

FEELING EMPOWERED

Would you give your money to be managed by someone who doesn't have your best interests at heart? Would you trust your children with someone who makes them feel unsafe and unloved, and may in fact be harmful to them? Would you lend your car to a careless individual who may drive drunk or enraged and cause an accident?

I'm assuming you answered "no" to the above questions. When then would you hand over your power to someone else, to have them determine your worth or control your life? The power to live life on your own terms should be in your *own* hands; don't hand it over to someone else by looking for external validation, which will only enslave you into spending more time pleasing others than yourself.

How does this process get started in the first place? As kids, we learn to suppress major parts of ourselves to adapt to our parents, since it's in our best interest. But 96% of families are flawed or dysfunctional to varying degrees, so even though that adaptation may have helped us survive as kids, it can cause unhealthy behaviours and attitudes as adults. As an adult, you need to break free from all that and claim the power to be your authentic self.

The relationship that we have with ourselves is the most important one, since it defines how we organize our lives. We need to love and accept ourselves the way we do the person who sucks up most of our energy – possibly the same person to whom we've handed over the reigns to our life.

It's time to take charge of your life, by breaking self-defeating cycles, and believing in yourself. For starters, get rid of what's gotten in the way of you living your most fulfilled life, on your own terms. The two biggest things that get in our way are, allowing others to control us, and anxiety from the unrealistic expectations we put on ourselves. FYI, perfectionism programs the brain to constantly be on edge, with strict black and white thinking. So we need to put away the measuring sticks that tell us we're not enough, embrace our imperfections, and foster the courage to stand up for what we need.

Here are 10 ways that you can achieve empowerment, by showing up for yourself!

1. ***Be self-reliant and learn to stand up for yourself.*** If you rely on others or don't stand up for yourself, you'll hand over your power. This includes being financially independent, so you can take care of yourself, respect yourself, and walk from a situation that isn't right for you.

2. ***Practice self control.*** The number one thing which makes people lose their power is becoming undone by losing control. When you fail to exert self-control, your limbic system flares into action and makes you act out of character. If you get that feeling like you're losing yourself, follow your feelings to the source and see what they're trying to tell you. Perhaps a childhood wound has been ripped open and it's taken you back to a place where you had no control. That being the case, commit to dealing with those issues, because being dominated by past trauma is like allowing someone to live in your head/heart rent-free.
3. ***Do not be thrown off by criticism.*** When you start to take things personally, you end up giving into self-doubt, or trying to change yourself to please others, which can compromise your living life on your own terms. Know that 90% of put downs and rejections are based in external circumstances and internal insecurities, which cause people to lash out, reject, or bully others – it's rarely about you.
4. ***Love yourself to bits.*** Your mantra should go past "Love thy neighbour as thyself", to "Love thyself intensely and your neighbour will be happier living next to you." The idea is to know your self-worth and treat yourself at least as well as you do others.
5. ***Never set yourself up for disappointment.*** It's important to be realistic and reasonable, versus having false expectations. And if something is not working out for you, have the courage to walk away. Being stuck in analysis paralysis, trying to force a situation that doesn't feel right, is a waste of time and a set-up for becoming stuck in disappointment.
6. ***Don't let guilt or shame control you.*** If you need to change something, go ahead and do it, but don't waste time wallowing in something that's taking away from you feeling good about yourself.
7. ***Don't take other people's moods upon yourself.*** If you have the urge to fix it, you won't succeed; you'll only make things worse. Tell yourself it's their bad mood, so you're not going to make it yours; and then just walk away.
8. ***Know that being happy outweighs being right.*** Most discussions heat up whenever someone tries to prove their point. Not being driven by the need to have the last word is true power!
9. ***Don't look to others to define your value.*** If you rely on someone else's validation, you'll live for their validation – and no one can sustain that. The flipside: if they stop giving you positive feedback, or if they give you negative feedback, they have complete power over how you feel, which impacts all other areas of your life.
10. ***Think about who/what makes you the happiest and who/what makes you the most miserable.*** Then do the math and redesign your life, to live it on your own terms, as the empowered creature that you'll become.

The power to change your life is in your hands, as is the power to have others please you. The easiest place to start is with small, attainable goals, such as, “I promise myself to say no to at least one thing that I don’t want to do this week, and replace it with a yes to something I’d rather do, for myself.” Or, “What others think of me isn’t nearly as important as what I think of myself, so I’m going to have a high opinion of myself and live up to it!”

At the end of the day, feeling empowered is all about doing whatever it takes to hold on to the power over who you are, who you want to be, and how you want to live your life, versus relying on someone else to establish any of that. Now you’re playing with power!

If you’re need help with finding your self-worth and feeling empowered, join us for our life-transforming series.