



Empower

Transform

Believe

# MyQuest

By Daniel Labbe



Empower Yourself with this affirmation

Today's Quote: This I know, when I am mindful I am free to choose how I respond to all situations, and it is through these choices that I create my reality. Today I choose to be the change I seek in the world; today I choose to create a reality that reflects the best of who I am. So be it!

I wrote this affirmation for the Mindful Living group I used to facilitate here at Old Colony Prison. It's meant to remind ~~us~~ us that we are responsible for our experience of life. The affirmation is also to remind us that we empower ourselves when we acknowledge that we always have a choice in how we respond to any situation. Our response can reflect our goals and values or it can reflect ~~our~~ our woundedness and victimology. No matter what is happening we always have a choice in ~~the~~ responding in ~~one~~ one of the above ways. No person, institution, circumstance, or government can take this freedom away from us. And it is these choices, more than any other factor, that creates our quality of life. As long as we choose to ignore this truth we ~~are~~ will live as the victims of circumstances outside our control. This is an empowering truth for anyone living in oppressive situations.

In decision can change your whole life

I remember the first time I ~~realized~~ consciously used my freedom to choose. It was shortly after

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(This incident occurred in 2009)

Reading Victor Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning,

I was in segregation unit (the hole) for fighting. I was sick of living such a dysfunctional life, and I was sick of always blaming unfair circumstances, mistreatment, and other people for my poor experiences ~~and~~ ~~and~~ and bad behavior (and sick of going to the hole!)

Anyway, while in the hole I ran out of toilet paper. A basic necessity that the officers are required to provide for us, I soon had to use the bathroom, so when a C.O. (Corrections officer) came by I requested a roll of toilet paper. Simple, ~~and~~ right?

Well, a half-hour goes by and the C.O. comes by again. "Hey, C.O. Did you get any toilet paper for me?"

"Oh, I forgot. I'll get it now."

Of course another half-hour goes by, and he still doesn't have it. Now I'm pissed off, big-time. Nature's calling - well, it's more like she's screaming. You get the idea.

Two hours of this game goes by, in case you don't know, one of the punishments in the hole is for the C.O.'s to mess with you. I'm locked in an empty cell, and I have no way to get the ~~base~~ necessities like T.P., except through a C.O.

In a situation like this a "con" is expected to do whatever it takes to address the unfair treatment and get his needs met. Three possible reactions came to mind. 1.) "Pop" the sprinkler. This would cause an emergency and make a huge mess for the C.O.'s to clean up. 2.) Make a rope with my sheet and

Ever have a "dysfunction hangover"?



It's all a game. Who can mess with who the most

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This is what they want me to do!

Yank the sink/toilet Unit off the wall, 3.) Kick the steel door continuously until the C.O. delivers the T.P. \* All these options are the standard reactions most cons use in such situations, Surprisingly, they get good results.

I was about to engage in option 3 when a thought came my mind. What Part of ~~me~~ would this response reflect? It occurred to me that this response would reflect the very dysfunctional coping skills and attitudes that have caused me and so many others immeasurable Pain and difficulty. Not only that, such a reaction would cause me to get all worked-up and stressed-out. Recently I had made a commitment to do all I could to ~~to~~ turn my life around, and honestly, I just didn't want to ~~to~~ experience the emotional "flip-out" reaction anymore.

Light Dawns

But they were treating me unfairly. Was I going to just let them Punk me off like that? ~~So~~ By now I was actually excited about the prospect of ~~to~~ choosing a new response to a familiar situation. I thought, if I truly want to lead a life of higher values that includes unfair situations, ~~to~~ So I made choice. To "flip-out" would reflect "dysfunctional Dan" and did I want to empower dysfunctional Dan over a ~~roll~~ <sup>roll</sup> of T.P.? or could I use this very situation, this abusive, humiliating situation, to empower the new Dan?

The new Dan was worth more than a roll of T.P.

A new life is born

So, what did I do? Nothing. I waited... and waited until finally, just before shift-change, ~~to~~ ~~to~~ an officer gave me a roll of T.P. Should I have had to put up with such treatment? no way. But life isn't always fair, and

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Who are  
you going  
to feed:  
the wolf  
or the  
noble  
Eagle?

often times it is how we respond to injustice that defines our character and creates our ~~reality~~ experience of reality. You may not be in prison or be as dysfunctional as I was, but we all have a tendency to want to blame other people or unfair circumstances for our poor decisions or our "bad" experiences. We can all feel oppressed, neglected, or abused, and in these situations it can seem like we have little to no power. Yet the truth is, we always have the freedom to choose a response that reflects the best of who we are. And it is these choices, choices we are responsible for, that have the biggest affect on our lives.

To accept responsibility for our choices - no matter what people do ~~to~~ us - is to empower ourselves. No longer do we ever need to live as "the victim"; even when we are victimized. Victor Frankel discovered this truth in the most horrific environment ever created: a Nazi death-camp. None of us have it that bad, do we?

So, if you are looking for a way to empower yourself or gain some sense of freedom and choice in an oppressive situation adopt the ~~affirmation~~ Mindful Living affirmation and reclaim your destiny!

This I know, when I am mindful I am free to choose how I respond to all situations, and it is through these choices that I create my reality. Today I choose to be the change I seek in the world; today I choose to create a reality that reflects the best of who I am. So be it!