

## The Ultimate Test of Self Belief?

Do you ever lack confidence in yourself, but still project a positive outcome to others? When you do, you probably notice that your self-doubt expresses itself in the same way that a lie does – sweaty palms, increased heartbeat, tense facial expression, and uncertain mental imagery. Your body knows you are kidding yourself.

But when you really believe you have what it takes, your body creates a symbiotic state, and responds accordingly.

People often ask me the difference between *arrogance* and self-belief - after all, no-one likes to be considered arrogant. When I explore their curiosity about the difference, I sometimes discover that they have a real anxiety about appearing arrogant, and this hinders their ability to act as confidently as they might otherwise do.

I think self belief involves humility, and can be seen as having a sense of absolute certainty of success, whilst simultaneously remaining open to being proved wrong.

In preparing for her Olympic appearance in Beijing, Heptathlete Kelly Sotherton was not short on self-belief. A short video clip, courtesy of Nike, demonstrates this vividly, and you can view it [here](http://www.nike.com/nikelab/site.html?en_GB#/video/athlete-kelly-sotherton2).

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As the clip shows, Kelly believed she would bring back a Gold Medal from Beijing. Nothing in her outlook view prior to the games accommodated an alternative outcome, even though as an athlete on top of her sport she will have seen countless attempts (including her own) foiled by injury, unfamiliar environments, or more capable competitors.

But that's not the point. Kelly understands that self belief alone does not guarantee success – but she knows that it drives personal best performance, creates exceptional resilience, and so optimises your chances in whatever you do.

Whilst Kelly didn't bring home a medal, she did bring home three personal best performances, and the knowledge that she is one of the top five multidiscipline sportswomen on the planet. Could she have achieved that if she had arrived in Beijing without believing that Gold was within her gift?

Of course it will be disappointing to have peaked just short of Gold in Beijing. But how many of us lack the self belief to 'go for gold' in the first place, and so miss out on being the best we are capable of being?

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