

## Exchanging Beliefs

Sitting in a Boston train station on a damp Tuesday morning in March, I overheard a conversation between a male customer and a female ticket agent. The customer asks the ticket agent for change of a \$20 bill. The rep shook her head no and the man shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

I then caught the end of this man's conversation with his family, "I'll go and find someplace [to get change]". A few minutes later, I spotted the man walking back from down the corridor carrying some donuts and drinks which he shared with his family. Ah! Problem solved.

For some reason, this common exchange between a ticket agent and this customer gave me reason to pause. Why hadn't the ticket agent helped this customer? Maybe she didn't have any change. Even if that was true, she didn't offer any suggestions how the customer could solve his problem. Maybe she didn't believe there was any benefit to her for providing him change. Her belief at that moment was that giving the customer change would only expend effort on her part without reward. If she held a different general belief that by helping her customers she would derive a benefit she may have been more likely to help solve the customer's problem.

Although denied assistance by the ticket agent, this didn't stop him from achieving his ultimate goal. His belief was that he needed to have change for his trip.

- ✓ What are your underlying beliefs toward assisting or helping others (customers, colleagues, supervisors) at work?
- ✓ Do you believe that you have enough to do and helping out someone else would just be expending more energy or effort without reward? An *expense*.
- ✓ To what extent do you hold a belief that by helping others you would experience some intrinsic benefit that may go along with helping out a customer or a fellow worker in either the short or long-term. An *investment*.
- ✓ Are there certain people or circumstances in which you view helping as an expense vs. an investment? Or do you always seem to help others because 'saying no' would be an expense?
- ✓ How are these beliefs serving or not serving you? What old beliefs could you exchange for more effective ones?

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