

Freedom to Choose

We have so much freedom today. Everything from what we can watch, say or even do has been expanded over time. In fact, we can feel overwhelmed by all the choices available to us on any given day. But are we really free?

On a recent trip across the country I was struck by how tenuous freedom can be. I had taken a flight from Texas to Florida to present a workshop. On my return flight I was stopped at the airport security checkpoint by a stern TSA security officer. A gift I had purchased for a friend was deemed suspicious. The TSA officer barked at me to step aside. My bags were thoroughly checked and the item was taken from me. Because it contained liquid in it over the allowed amount it was considered dangerous and immediately confiscated - dumped into a nearby garbage can. My efforts to reason with the officer made no difference. She barked at me to move on and I walked away a little stunned.

Due to terrorist threats, high fuel costs, and increasing air traffic, flying is not as pleasant or as easy as it used to be. I know there are good reasons for the checkpoints. We are told that they are there to make sure that terrorists can't bring anything aboard the plane that would enable them to take it over or destroy it. When we are told to take our shoes off, don't bring liquids over 3 ounces, or have proper identification, I know the intent is to create safety, but it can also rob us of freedom.

That day I looked at the other people in the airport passing through the same security checkpoint. Even though they were freedom-loving Americans too, I thought to myself how easily we had given our power over to the Transit Authority and our government. We had accepted new rules without questioning them too much. This experience eerily reminded me of a movie I had recently seen, *Children of Men*. The film is set in a future time where, due to a plague which has caused global human infertility, society has collapsed into chaos. There is heightened terrorism, a massive reduction of civil liberties, and violent inhumanity by the government. Outrageous rules and laws are blindly accepted by the majority of society. Despite obstacles, the main character chooses freedom and finds new hope amidst the devastation of a society gone mad.

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It is easier than you might think to move from freedom to totalitarianism. When we blindly accept authority we can end up giving away our freedom in exchange for security. We can also give our freedom over to negative thoughts, worries, doubts and illusions. The experience at the airport was my creation. I felt it was prodding me to pay attention and think.

How do we hold on to freedom? How do we truly know if we are free? Here are some ideas to maintain your own freedom.

1. Whose Reality is it Anyway?

One way to stay free is to ask, "Whose reality is it anyway?" Companies try to sell you all sorts of products and point out the seeming evidence about why you need to buy what they offer, but is that true for you? Do you truly need every gadget and gizmo that comes off the production line? It is the same with reality systems; everyone will unconsciously try to convince you to jump into their reality bubble. Before you jump in make sure it feels right for you! During the Cold War of the 1950's the U.S. government made it sound like there was a communist under every rock and yet there wasn't. Totalitarian communism lost its foothold and the U.S. was not destroyed. Currently the U.S. government may want you to think that terrorists are under every rock. Is that really true? While we are in many ways being threatened we have to be careful about exaggeration.

Your thoughts can do the same thing. They can become exaggerated and torment you, scare you and make you submit to roles and ideas that are not loving to yourself or others. Question them. Whose rules are these anyway? Where did it come from? Does this idea or feeling allow me to be free and happy?

2. Creator or Victim?

When you feel you do not have the power to create your life it is very easy to become a victim. While there is definitely injustice in the world, you can still see yourself as a creator and respond from freedom.

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From a metaphysical perspective you do create your own experiences. Using this logic, there must be some good reason that you created your life issues. If you created lack then you can manifest abundance. If you created pain then you can create joy. If you feel imprisoned – by anything – you can liberate yourself. You are a creator and the canvas of your experience is blank.

You may notice that when a person sees themselves as a victim they tend to act from weakness, limit their options and thus reinforce the idea that they are being victimized. Gas prices are very high as are energy costs in general. Should we blame the government, the oil companies or someone else for this? Maybe we created this situation to discover ways to generate non-polluting energy and learn to use fewer resources? We might have created this as an empowering way to see ourselves as creators. Be a creator and you will feel freedom being magnetically drawn back to you in many ways.

3. You Are Always Free

If you are saddled with a problem, harassed by fear or doubts, or constrained in some other way, remind yourself that you do have freedom. You can think what you want. You can feel what you want. You can put any face you want upon a situation. Above all you are free to choose your actions. You are free to respond. Ask yourself what freedom is available in your current circumstances. What can you do?

The tendency can be to cling to old emotions or past habits. To be free is to live in the moment and to live consciously; this does require effort. It is useful to have rules and laws and helpful at times to question rules and laws. There is no law that life is painful, yet many people believe in that idea.

If you want to be joyful remember that you are a free being. Regardless of the obstacles and challenges you may face, you are always free to walk on the path of joy.

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Egan Sanders is an Intuitive Counselor, Coach and Spiritual Development Teacher who helps people accelerate their personal and spiritual growth, and experience greater happiness, clarity and fulfillment. Egan also assists Holistic Practitioners to increase their income, transform challenges, and be more effective in their work.

Egan is the author of the free report, "25 Ways to Clear Blockages to Well-Being" which is available at his website (www.egansanders.com). Egan also offers inspiring and practical information in his two newsletters. Healing the Hologram is a quarterly newsletter dedicated to assisting holistic practitioners to succeed, (www.egansanders.com/practitioners.html). Path of Joy is a monthly newsletter for those traveling the road of Personal and Spiritual Growth, (www.egansanders.com/growth.html.)

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