

A Rope for an Elephant

Experiences, particularly those we have early in life, tend to shape our thinking about what we can and cannot do. An illustration of this is found in *The 10 Natural Laws of Successful Time and Life Management* by Hyrum W. Smith, and published by Warner Books.

A man once went to the circus with his young daughter. He was surprised when he saw a group of eight elephants and found that each was tethered by only a small rope attached to a ring on an iron leg shackle. Each of the small ropes was tied to a much larger rope that was staked to the ground. The ropes and stakes were no match for the size and strength of the elephant. Any one of them could have easily walked away to explore the nearby shopping mall.

The man couldn't help but wonder why they didn't break free, so he questioned the elephants' trainer.

He discovered that when they are very young, elephants are chained by the leg to immovable stakes. For several weeks, they struggle to free themselves. Little by little, they come to the realization that they can't move about freely when they are tied by the right rear leg.



From the moment this conditioning takes hold – after about three to four weeks – the trainer said that you could tie an elephant with a string and he wouldn't move as long as the shackle was on his right rear leg. The elephants at the circus did not roam about because they *believed* they could not. The tethers in *their* minds were stronger than any chain or rope.

Now, what is it that you believe you *cannot* do?

– Beecher Hunter