



How small is your world?

By Paul Butler

Although I have an office in town, I often intentionally don't go directly to "work" every day. I have developed a practice of occasionally finding a place to have a coffee, and that allows me to do some reading, reflecting, and writing. Today is one of those days. I pulled into the local Starbucks, ordered a coffee, and found a quiet place in the corner to read a new book.

A few weeks ago, I had an exciting conversation with Joseph Jaworski, one of the world's best authorities on leadership. Jaworski has dedicated his life to building the capability of leaders for the betterment of organizations, as well as society in general. While we discussed a variety of topics, it is his work on innovation that interested me most. I told Joseph that I had ordered his book, *Source: The Inner Path of Knowledge Creation*, and was looking forward to diving into it. The book is his story of experiences with scientists, physicists, artists, entrepreneurs, and spiritual leaders on finding their sources for creativity and purpose.

This morning, this was the book I was reading. In the chapter, "The release of limited belief systems" – something jumped out at me:

"Over the years, my worldview has shifted. I had released my limiting belief systems, which has been implanted in me over a lifetime, and discovered that a profound shift had occurred in my metaphysics – my philosophy of being and knowing."

He goes on to write, *"...many leaders operate under obsolete assumptions and inner mental models of which they may no longer be aware. These limiting belief systems inhibit*

leaders at all levels from pursuing and discovering novel opportunities. The result is repeated strategic failure even in enterprises that are exceedingly run well."

Since we founded our company ten years ago, the world has changed in breathtaking ways. Throughout this period, I have seen and have experienced people doing remarkable things in their organizations. We have worked with thousands of people at all levels in over 50 different organizations. They have taught me to challenge my assumptions about how great companies work—people who think about possibilities: **big**, not **small** thinkers—making a difference in the place they work and for the customers they serve. Because of this, we have been able to pivot, grow, and innovate to deliver better the value clients deserve.

When I limit my belief system and don't pursue new and different ways of being, my world gets much smaller—and less personal and professional growth occurs. I don't grow when I fall into that trap of overactivity. We need to step back and see how we are growing and learning. I suggest selecting a particular space where you can stretch your thinking. Ask yourself, "How have my views have changed over time? Who positively influenced me? How did they help my world get bigger? Where can I focus my attention to help me learn and expand my world view?" And finally, "How can I use what I have learned to make a difference in the world?"

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