



Dear friends and colleagues,

A while ago I was struck with how judgmental we are as a species; how necessary it appears to be for us human beings to have an opinion, even if that opinion isn't our own.

Most of us have adopted beliefs that, if we truly thought about it, aren't even ours to begin with. As children, we gained knowledge from our parents, teachers and peers. Along with instructions on how to behave, get along with our playmates and fit in with society, we also learned to believe things about our world. In most cases, we bought in to someone else's belief system without giving it a second thought.

Hmmmm...maybe now might be the time to have that second thought.

By adopting a belief about something (or someone) you are ascribing meaning to it. And once you do that you form judgments, which in turn causes you to defend those judgments, which in turn puts you on the defensive. And a defensive stance is never one of empowerment.

Think about this; you are going about your day just fine, thank you, until someone stumbles over a specific belief of yours. Maybe it's the nightly newscaster who trips your trigger or a co-worker or friend who brings up a topic that (for you) has red flags attached. Suddenly, your defenses go up, you tap into a belief that who knows how long you've had or where it came from and, poof, a judgment is released. Your mind now races to find all of the supporting beliefs that will validate your judgment.

I challenge you to perform a reality check. The next time you find yourself in a "fighting stance" over a belief take a deep breath and ask yourself:

- **Is this belief really mine?**
- **Where or whom did it come from?**
- **Is there another way of looking at this situation?**
- **Am I judging this situation without thinking it through?**
- **How would I feel if I changed my opinion about it?**

We have all had knee-jerk reactions to someone else's belief. Often, we speak before we think (and dang) we have all put our foot into our mouths as a result of needing to be right.

Next time you “need to be right” ask yourself...what if I looked at this from another perspective? What if (just for a minute) I changed my belief? You just might broaden your horizons. Remember, a belief is only a thought you've had over and over again.

I promise you that practicing these steps will bring flexibility and wisdom into your life. Now, how cool is that?

See you down the road!
Terry Kohl