

3 Belief Systems that Hurt High Achievers

MALIGNANT MINDSETS OF CURRENT AND ASPIRING LEADERS LIKELY TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE

By: Dr. Marissa Pei

AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST and 28 years working with the top three levels in Fortune 100 companies, I've noticed some common themes with some of the most successful people in the world. See if you can identify with any of these:

I'm harder on myself than anyone else ever is ... and it's never enough.

I'm not any harder on others than I am on myself.

I wouldn't have these issues if I were allowed to hire my own people!

This is not rocket science. Why is it so difficult to find people to do their job?

I wish everyone were like _____ (the one you are accused of favoritism for).

I only want what's best for everyone.

You say perfectionist like it's a bad thing.

I AM NOT ANGRY!

At first glance, these belief systems seem rational and logical, and part of the success formula for the high achiever ... or are they? I call them "BS" belief systems that hurt leaders because of their unintended consequences in their relationships at work and at home.

BS #1: A Leader's Job is to Whip You into Shape

If I can do it anyone else can and it's my job to push you to your highest potential. I'll never forget my first year in my doctoral program. I took an internship on the East Coast with a prominent consulting firm and loved the fact that my nickname was "The Ice Queen of Attila." I had a reputation for cracking the whip, and I thought that was a good thing. My partner in charge pulled me into his office one day and asked why I was so tough on people? I answered that I was trying to make them into better people – that it was for their own good. He thoughtfully retorted, "Did they ask you to make them better people?"

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That was a lightbulb moment. I could be hard on myself to my heart's discontent, but I had no right to make others miserable. Leadership by dictatorship went out with assembly lines.

BS #2: Perfectionism is a Noble Endeavor

The majority of leaders I've met are recovering perfectionists, and their ability to be effective was highly correlated with the level of recovery.

Picture a horizontal line where the left end is zero or start, and the far right is 100 percent or finish. High achievers are almost always at 88 percent. They tackle all goals, jobs and projects with gusto and get to the 88 percent yard line. The 12 percent gap between where we are and finish is where we live. It's where the tension is ... what still has to be done, what isn't finished, what is still wrong.

The good news is that it gives us the impetus to strive forward. The bad news is that it's where stress lives, and that anxious feeling will take its toll. And then the straw that breaks the overachievers back is that if and when we do hit the 100 percent, we are off to the races on the next project, goal or activity and right back at the 88 percent mark.

The lesson in this line? We need to stand at the 88 percent mark and instead of lamenting what still needs to be done, turn around to look at the 88 percent that has been accomplished and smile with a "Wow, that's great work!" acknowledgment to self and others, we would reduce our stress by 88 percent and give ourselves and others the validation we crave.

BS #3: I Need Smart People to Execute, I Don't Have Time for This Touchy-Feely Stuff

Every single one of my executive coaching clients has started with the same vent: "I don't know why things have to be so difficult – it's not rocket science, it's common sense."

My response has not changed, "There is one organization where pure logic, rational thought prevails, where there's no politics, power plays, peripherally located egos, conflict and miscommunication ... the CEMETERY. Where there are no people and there are no problems.

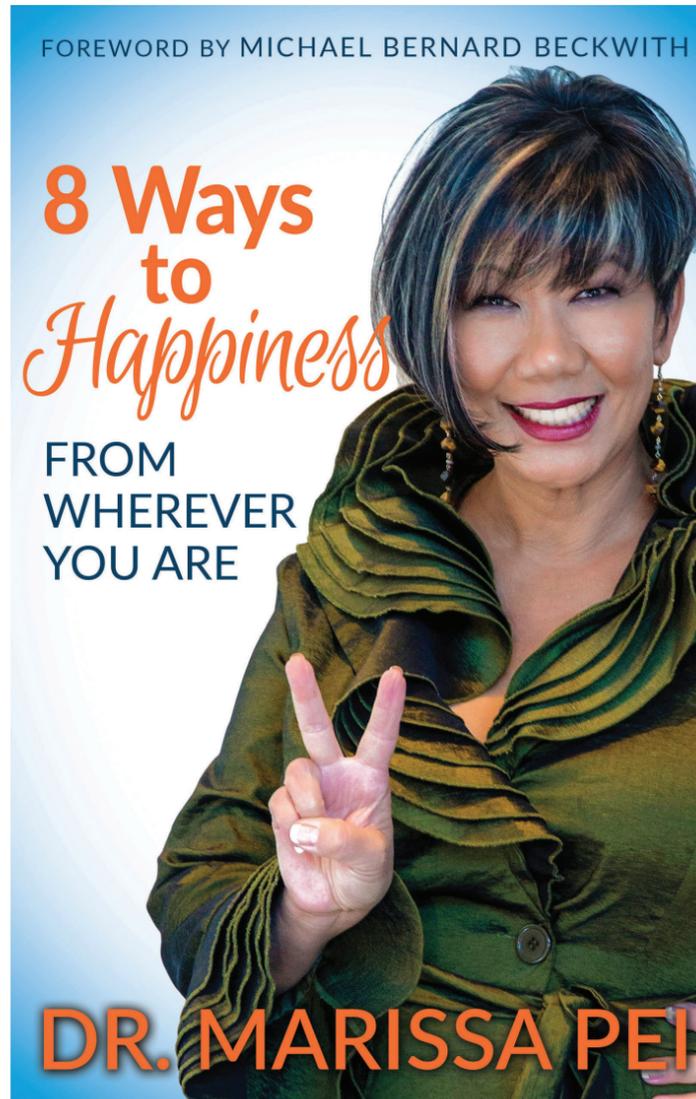
Once my clients accept the BS, they spend less time fighting the illogical, irrational part of organizational life and allow for natural human dynamics to take place at work. That takes 88 percent of the angst out of the situation. At that point, processes and plans can be made which harness the great parts of having humans at work, including creativity, inspiration, collaboration, synergy and joy.

FOREWORD BY MICHAEL BERNARD BECKWITH

8 Ways to Happiness

FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE

DR. MARISSA PEI



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About the author: Consulting Psychologist Dr. Marissa Pei is author of the newly-released title, "8 Ways to Happiness from Wherever You Are" that outlines eight ways to transition from sadness to being happy 88% of the time. Dr. Marissa has been speaking, coaching and facilitating to hundreds of Fortune 500 companies for nearly three decades. Her popular award-winning syndicated talk radio show "Take My Advice, I'm Not Using It: Get Balanced with Dr. Marissa" is syndicated on CNBC News Radio and iHeart Radio. Find her book online at www.8WaysToHappiness.com.