



Partners for Youth Empowerment

PYE Third Thursday Assembly October 16, 2015

Nilisha Mohapatra

Hello good people! I am Nilisha, an artist, coach and your facilitator for today ☺ There are 2 minutes to go for today's assembly. We are going to explore the impact and meaning of limiting beliefs, and understand how to shift them. I'm excited to engage with you all soon. In the meanwhile, here is something to chew on!



Nilisha Mohapatra Check In and the first Q are up on the page. See you all in those thread too! SO eager to know more.

Amber Hescock Johnson Remember to "refresh," everyone ☺ (your friendly PYE comms person here).



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Nilisha Mohapatra YES! So grateful to have you here.

Becky Jaine so excited I had a chance to join this fun and it's YOU Nili!!!!

Nilisha Mohapatra

Goals and Agreements for 15th Oct 2015

GOALS:

- 1) To explore the meaning and impact of limiting beliefs.
- 2) To share ideas and practices for shifting limiting beliefs.
- 3) To encourage the a worldview of possibility and courage.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS:

- 1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe.
- 2) Share at your level; Everyone is welcome, no matter their level of experience as a facilitator or community organizer. All questions are important, and all answers (or further questions) are valuable. It is also okay and important to respectfully disagree with each other.
- 3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow. Ask questions, make comments, connect. The technical trick for this format is to REFRESH your browser fairly often. LIKING IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER SINCE FACEBOOK HAS CHANGED AND WE CAN NO LONGER SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE READ A POST.
- 4) Answer any questions in the COMMENTS below the question to keep the conversation organized and readable. Only open NEW questions in new threads.
- 5) You can come and go as you please, take as long as you like to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format to make this work no matter whether you are just waking up, just going to bed, or on your lunch break (time zones unite!!) A pdf transcript of the conversation will be provided. Feel free to continue the conversation even after the 90 minute period has ended.



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Nilisha Mohapatra

CHECK IN:

What is one living thing/being/object, that embodies courage and possibility for you? What do you feel in their presence?

Amber Hescok Johnson The Steller's Jay. When they visit our yard, I feel energized and inspired to be more bold. They're fierce, smart and will even mobilize other types of birds to take on a predator.

<http://www.fws.gov/.../stellar-jay-1024x768-RBanno.jpg>



FWS.GOV

Nilisha Mohapatra Oh wow! Such bold colors and vibrant presence. Love that you shared an image! Thanks, Amber.

Nilisha Mohapatra It's a bird for me as well, the Humming Bird. I feel might



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and resolve everytime I look at one. There is something about knowing that each one of us is unique, and has a power we can embrace. So hopeful!



Helena Hennighausen My daughter. She is a force to be reckoned with because she does not seem limits. I look at her and remember once feeling in myself all of what I see in her.



Amber Hescock Johnson I love this photo!

Nilisha Mohapatra This for me is all about freedom and imagination. Lovely pic! Thanks, Helena!



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Becky Jaine ohhhhhhhhhhhhhh! yes, my boy too! what amazing photo. breathtaking~

Virtually Ally Thank you for the beautiful bird photos! Embodies courage = when a student tries a new form of creative expression for the first time - I am in awe of their AWESomeness and Authenticity!!

Nilisha Mohapatra YES! Totally resonate with that experience. It is a testament to true limitlessness. Thanks for reminding me of that

Becky Jaine Hiya friends. Late joining the party. I love this question. My 6 year old son embodies courage to me. Sometimes to the point of anxiety, like when he stands on the back board of the coach (nothing but a piano behind him) and believes he can fly. (and well, he can, but I forget). He reminds me we are all born to fly.

Nilisha Mohapatra Welcome, Becky! Perfect timing
Sounds like your son is the wind beneath your wings.

Nilisha Mohapatra

QUESTION 1:

How do you understand limiting beliefs? And how do they manifest in our work/lives?

Amber Hescocock Johnson I hope to learn a lot more this morning, but I think of them as internalized messages about what is or isn't possible for us.

Nilisha Mohapatra Yeah! Deep rooted.

Nilisha Mohapatra This Q got me thinking a lot. And for me limiting beliefs are like boundaries. More the kind that hem us in. These beliefs create a fixed world-view, and color our experiences from that place. I feel they manifest in all the 'cannots', 'do not', and 'shoulds' that we have. What say?

Helena Hennighausen I have come to think that limiting beliefs are an external force. They started with adults in my life telling me what I should be (thus



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implying what I should NOT be). I posted a photo of my daughter below, and at 9 years old I am starting to see how people in her life – adults and peers – are introducing constructs that are limiting her beliefs in who she is and what she can do.

Nilisha Mohapatra Ah, such a valuable insight. Makes me wonder at what point we starting making it our own. Might be a rhetorical question!

Helena Hennighausen Hah! It was 35 for me!! It took a long time for me to realize that I was living a life of "who I was supposed to be" (according to... a laundry list of my parents, husband, teachers opinions, media, etc). It was a bit of work to figure out who I actually am!

Amber Hescock Johnson Nilisha Mohapatra I wonder if it just has to do with the capacity for self reflection. If you become aware of the beliefs, you can start to change them. But some people seem more able to self reflect than others.

Nilisha Mohapatra Mmm true that. Recognizing that a belief is limiting, is probably half the battle won. Good catch there, Amber. I am also thinking it is experience/presence of the opposite- the freedom, a role model etc. can enable that reflection.

Becky Jaine Very thoughtful. Amber Helena and Nili! I have wondered if for my journey, waking up to my the power of my own choices is really about entering a different stage in my "adulthood", as a right of passage. I feel like I've had to go through the bucking up, in order to liberate myself. And now I try to work towards activating awareness in others (the children and adults I work for), that we can consciously choose what resonates with our hearts, not only what is expected of us.

Amber Hescock Johnson I think of traditional gender roles and how when internalized, they can really box us in!

Nilisha Mohapatra Absolutely. And it somehow becomes the norm, posing a challenge to be authentic.

Virtually Ally Limiting beliefs = either/or thinking = like blinders on our brains that close us off to a growth (or possibility) mindset. I agree they manifest in



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messages of the inner critic (shoulda, coulda, wouldas) --- I agree with [Helena Hennighausen](#) about adults that mean well but stifle our authenticity.

Amber Hescocock Johnson It must be that those adults are operating out of fear in some way.... ?

Nilisha Mohapatra Blinders, like horses! Single focus, no deviation, no questions! That metaphor is so vivid.

Virtually Ally I notice limiting beliefs manifest in my facilitation work when I focus on my expectations for a workshop...rather than embracing the unfolding that happens with collaborative creative expression.

Nilisha Mohapatra Oh, thanks for bringing that up. I recognize that in my work too. Infact, I think I had limiting beliefs about facilitating a chat on limiting beliefs - maybe it won't work because it's too early in the morning for such a conversation!

Virtually Ally Ha! lol.

Virtually Ally Thank YOU for your honesty.

Kitty Jackson So interesting virtually Ally. I think that is very true. Limiting beliefs can be set expectations that we refuse to re-asses

Virtually Ally Kitty Jackson!! Hi!! Yes! It is amazing how limiting beliefs trap us ...we forget that we are just a thought away to re-assessment.

Becky Jaine To me, limiting beliefs are BS (LOL... I mean "belief systems") that many times are habits or patterns that may need re-assessment in order to evolve them to broaden our experience, deepen our love, expand our possibilities.

Amber Hescocock Johnson Love this. LB's are BS!

Nilisha Mohapatra Kudos, Becky!

Neha Parti For me limiting beliefs are the biases and pre conceived notions that I bring to processes and people. It manifests in how I judge people of what they



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are capable of, how I set my expectations from things and how open I am to try to do things differently from my set way of thinking. Somewhere I think it also links to the idea of trust especially with respect to people.

Nilisha Mohapatra I am totally enjoying the specific insights, and how you are relating to some core needs to trust. Thanks, Neha.

Amber Hescock Johnson Yes! People really do rise and fall to expectations, it seems!

Nilisha Mohapatra

QUESTION 2:

I'm certainly learning a lot from you all about the impact these beliefs have. I'm curious about what role do these beliefs play? How do they serve us?

Amber Hescock Johnson They may make us feel safe, in a way. Like, "I know my place."

Nilisha Mohapatra Beautiful phrasing of the role, Amber!

I've come to learn that limiting beliefs not only protect us, but also somehow provide a sense of belonging to others, which we all crave. And in this belonging, a need for validation is met. How does this land on you all?

Neha Parti Can you talk about this a bit more please.

Nilisha Mohapatra Sure, Neha! Limiting beliefs which come from 'shoulds' keep us safe from danger or anything that is outside our comfort zone/societal norm. We end up not being 'outliers'. We in some way comply to what expectations remain of us, winning the approval of many around us. Hence belonging to groups which hold the same limiting belief. When we push the boundaries, it sometimes gets isolating.

Neha Parti Ah ok...I get that. Sometimes we also use the limiting beliefs as a justification of our actions and presenting what we are doing as the best possible alternative given the constraints which actually are a product



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of our thinking.

Nilisha Mohapatra Perfect derivation! Crystal clear. It keeps us safe and comfortable.

Amber Hescoc Johnson I think that's spot-on. The catch is, if you are just playing a role, that validation is of the role and not your true self.

Nilisha Mohapatra That's a brilliant distinction between role and self. We are not our limiting beliefs.

Becky Jaine Yess yes, brilliant!!!!

Virtually Ally I think limiting beliefs also give people "a sense of control in a world full of chaos* And yes, I just quoted Cher from the movie "Clueless". he he.

Nilisha Mohapatra Agree. Certainty is something we desire.

Amber Hescoc Johnson HAHA! Profound wisdom can come from anywhere! Good thing you didn't have any "limiting beliefs" about the movie or you wouldn't have taken that one in.

Becky Jaine I remember this conversation between characters played by Kevin Spacey and Danny Devito, in the film The Big Kahuna. They were talking about circus elephants. They said that if you put a cuff on an elephant and train her to stay in that place, by posing frightening scenarios at her while she is chained, that when they take the cuff off, she will not realize she is no longer physically bound and will continue to stay in place. I think much of our human experience is like that, by the patterns we propagate... those of society and bought into personally. Recently I've been contemplating "positive deviance": how to gracefully disengage what cultural conditionings that are not my truth. A simple (and yet complex) example, like the belief that I need to cover up my 45-year-old white hairs, or "fix" my facial wrinkles, because they are displeasing or collectively shameful. I love that my body has lived this long, and embrace the signs as gifts for being her this long ... and I hope I have many more.

Nilisha Mohapatra

QUESTION 3:



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Taking off from [Virtually Ally](#)'s response about how expectations of a workshop limit creative collaboration, I'd love to know more about your experiences of the impact of limiting beliefs while facilitating workshops. What happens to you as a facilitator, and how then does it guide the experience of the group?

Amber Hescock Johnson I'm about to take PYE training (I haven't yet!) but am reading *Catch the Fire*. From page 31: "The quality and impact of your program is intimately connected to where you "come from"--the basic set of lenses through which you perceive and interact with people."

Nilisha Mohapatra Bingo! Love that book. So powerful!

I'll just add an example to that quote. Don't think I can say it in a better manner (is that a limiting belief?). Whenever I have not believed in the resourcefulness and possibilities, it has been an energy drain. The group felt out of my depth. I probably wasn't able to notice creative risks and the process of group development, because I didn't think it would happen. So it was a lost opportunity to amp up that experience.

On the corollary, this one time at a camp I learnt that 80% of the students had been to our camps - Twice! So I knew it had to be different. I kinda just asked to group to imagine sky was the limit. Or beyond. What did they want from this time? That camp, theatre activities were a whole new level I had never seen. We got the youth to lead. Phenomenal.

Amber Hescock Johnson WOW! That's amazing. I'd actually love to hear more about this.... did knowing that the youth really wanted to be there, that they kept coming back, give you the trust that creative risk taking and group development could happen? By contrast, it can be soooooo hard to lift your mind up out of doubt when you're not feeling connected to the group, I bet.

Nilisha Mohapatra Absolutely! It was at moment that I trusted the work we had done with the youth thus far. That they had been taking creative risks and growing. Yet they were so eager to be there. Just that energy made me believe that the unthinkable for me was to happen. Youth-led camps. For the youth themselves. We just invited them into the space of



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their knowing- they knew the activities, but now had to find more and new experiences in them.

Becky Jaine I haven't taken training yet, but I feel so much gratitude for the existences of the Catch the Fire bible and PYE's open sharing on the web site. So many resources.

Becky Jaine Nilisha Mohapatra that's awesome, Nili!!!

Neha Parti While facilitating workshops for teachers sometimes I have gone with assumptions about their motivation levels and that sometimes has prevented me from pushing myself to try harder. Thus the discussions tend to become shallow and more problem oriented than moving towards creative thinking for resolving those.

Becky Jaine Ooooh, this is a biggy! What I've learned (the hard way) is that if you are collaborating with someone, where you are coming from and your intentions for co-creating the experience, versus controlling the experience, are tremendous differences. I'm still very much learning how to establish co-facilitator guidelines. (and welcome ANY ideas).

Quick story: I believe in keeping things reeeeeeeeeeeally open in the playshops I offer. I bring lots of creative elements, and like a tool box, will pull different things, or let the participants pull different supplies based on where their hearts and intentions are going. I once collaborated with someone I thought was very open to the joy of surprise and co-creation, but my assumption was wrong. Instead wanted things to go a certain way, without wiggle room. Personally I choose to work to establish group intentions and guidelines that foster creative and self expression and co-creation, but much of the time it (joyfully) feels like its out of my control. It's a co-creative process, instead of a traditionally teaching where I teach you, you follow model. To me co-creating in the moment is liberating, but I honor that for some facilitators it can feel out of control.

Amber Hescoc Johnson Maybe a need for control is a limiting belief?

Becky Jaine Amber Hescoc Johnson yes, I am not saying necessarily that is bad, it's just a major difference in the energy I want to contribute to at my programs.



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Amber Hescock Johnson Perhaps in some situations, it could be limiting, but not necessarily inherently bad, right!

Virtually Ally Thank you **Becky Jaine**...a wonderful teaching story for me as a new facilitator.

Becky Jaine I should add that for the facilitator I was working for, this other style works for her and what she does. I'm not being critical of it, it's just that I realized this is very important to discuss WAY before getting in the playroom with the peeps. As it unfolded, it was heartbreaking to me, but really it was hard knocks I had to go through, so hopefully that will never happen again.

Amber Hescock Johnson **Becky Jaine** thank you SO much for sharing this with us. really valuable learning. and brave of you to be open.

Becky Jaine It felt like such a HUGE mistake (eta: well really an oversight, because I didn't know what I didn't know) on my part. I made so many assumptions, but I'm a rookie... learning. I'd LOVE to see a chapter in the future in the book (or lesson in the near future) on how to optimize collaboration in the co-creative process.

Amber Hescock Johnson **Becky Jaine** Great idea. I know Peggy has plans to update and add to the book. Will note this!

Becky Jaine **Amber Hescock Johnson** Thanks so much.

Nilisha Mohapatra

QUESTION 4:

What are some of your go-to techniques or practices to transform limiting beliefs into possibilities?

Nilisha Mohapatra My favorite tool to challenge limiting beliefs is 'The Work by Byron Katie'. She asks four questions for inquiry:

1. Is it true?
2. Can you absolutely know that it's true? (Yes or no.)
3. How do you react, what happens, when you



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believe that thought?

4. Who would you be without the thought?

Here is a link to her work:

<http://thework.com/sites/thework/downloads/Little%20Book.pdf>

Amber Hescoc Johnson I like thinking of alternatives to a limiting belief and kind of playing a "what if" game.

Nilisha Mohapatra Turn it on it's head!

Nilisha Mohapatra Building on your response, I am thinking of how it would be to regularly imagine the opposite scenario. Would that enable making true choices?

Becky Jaïne breaking free of limiting beliefs is hard. sometimes we have something happen and we KNOW e will never go back, but most times I think if we become conscious of subtler things, it's much harder. If it's something like a habit, then doing little things can reap huge results. I watched this TED talk and it really inspired me to think much smaller and subtler. Here is the link in case you want to watch later... <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/.../Forget-big-change-start-with-a> BJ Fogg is talking about making physical habitual changes, but physical habits stem from internal world.

Nilisha Mohapatra Thanks for this! Will watch it today. Feeling super inspired

Neha Parti I try to be more conscious of my thoughts and sort of keep telling myself 'Neha you are doing it again'. Also I have just started morning pages which really helps clear the mind and look at things from a fresh perspective.

Nilisha Mohapatra I love morning pages too! And I would invite you to think about what you'd like to tell yourself, to move towards a desired belief.

Becky Jaïne Go **Neha**!!!!!! I love that. Positive affirmation to counter our inner (beast) dialog. LOL!

Neha Parti Thanks **Nilisha** for the suggestion... Will definitely try doing



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that

Nilisha Mohapatra Thank you for the share! I enjoy self-talk ☺

Virtually Ally 1) When I'm awake and recognize a limiting belief that is not serving me I say to myself, "Well, that just happened." Recognize it. Feel how it feels. And choose another thought or look at nature or just breathe. There's something so neutral about the term, "Well, that just happened." 2) Another idea is instead of asking, "What's true about me?" I ask, "What's true about human beings in general?" This broader view reminds me that human potential is infinite and that I am too. 3) Turning to comedy improv - I might jump up and down and chant, "It just doesn't matter! It just doesn't matter!" and burst into giggles!!

Nilisha Mohapatra So fun! And so aware. All of you ☺

Becky Jaine I am SOOOOO taping that to my forehead for a week. ;)

Becky Jaine Oh YES. I'm going to do this, **Virtually Ally**!!!! "Well, that just happened." love it! It's a self pattern interrupt. And the allowing part, yes. That's tough!

Nilisha Mohapatra

All you courageous social artists, thank you for your honest and heartfelt sharing. I feel honored and grateful to witness this conversation. It may be the tip of the iceberg, but just the way the group dove into the topic today, is so so inspiring. As a closing, I would LOVE to invite you to FILL IN THE BLANK with a transformed or changing limiting belief of yours, inspired by today's conversation.

"I AM....." (Let's write as many as we can!) GO GO GO!

I AM



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Nilisha Mohapatra I am worthy and enough.

Amber Hescock Johnson That seems like the absolute core of everything we're talking about. I love it.

Neha Parti I am capable of making things happen.

Nilisha Mohapatra Beautiful! Tell us a few more!

Amber Hescock Johnson I can make a difference.

Becky Jaïne Nili I'm so thankful that YOU ARE... (AWESOME)! And so thankful for this incredibly dynamic and expressive group. Thanks so much for everyone's honesty and willingness to jump in and share with creative abandon. I learn SO much every time I can squeeze a third thursday in. (I wish it was more often, but we all do the best we can in the time we have
wink emoticon
Lots of love and blessings to you all. xo

Amber Hescock Johnson I am beautiful just as I am.

Becky Jaïne Oh Crow, just re-read the prompt.... LOL. I'll say, for me personally, I AM GRATEFUL!

Nilisha Mohapatra Hahah! Beckkkkyyy

Nilisha Mohapatra Tell us a few more!

Nilisha Mohapatra I am an engaging facilitator.

Amber Hescock Johnson Heck yeah!

Becky Jaïne rock on

Amber Hescock Johnson I am creative.

Neha Parti I am a good listener

Nilisha Mohapatra I am capable!



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Neha Parti I am open to trying new things

Amber Hescoc Johnson I am whole.

Neha Parti I am fine the way I am

Nilisha Mohapatra I am loved.

Becky Jaine I AM able to learn from my oversights. I am perfectly imperfect. I AM trying my all my heart.

Becky Jaine AHO Ya'!!! (a beautiful apache affirmation!-- well, the first part is Apache. The second half is ... uh not Apache. no offense intended.)

Nilisha Mohapatra This was one of the best closings ever! So energetic

Virtually Ally I am naturally creative, resourceful and whole. There is nothing about me that needs to be fixed or improved. Of course, I may learn, unlearn, change and grow on my way...but I am LOVE every moment of every day.

Virtually Ally We are all naturally creative, resourceful and whole. There is nothing about us that needs to be fixed or improved. Of course, we may learn, unlearn, change and grow on our way, but we are LOVE every moment of every day.

E Cee Bee I am strong in my sensitivity.

Nilisha Mohapatra Thank you for responding. Love the affirmation you shared