
The Power of Beliefs

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By Kathleen Gage

Years ago I had the opportunity to meet a woman who reinforced my understanding of the power of beliefs. A woman who is probably one of the most powerful individuals I will ever encounter. I met Chris in 1986 while taking the Dale Carnegie course in Santa Rosa, California.

Although not in class the first week of a twelve-week training; Chris showed up during the second week. Class was well under way when Chris walked into the room. Actually, she didn't really walk into the room; she dragged herself in, supported by a pair of metal crutches. Chris has Cerebral Palsy, which she lived with all her life.

Chris had an extremely difficult time communicating with others. This was not due to lack of desire, but because for most of her twenty-one years of life she had been kept in a room with no more than Elvis records and tapes to entertain her. No one had taken the time to assist her in developing the ability to communicate. No one except Bonnie, her current caretaker. It was Bonnie who knew there was much more to Chris than anyone ever gave her credit for.

When asked by the instructor what her goal for the twelve-week course was, Chris struggled to respond and became frustrated and angry in the process. Chris had a very short fuse when it came to frustration because for most of her life no one would listen to her. The only way she knew to get someone to listen was through temper tantrums.

We discovered her goal was to be able to stand, by herself, in front of forty-five people and tell us about herself. With Bonnie as her interpreter, Chris conveyed this desire to a room full of business professionals.

To the amazement of everyone in the class, on the twelfth week, Chris stood in front of the room and shared with us, in her own words, what her life had been like for her. It was one of the most beautiful and enlightening experiences I have ever witnessed. Here was a woman who had, in many ways, been thrown away. And yet, she had a determination, commitment and belief that she could accomplish more in her life and she did. She also had the love and support of forty five friends, who weeks before had been strangers complete strangers.

What we all witnessed through Chris' courage, is that life is created moment by moment based on our beliefs. Beliefs that can empower beyond our wildest dreams.

Our beliefs are developed on both a conscious and subconscious level. As our beliefs change our experiences change. And as our experiences change, so do our beliefs.

What are the beliefs that will carry you to places you have yet to explore?

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