sees social situations as dangerous, and won't fire off the FFF response that causes the social anxiety symptoms.

By neutralising S.E.E.'s you're doing two powerful things:

1. You're eradicating stuck negative emotions; you're healing old wounds

2. You're *automatically* weakening negative limiting beliefs (because S.E.E.'s are the evidence that support the negative limiting belief)

The information that follows is to give you a deeper understanding of the structure of a negative limiting belief.

Destroying the evidence of a negative belief

The beliefs responsible for your social anxiety come from all sorts of sources; your parents, teachers, peers, siblings, **Significant Emotional Experiences (S.E.E.'s)**, media programming, etc.

You learned these beliefs somewhere, and your mind then searched for, and has gathered additional evidence of these beliefs being “the truth” (or more accurately, YOUR truth).

Let’s look at an example. Say that you have the belief “I’m not good enough”.

You know you have this belief because when you say it out loud, it *feels* true to you. Let’s say that you feel it to be true 10 out 10.

Since you are not born with such a belief (unless, and this is rare, something traumatic happened with your mom while you were in the womb and you picked up on that trauma –such as when your mom wanted to abort you-) you have to have learned this belief somewhere.

You have to have had experiences in life where this was true to you in order for you to now believe this.

You have “*evidence*” of the belief being true.

These experiences where you really felt you weren’t good enough are the evidence you have for believing that you are indeed not good enough.

Some questions I might ask you to uncover this evidence:

- Where did you learn that you are not good enough?
- How do you know you are not good enough?
- What does that feeling of not being good enough remind you of?
- When, with whom, and for what reason did you feel not good enough before?

The answers you come up with will be Significant Emotional Experiences (S.E.E.'s) where you learned you weren’t good enough. This can either be single experiences, or repetitive negative experiences.

These S.E.E.'s are the building blocks of the walls (the walls are the negative limiting beliefs) of your social anxiety dungeon.

Maybe you once came home with a rapport card with B’s and C’s and your dad scolded you.
You felt you were not good enough.

Maybe you one day finally mustered up the courage to ask your crush out for the prom, but she chose this more popular guy over you. *You felt you were not good enough.*

Maybe you would always be compared to your older sister and you never measured up.
You always felt you were not good enough.

Maybe you worked really hard to make it into that prestigious school, but you got rejected on your application. *You felt not good enough.*

Maybe your brother got all the attention when dad would come back from travel, and you did not.
You felt not good enough.

All these experiences where you felt you were not good enough are the evidence you have that supports the belief of not being good enough.

This evidence needs to be destroyed because it's the experiences in life that you had where you *felt not good enough* that are the causes of you not *feeling good enough* today.

Once you destroy that evidence (by using EFT tapping to neutralise a S.E.E.) the belief no longer holds true today. And you won't feel the "I'm not good enough" belief to be true anymore.

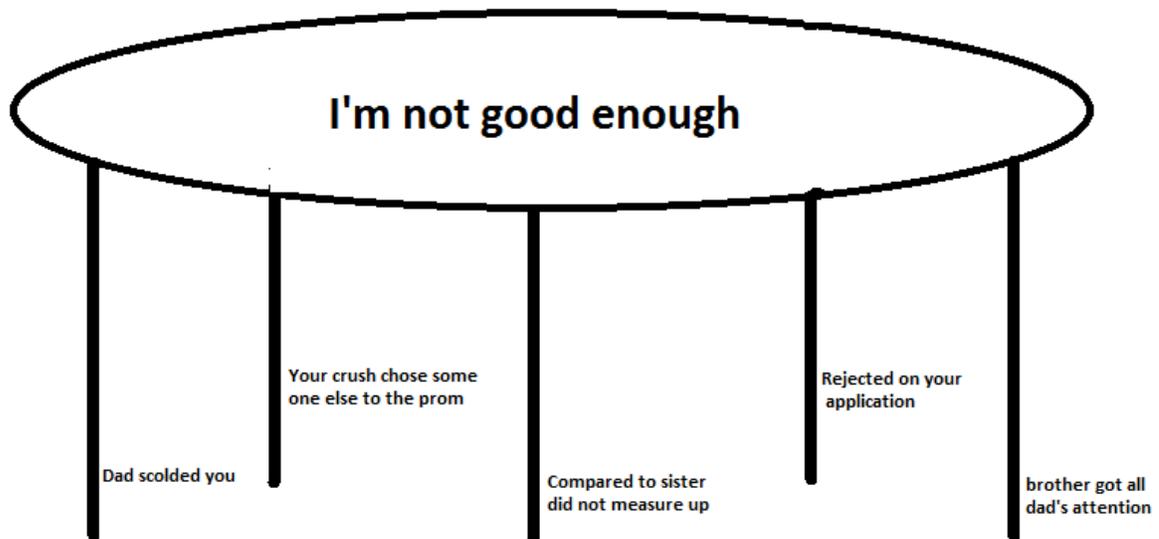
Let me give you a simple metaphor the originator of EFT (Gary Craig) came up with that is different from the metaphor of S.E.E.'s being the building blocks of the walls (negative limiting beliefs) your social anxiety dungeon.

Table Top Metaphor

Take a kitchen table. See a negative limiting belief as the table top. The table top is supported by legs.

The legs that keep the table firm in place are the negative experiences (Significant Emotional Events) that you have as evidence of the belief being true. Once these are removed, the belief will no longer hold true for you. The table top will collapse.

PICTURE: “table top of the belief “I’m not good enough” supported by the legs of S.E.E.’s”



There are some key experiences in life (S.E.E.'s) that taught you that you weren't good enough. And these Significant Emotional Experiences are the legs holding up the table top.

When you revisit some of these key memories and you get rid of the negative emotions from them, you are destroying the legs of the table top and the "I'm not good enough" belief will be destroyed in the process.

As you cut down the legs one by one, the table top will eventually fall and the negative limiting belief no longer will feel true to you.

Example:

James holds the belief that he is not good enough. When he says it out loud it feels totally true, a 10 out of 10 true. He understands the concept of the table top and starts working on the Significant Emotional Experiences he had in life where he learned that he wasn't good enough.

He tunes into the feeling of not being good enough and asks himself what it reminds him of, or what the earliest time is he can remember feeling that way (typically, the earlier a memory the more positive benefit you get neutralising them. Always go for the earliest experiences you can find).

He goes with the first thing that comes to his mind (Trust your subconscious mind and go with the first thing that comes to mind. This is your subconscious answering your request. This is what your subconscious gives you, so go with it. Don't doubt it, don't judge it, simply go with it, even if it seems unrelated) which is a memory where his dad came back from sea and his brother got all of dad's attention, and he got none.

He uses EFT on this experience thoroughly, gets all the negative emotion out of the S.E.E. and floods the neutralised memory with a positive emotion (not necessary, but a nice "icing on the cake").

After this he checks in with the "I'm not good enough" belief by saying it out loud again and measuring how true it feels to him on a scale of 0-10.

Because he successfully removed one of the supporting legs of the table, the table is a bit more wobbly, and it feels less true to him. It now only feels true to him 8 out 10. A drop of 2 points.

He continues...

When he was tapping on the experience with his dad coming back from sea before, an image came up of dad comparing him to his older sister and him not measuring up. Since he was already working on the S.E.E. of dad coming home from sea, he made a note of it and finished working on that S.E.E. first.

NOTE: I recommend first finishing the S.E.E. you're working on and making a note of other S.E.E.'s that come up, and then treating the S.E.E. that came up later once you have successfully treated the S.E.E. you were working on.

Do this unless what comes up is much stronger and needs your direct attention. If that's the case, first treat the new S.E.E. that came up, and then go back later to finish the original S.E.E. you were working on.

Since dad comparing him to his sister was a repetitive negative experience, he used the bundling baggage bundles technique (you will learn, or have learned how to do this in the SCS) to eliminate all of them in one go.

In doing so, he collapsed another table leg of the “I’m not good enough” table top.

He says “I’m not good enough” out loud and it now feels a lot less true to him. It feels less strongly negative when he says it. He guesses (if you don’t know what your number is on a 0-10 point scale, just guess! Your subconscious will likely give you the right answer, and it’s not a science experiment, you just want a rough measure of where you are) that it’s now at a 5 out of 10 true.

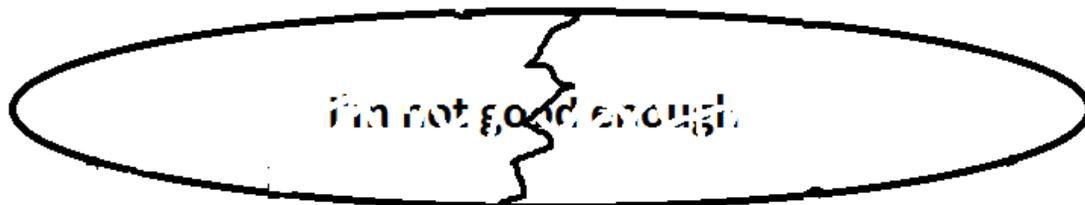
He continues and releases the negative emotions from the S.E.E. with the rapport card.

Yet another leg collapsed.

He checks in with his belief and it feels to be true only a 4 out of 10.

After releasing the S.E.E. of his rejected application and his crush picking the more popular guy, the belief of “I’m not good enough” no longer feels true to him. The key experiences that were responsible for his belief have been eliminated; the legs supporting the table top are collapsed.

PICTURE: The collapsed table top of the belief “I’m not good enough”



NOTE: Sometimes it is the case that you have tapped on all the evidence you can think of, and you have done some research and you think you have covered all the S.E.E.’s that served as evidence, and still the table top won’t buckle completely. If this is the case, tap on the belief itself because there might be an emotion associated with the thought, and saying the statement “I’m not good enough” out loud will have emotion attached to it and so it feels true.

Tapping while verbalising out loud the general belief statement will then likely release the negative emotion attached to the thought, and make the table top fall. Use the instructions in PDF “**Attempting To Change A Negative Limiting Belief**” to neutralise the belief completely.

Deeply Rooted Beliefs and Surface Beliefs

In the example belief I have given you above, I'm not good enough, I used a very common belief that is a deeply rooted one. It is an identity belief. This is usually a belief that has several roots to it and therefore takes some persistence to fully resolve and let go of. Quite some evidence/table legs/S.E.E.'s need to be treated for it to no longer feel true to you completely.

There are also other beliefs that take a lot less persistence to let go of than deeply rooted beliefs. I call these surface beliefs. These beliefs are just ideas that you might have less evidence of, or maybe even none.

Examples of these are perfectionistic standards about how you should perform in social situations (I must always say the right thing, I can't ever offend anyone, I must have everyone's approval 100% of the time, etc.) and cause-effect beliefs concerning social evaluation (if others know the real me they won't like me, if someone disapproves of me it means there is something wrong with me, if I become embarrassed people will see me as weak).

These limiting negative beliefs *can be* less deeply ingrained and therefore it is possible that with some continuous tapping while verbalising the belief, and perhaps some challenging of the validity of the belief, and perhaps choosing more positive things to believe instead, the surface belief changes into a more positive understanding rather quickly.