Ways of understanding I

Through the course of human history, people have had different ways of understanding their world and things in it. One of the most fundamental improvements of human thought is to recognize that there are these different ways of understanding, and then to decide which way of understanding is superior to the others.

This page illustrates that concept by presenting different ways of thinking about some question, with different answers to that question designated by capital letters. Almost all scientists would say that one of these ways of understanding is better than the others.

When I was a small child, I was taught $A$, so I think $A$ is true.

I will profit most if $B$ is true, so I say $B$ is true.

$D$ is consistent with ideas that I find comforting, so I think $D$ is true.

I have heard a voice or voices that told me $E$, so I think $E$ is true.

The sacred texts of the ________________ clearly support $F$, so I think $F$ is true.

Deep in my heart, I know that $G$ is true.

All of the available evidence – chemical, structural, contextual, and/or other evidence – suggests that $H$ is true, so I think $H$ is true (at least until new evidence contradicts it).

My ancestors believed that $J$ is true, and therefore I believe that $J$ is true.

My understanding of the universe is based on a very small number of fundamental principles, and from those principles I deduce $K$, so I think $K$ is true.

$L$ is consistent with the idea that my family, ethnic group, species, or planet is special, so I say $L$ is true.

Most people think $M$ is true, so $M$ must be true.