

# THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

## Worksheet for Tali Sharot | Unpacking the Science of the Influential Mind (Episode 16)

No matter how open minded we consider ourselves to be, we all hold strong beliefs that are sometimes difficult to recognize — and more difficult to change even when we're presented with evidence that contradicts them.

So what does it take to change such beliefs, whether it's in ourselves or others?

Tali Sharot, associate professor of cognitive neuroscience, founder and director of the Affective Brain Lab at University College London, and author of *The Influential Mind: What the Brain Reveals About Our Power to Change Others*, joined us for [episode 16](#) to explain why the human

# THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

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brain can be so resistant to change and how we can reframe our approach if we want facts to prevail over misinformation in spite of this innate resistance.

## The Defense Mechanism

When Jordan asks why people tend to ignore evidence contrary to their belief, Tali makes two interesting observations.

The first, and most obvious reason, is that we can be defensive due to an emotional response.

When our belief is challenged, it challenges our self image, so ignoring new evidence can be a protection mechanism.

**Think of the most recent time where you had a deeply held belief that was challenged... and later found out you were wrong.**

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**Write down**

**a) your initial emotional response,**

**b) the emotional response you had when you found out you were wrong,**

**c) what caused you to finally admit or become aware you were wrong. Next, brainstorm some ideas in which you could be more emotionally open to having your beliefs challenged in a shorter amount of time.**

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## For the Love of All Things Rational!

The second observation Tali made was far less obvious. She asserts that it is actually not irrational to assume that new information incongruent with our beliefs is wrong.

We have many beliefs that we hold with confidence, and on average, those beliefs are right.

She shares that it is absolutely rational to consider new evidence in light of what we already know, and goes on to describe the four factors which determine whether we change our beliefs:

1. Our current belief
2. Our confidence in that current belief
3. The new piece of evidence
4. Our confidence in the new piece of evidence

# THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

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**Using the same belief challenging instance above, consider the difference in confidence level between your original belief and the new evidence. What was the source of that new evidence initially?**

**When you finally became aware that you were wrong, was the source a more confidence inspiring source?**

**Did you take any actions to verify its validity?**

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**Now, think of a time where you had a strongly held belief challenged but either did not change your mind or were proven to be correct. Can you identify any differences between the first scenario and this one? Any similarities?**

**As you consider these questions, write down what you learn about yourself, and determine how you're going to incorporate a more consistent, rational assessment applied equally to your beliefs and new information as it comes.**

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## Overcoming Personal Bias

Early in the discussion, Jordan and Tali discuss how a positive emotion such as hope is more likely to create action than fear.

Later, Tali provides suggestions for how we can implement protections against our own information processing biases once we're aware of them.

She states that while biases are very hard to change, our reactions to those biases are much easier to change.

**Consider how these two ideas could be combined.**

**Write down a couple of ways in which you know you have natural bias.**

**How can you use a “carrot” (as opposed to a stick) approach to reward yourself**

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**for conscious, deliberate actions taken  
in spite of your typical biases?**



*Full show notes and resources [can be found here.](#)*



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## About



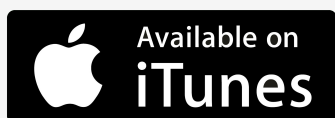
Join Jordan Harbinger (critically acclaimed host, formerly of The Art of Charm) as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary musicians to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth -- and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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