

Lesson 43 – Beliefs & Doubts

When you **strongly/firmly believe** something, we can call it a **deeply-held belief** or an **unshakable belief** – the latter phrase implies that it would be difficult to convince you to change your mind. It's possible to have a **subconscious belief** – a belief that you are not actively aware of. Your emotions can also **color your judgment** (*influence your opinions/decisions*).

A lot of people **believe in superstitions** – irrational beliefs that have no basis in fact, like the number 13 being unlucky. Others have a **blind faith** (*believe in something without thinking*) in fate or destiny. When new evidence appears, it can either **strengthen/reinforce your belief** (*make it stronger*) or **undermine/weaken your belief** (*make it weaker*).

When forming your beliefs, be careful about **making assumptions**, which can **lead to erroneous conclusions**. False **beliefs held** by many people are called **common misconceptions**. Scientists and other researchers often publish material to help **dispel misconceptions** (*eliminate them*) – for example, “**Contrary to popular belief**, it's not harmful to go swimming immediately after eating.”

If you are completely sure about something, then you can describe it as “**beyond/without a shadow of a doubt**.” But sometimes **doubts arise** – or another person **voices their doubts** – thus making you reconsider. Maybe the doubts don't even come from a fact, but you just have a **sneaking suspicion** – a persistent feeling – that **casts doubts on** things you previously assumed to be true.

When you have a small doubt that persists and continues to bother you – this is called a **gnawing/lingering/nagging/niggling doubt**. This might be an indication that it's time to **rethink/reexamine your beliefs** – after **further consideration**, you just might **arrive at a different conclusion**.

Lesson 43 – Quiz

1. Aaron is so arrogant; he seems to have an unfeasible / unlikeable / unshakable belief in his own superiority.
2. After another / further / supplemental consideration, we decided to buy a van rather than a car.
3. Although I was hired for the job, I still have a bothering / nagging / staying doubt about whether or not I'm truly qualified for it.
4. Bill Clinton's affair cast / put / thrust doubt on his honesty as a president.
5. Against / Contrary / Opposite to popular belief, blonde and blue-eyed Brazilians do exist.
6. Don't let your fears color / light / sound your judgment.
7. I hate it when people make assumptions / inferences / suspicions about me based on my skin color.
8. I have a cunning / sneaking / tricky suspicion that my friends are planning a surprise birthday party for me.
9. I heavily / securely / strongly believe that everything happens for a reason.
10. If you have a psychic / subconscious / unaware belief that you don't deserve success, then you'll probably never attain it.
11. Meeting an 80-year-old professional athlete enlarged / hardened / strengthened my belief that age is no limit!
12. The evidence proved, before / beside / beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Carson was guilty of the crime.
13. The results of the customer satisfaction survey lead / put / take us to the conclusion that our service needs to be improved.
14. There's a common misconception / misconception / misunderstanding that tomatoes are vegetables - but they're technically fruits.
15. We sounded / told / voiced doubts about the feasibility of the plan, but our colleagues said we were worrying too much.