**“This I Believe” Audio Narrative Essay**

***ASSIGNMENT***

**Task:** Write a 500-600 word essay according to the [This I Believe Essay Writing Guidelines](https://thisibelieve.org/guidelines/) and the [Original Invitation](https://thisibelieve.org/history/invitation/) from 1954 (see next page). Record your essay into an approximately

3-minute MP3 recording to be shared on the last day of class.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this assignment is reflect on your own beliefs and to share with an audience one specific belief born of lived experience. This assignment provides an opportunity to put into practice what you have learned about multimedia writing and rhetoric this semester.

***RESOURCES***

For help with the technical aspects of this assignment, consider a consultation with the Media Corps, located in Hesburgh Library 2nd Floor, Tech Commons Help Desk.

**Media Corps Coaches:** <https://remix.nd.edu/media-corps>

**Fall Coaching Hours:**

Sunday-Thursday, 3:30pm – 9:30pm

Walk-in or [By Appointment](http://libcal.library.nd.edu/reserve/media-corps?)

**Book an appointment at the Sound Studio:** <https://libguides.library.nd.edu/sound-studio>

**This I Believe Essay Writing Suggestions (**<https://thisibelieve.org/guidelines/>)

**Tell a story about you**: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events that have shaped your core values. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be real. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.

**Be brief**: Your statement should be between 500 and 600 words. That’s about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

**Name your belief**: If you can’t name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief.

**Be positive**: Write about what you do believe, not what you don’t believe. Avoid statements of religious dogma, preaching, or editorializing.

**Be personal**: Make your essay about you; speak in the first person. Avoid speaking in the editorial “we.” Tell a story from your own life; this is not an opinion piece about social ideals. Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

# The Original Invitation from This I Believe

This invites you to make a very great contribution: nothing less than a statement of your personal beliefs, of the values which rule your thought and action. Your essay should be about three minutes in length when read loud, written in a style as you yourself speak, and total no more than 500 words.

We know this is a tough job. What we want is so intimate that no one can write it for you. You must write it yourself, in the language most natural to you. We ask you to write in your own words and then record in your own voice. You may even find that it takes a request like this for you to reveal some of your own beliefs to yourself. If you set them down they may become of untold meaning to others.

We would like you to tell not only what you believe, but how you reached your beliefs, and if they have grown, what made them grow. This necessarily must be highly personal. That is what we anticipate and want.

It may help you in formulating your credo if we tell you also what we do not want. We do not want a sermon, religious or lay; we do not want editorializing or sectarianism or ‘finger-pointing.’ We do not even want your views on the American way of life, or democracy or free enterprise. These are important but for another occasion. We want to know what you live by. And we want it in terms of ‘I,’ not the editorial ‘We.’

Although this program is designed to express beliefs, it is not a religious program and is not concerned with any religious form whatever. Most of our guests express belief in a Supreme Being, and set forth the importance to them of that belief. However, that is your decision, since it is your belief which we solicit.

But we do ask you to confine yourself to affirmatives: This means refraining from saying what you do not believe. Your beliefs may well have grown in clarity to you by a process of elimination and rejection, but for our part, we must avoid negative statements lest we become a medium for the criticism of beliefs, which is the very opposite of our purpose.

We are sure the statement we ask from you can have wide and lasting influence. Never has the need for personal philosophies of this kind been so urgent. Your belief, simply and sincerely spoken, is sure to stimulate and help those who hear it. We are confident it will enrich them. May we have your contribution?

Adapted from the invitation sent to essayists featured in the original ‘This I Believe’ series. Excerpted from ‘This I Believe 2,’ copyright © 1954 by Help, Inc.