“A belief is a lever that, once pulled, moves almost everything else in a person’s life… Your beliefs define your vision of the world; they dictate your behaviour; they determine your emotional responses to other human beings… part of the very apparatus of your mind, determining your desires, fears, expectations, and subsequent behaviour.”

(Sam Harris in The End of Faith)

* Complete the statements by writing ‘believe’ or ‘do not believe’ in the gaps.
* Give reasons to support your answer. **Don’t fill out the third column yet.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Belief Statement** | **Reason** | **Beliefs which underpin the reason** |
| I………………………………………….in ghosts. |  |  |
| I…………………………………….that democracy is the best form of government. |  |  |
| I…………………………………… that the sun will set this evening. |  |  |
| I…………………………………….that money makes people happy. |  |  |
| I…………………………………….that there is extra-terrestrial life in the Universe. |  |  |
| I…………………………………….that it is rude to leave the dinner table without asking. |  |  |
| I…………………………………….that God exists. |  |  |
| I…………………………………….that asylum seekers should have the same rights as me. |  |  |

Beliefs are statements that we assume to be true. We rarely examine our beliefs and yet they inform most of what we do, what we think, what we say and how we act. If we didn’t hold our set of beliefs, it would be very hard to live our lives.

* What would your life be like if you didn’t believe that gravity exists?
* What would it be like if you believed that every single person in the world wanted to hurt you?
* What do you think it must be like for people who believe that their lives are worthless or pointless?

We aren’t born with beliefs – we gather them as we grow. They come from somewhere! Look again at each reason that you have given to support each belief statement. Try to identify the beliefs that underpin your reasons and ask where those beliefs might come from. Did your parents tell you? Has the media influenced you? What about your culture?

Now identify 3 beliefs that you hold. Identify where these beliefs come from and give an example of how these beliefs influence how you live your life.

1. Belief:

Where it comes from:

Influence on my life:

1. Belief:

Where it comes from:

Influence on my life:

1. Belief:

Where it comes from:

Influence on my life:

**Science & Belief** (Mulherin 2019)

Science has a number of foundational assumptions or underlying beliefs. But this doesn’t mean they are proven; science can’t justify its assumptions scientifically; they come first before science even beings its work.

1. Scientist assume we live in an ordered world
2. Scientists assume that the world could be different
3. Scientists assume that we are able to understand the world
4. Scientists assume that inductive reasoning is effective