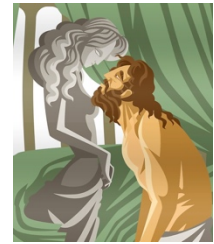


## The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy (SFP)

The origin of the SFP is from the story of the Greek Mythological sculptor called *Pygmalion*, who carved a marble statue of his idea of the most beautiful woman. The statue of the woman was so beautiful that Pygmalion fell deeply in love with her and named his love Galatea.



The goddess of love, Venus, feeling sorry for Pygmalion turned the statue into a real woman. From this story come two terms which we use today.

1. The **Pygmalion** effect
2. The **Galatea** effect

From the story above, we could say that Pygmalion was the sculpture and that Galatea was the creation of his belief. To see how this works, here is a short story about the Pygmalion effect and the Galatea effect in action.

Sam joined the company knowing that he had a lot to learn and he was quite worried that he would struggle and not meet the required standard in 6 months when his probation would be decided upon. He didn't want to have his probation period extended as once he passed his probation he would receive a decent pay rise.

After three weeks he felt that he was really struggling. Babak noticed this and joined him one day at lunch and chatted to him. Sam opened up and said how he wasn't doing well enough and he just didn't believe that he could make the grade. Babak replied and said that he actually thought he was doing really well and had made far fewer errors than most people at this stage of training. Sam's face lit up and he sounded better already.

Babak kept this positive reinforcement up. He coached Sam where he needed it and encouraged him. Most importantly, he would praise him, and on occasions, he even praised him in front of his colleagues too. Gradually Sam started to believe that he could make the grade and focused on getting the best results he could to prove his value to the company.

While Babak was being Sam's Pygmalion and boosting his confidence and creating that self-belief, within Sam something was happening. This change within Sam was that he began to believe in his own ability, **that** was the Galatea effect taking hold within Sam. Babak's influence as his Pygmalion was no longer required as Sam now believed in himself. The two movies below are based on this story:



**Pygmalion** (1938) – George Bernard Shaw - <https://www.filmsite.org/pygm.html>

**My Fair Lady** (1964) - George Cukor - <https://www.filmsite.org/myfa.html>

The more we genuinely show others we believe in them, in their ability to do something, to work towards something, and we recognise their efforts and praise them when appropriate, the more they will believe in themselves and bring about their own Self-Fulfilling Prophecy.

*Belief Creates Reality*