



Inner
Freedom

HOPE

Personal
Empowerment

MyQuest

By Daniel Labbe

Today's Meditation - I have been working on personal development for years, but for most of that time progress was slow and grueling. Is this your experience as well? For years I couldn't understand why I was making so little progress. I mean, I was trying my hardest, reading all sorts of books on psychology, spirituality, and personal development; I was in therapy, and I tried every combination of psychotropic drugs imaginable. Yet my life was still highly dysfunctional. I was able to make some progress, but it did not reflect the amount of effort I put in.

Then, as if by some miracle, my progress took off, and I found myself leading a life I never thought possible. Today I am the creator and facilitator of^a personal development group called Mindful Living. I'm a facilitator for the Alternatives to Violence Program. I'm a board member of Toastmasters International. And I'm working on creating a revolutionary new self-help organization called LifeQuest. I wake up every day excited about the potential of the day ahead of me. I feel empowered, a sense of inner freedom I've never known, peaceful, directed; I feel confident, and I know who I am today and I actually love this person (myself!). Relationships are more rewarding — it's just amazing, and it just keeps getting better.

So what happened? I've thought about that question a lot, and many answers came to mind. But one

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Particular event happened that made everything else possible. I got fed-up with relying on other sources (people, organizations) - having my expectations let down - and I decided to take full responsibility for my life in all areas.

Sounds obvious... simple, right? The fact is ~~it is~~ it is not as common as many of us believe. For years I thought I was taking responsibility for my life by going to AA, going to therapy, reading self-help books. On the surface it sure sounds like I took full responsibility because of all the things I was into. The problem was this: I relied on those things to produce the results for me. I believed I was doing my part just by showing up and thinking about all the stuff I was hearing. If my life didn't improve then these people must be full of it, right?

It was a hard lesson to learn. Only when I felt "let down" over and over did I get angry enough to say "That's enough! I'm going to change my life no matter how little help I get." The fact was that no one was failing me. I was failing myself. I was living with a victim's attitude, blaming my failures on the incompetence & carelessness of others.

The principle that really got me to understand personal responsibility was the Principle of Freedom. While ~~reading~~ reading Stephen Covey's book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People ~~that~~ I learned that I have the freedom to choose how I respond to any situation, and no one can take that freedom from me. I can always choose a response that reflects my

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Goals and Values. Not only that, but my experience of life depends more on my responses to circumstances than it does on the actual circumstances themselves! This truth blew my mind. You mean that my experience isn't a product of my environment, and the events that happen to me or how people treat me, but it is created more from how I choose to respond to those things? That's amazing! That means I am not a prisoner of difficult circumstances or a dysfunctional upbringing, or of negative, mean, careless people. None of these has more power over my experience than my freedom to choose!

This truth sent shockwaves through my psyche. I felt like I was released from the worst prison on earth. Being in Old Colony correctional center is a piece of cake compared to being a prisoner of my own mind!

Anyway, it may sound simple, but consider this. I like to think I'm a half-way intelligent guy, and I really did try my best to change for years. Rehabs, psych hospitals, therapy, day programs, AA, churches, temples, retreats — you name it! But it wasn't until I grasped the true meaning of personal responsibility and freedom that ~~anything~~ I was able to make significant and lasting changes to my life.

If you are struggling to outgrow a dysfunctional lifestyle Please consider the power of personal responsibility and your freedom to choose. It will change your life.



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Current Events - The Mindful Living group is still going strong. Right now I'm creating an eight-week course for inmates called The Basics. This course will teach seven skills and principles that are fundamental to personal growth and success. These include: Personal Responsibility, Mindfulness, The Freedom to choose, Rational thinking (CBT), Compassion, ~~and~~ Forgiveness, and Self-Worth, Not in that order. Throughout my studies, and through personal experience, I have found these concepts to be universally promoted as a means of personal transformation. Over and over again leaders, visionaries, and spiritualists speak about these principles. Personally, these seven concepts have made my life rewarding, exciting, and personally ~~fulfilling~~ fulfilling.

If anyone has some advice for me concerning what you've read here, or you would just like to show your support for what I am doing just leave me a comment or drop me a letter to the address below.

Happy Questing, Travellers!

Quote - "The greatest discovery of this generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes." William James

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