

YOUR PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE: How To Find It, How To Keep It

By
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"Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

To become independent is the main challenge of life. There is a strong external pull from others to keep you helpless. There is also an internal unconscious pull to remain dependent. Your whole life you will have strong desires to lean on someone else to make you feel better and to blame when things do not go your way. Becoming independent is not giving up normal social interdependency or becoming a hermit. Self-isolation and loneliness are a result of excessive dependency, not independence. In your own perceptions there are only four things in the world: how you think, how you act, how you feel, and the rest of the world. You have a lot to say about the first three, and very little to say about the last. Most people worry only about the rest of the world and things beyond their control. When you try to control the rest of the world, you are out of control. When you give up trying, you are in control. The independent person chooses to control himself – not the rest of the world. When your satisfaction depends on how the world treats you, you will be dissatisfied most of the time.

Accepting things just the way they are is the first step to independence. When bad things happen you'll go through 5 stages before you reach acceptance: *denial* (I don't want to know), *disbelief* (I know it, but I don't want to believe it), *anger* (Whose fault was it?), *depression* (Look at what I've lost – I am a loser), and *anxiety* (What will happen to me?) You can cycle through these in a matter of moments or it can take years. Acceptance starts with awareness. Once you become aware of your thoughts, feelings and actions, you can start to make more independent choices.

You can increase your level of awareness when you:

Own your own actions - choose to or choose not to according to the outcome you want.

Own your own feelings – no one makes you feel happy or sad; you choose to feel that way

Own your own success – tell yourself what you are doing right

Face what you fear – it's often False Expectations Appearing Real

Keep your mind open – challenge old beliefs about how you think you should think or feel

Take an active rather than inactive approach to life – make everything you do a conscious choice

Be honest with yourself – don't ignore or overstate your faults; identify the problem at hand

The second step is to examine your choices. You cannot control the cards dealt to you, but you can always choose how to play them. We call that "free will". When you believe you have choices, you will suffer less. The more freedom you have, the better to meet and master challenges in life. Usually when you say you have "no choice" it really means you don't like the options. Believing that you have no choice brings out the worst in you. If you have the freedom to do something, you also have the freedom not to do it.

To become more independent, put your acceptance of the situation and your choice to feel in control into practice. Translate your new ways of thinking into action. Notice the precise moment when you want to act in a dependent way. At that point in time, do the opposite of what you've always done. If you feel like running, stay. If you want others to do something for you, do it yourself. You strengthen the beliefs you act on. What happens when you take full responsibility for who you are, how you feel, and what you do? You have no need to compare yourself to others, to demand perfection from yourself, your fear goes away, you no longer need to be a "big shot", your relationships with others will improve, and you'll open up to your potential. **Celebrate your independence!**

Dr. Darlene Treese has been in private practice in hypnosis and counseling since 1983. She is a Diplomate in Counseling with the National Institute of Sports, Past President of the American Psychotherapy and Medical Hypnosis Association and Vice President of the Rotary eClub of Southwest, USA. Darlene has been internationally acknowledged for her positive action and solution-based therapies and work with corporations. "A person for the people," Dr. Dar is always available to help with your questions and dilemmas through office visits, email or telephone consultations. Call her at **850-201-0073** or visit **www.AskDrTreese.com**