

## **Beliefs That Have Changed The World**

The power of belief is the most impressive part of man and the most highly developed; the source of greatest energy. Man is unique because of his ability to believe and often, those beliefs have changed the course of humanity.

All the people who follow challenged the existing beliefs and accepted standards of their day and many made enemies among the influential people of their time. The strengths of their beliefs and ideals, however, gave these men sufficient fortitude to endure and overcome their many hardships and difficulties.

### **Socrates (Greek Philosopher, lived 469-399BC)**

He questioned conventional assumptions about morality, justice and other social concepts and he faced a death sentence with equanimity because of his unshakable belief in his own philosophy of life. His philosophies were taught around the world for the next 2,000 years.

### **Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)**

Galileo was born into a poor but noble family in Italy and at university was fascinated by a wide range of subjects. He became a mathematics professor in Pisa but his beliefs against and strident criticisms of Aristotle's teachings left him isolated by his contemporaries. During the next 18 years he pursued his interests in astronomy and mechanics and made important discoveries about gravity, inertia and the laws of motion. It was in astronomy, however, that Galileo became famous. He came to the same belief as Copernicus that the sun was the centre of the universe and not the earth. Such beliefs brought about the opposition of the church leaders of the day and his teachings were forbidden. In 1623 a new pope allowed him to publish his works on astronomy; however, after publication Galileo was arrested and imprisoned for several months. He was convicted of heresy and made to recant his beliefs. He spent the remaining years of his life under house arrest but despite censure of his works by the church, he continued to believe in himself and make discoveries until his death in 1642.

### **Christopher Columbus**

Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy, and as a young man went to sea. He became an experienced sailor and moved to Lisbon in Portugal to try and gain support for a radical new journey he was planning. He visited the courts of the kings and queens of Europe asking for help and money. Finally, after many refusals, Ferdinand and Isabella, the King and Queen of Spain, agreed to fund his voyage into unknown territory. At that time the Europeans wanted to find sea routes to the East and Columbus believed he could find a route to the Far East by sailing west. He spent ten years trying to get people to agree that it could be done. He believed the world to be round, although he thought it was much smaller than it was, and he firmly held on to that belief despite opposition and the many rejections he received over the years. Finally he was able to sail west and he found what is now known as the West Indies; although he always remained convinced he had come

to an area of the Far East. Columbus made four journeys across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean. His belief had fuelled his determination until it became a reality and in doing so he opened up new lands for exploration.

### **Albert Einstein**

Born in 1879 in Germany, Albert Einstein was to become the most celebrated scientist of the twentieth century and his theories were to lay the framework for new branches of physics. He taught himself maths but did not do well at school because he had no interest in other subjects. On leaving school he became a maths teacher to support him in his studies of maths and physics. Einstein's belief that light doesn't just travel as waves but as electric currents (his Quantum Theory) was not immediately accepted, neither was his special Theory of Relativity. Like all new theories, it took time for others to come around to agree with his beliefs. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921.

### **Martin Luther King**

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, USA in 1929, Martin Luther King was one of America's most influential civil rights activists because he believed that all people were born equal. His passionate, but non-violent protests helped to raise awareness of racial inequalities in America, leading to significant political change. He captured the imagination and hearts of people, both black and white. A turning point in his life was the Montgomery Bus Boycott which he helped to promote. His boycott also became a turning point in the civil rights struggle – attracting national press for his cause. The boycott, caused by a black lady refusing to give up her seat on a bus although it was in a white only area, was won after lasting for several months, when it was finally brought to the Supreme Court who declared the segregation as unconstitutional. Martin Luther King offered a vision of hope to an oppressed people although he remained committed to the ideals of non-violent struggle. In 1963 Martin Luther King was named as Man of the Year by Time magazine and the following year was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work toward social justice. Unfortunately he made many enemies along the way and on 4 April, 1968 he was assassinated. He remains symbolic of America's fight for justice and racial equality.

All these people, and the many more who have not been mentioned, had a powerful and positive belief in themselves and the world around them and refused to be intimidated by those who refused to expand their minds to something new.

### **A Final Word**

The power of belief is in action within you continuously and is constantly being manifested as quickly as you can think. If you find your current results displeasing today, you only need to put the power of positive belief to work for you and change those beliefs from your past which made today your reality, to empowering achievement-oriented beliefs and you will be well on your way to success.

When your beliefs are positive it is important to take a stand for what you believe in. It is important, also, to be proactive about what sparks your vision, fuels your choices and instils your 'can do' spirit with a sense of purpose, meaning and focus. When you control

and use your belief system, not only for your own success but also for the support and uplifting of those around you, you will find yourself well rewarded.