



Empowerment – Taking Control Of Your Life

Virginia Woolf once said that “To enjoy freedom we have to control ourselves.” Empowerment is the process of developing our personal power so that we control our own life, leading to personal freedom. To become empowered, I found the following six steps to be helpful:

- 1. Understand that you have control over your life and that no one can control you.** This first step is absolutely critical. Although others may have controlled your life in the past or may still attempt to do so, you are the one who ultimately controls your life. It may be difficult to break old patterns, but it can be done. On a daily basis, remind yourself that you are the one who controls your life. Develop an affirmation, such as “I am in control of my life.” Tape this affirmation to your bathroom mirror so that you see it every morning.
- 2. Don’t give your power away; stand your ground.** Without realizing it, many people give their power away. They let others make decisions for them and run their lives. If you want to change this, realize that no one takes your power away; you give it away. Learn how to make your own decisions, whether they end up being right or wrong. Even if you make the wrong decision, you can always learn from your mistake. When you begin to take control of your life and make your own decisions, others may attempt to change your mind or take over. When this happens, stand your ground. Tell people that you are in control of your life and are responsible for making your own decisions. Don’t waver from your position.
- 3. Develop your self-esteem and self-confidence.** Generally, a lack of self-esteem and self-confidence are at the root of feeling powerless. Think about what you can do to increase your self-esteem and self-confidence. Some suggestions include developing a list of all of your gifts, talents, strengths, skills, and abilities (those items that make you unique); developing a list of personal affirmations and reviewing these daily; identifying and addressing your weaknesses; reading self-help/self-improvement books; and taking classes to boost your self-esteem and confidence.
- 4. Develop or expand your knowledge base.** It is well known that information is knowledge and knowledge is power. The more knowledge you have, the more powerful you are. Think about what types of information you need to increase your self-esteem, improve your self-confidence, increase your ability to take control of your life, and

defend your position. Then research books, classes, websites, and other resources that will help you develop your knowledge base or expand your knowledge in specific areas.

5. **Learn what assertiveness is and how to become assertive.** Being assertive occurs when you ensure your needs are met while, concurrently, meeting the needs of others. To become assertive, you have to identify how you want to be treated, and what you will and will not accept. It helps to use “I” language when communicating with other people in an assertive manner. For example, “When you make decisions for me, I feel that I don’t have control over my life. Although your intention may be good, I am in control of my life and able to make my own decisions.” You can practice role playing (with friends or family members) to improve your communication style and ensure your needs are met.
6. **Take responsibility for your actions.** When you assume control of your life and run it the way you desire, be prepared to take responsibility for your decisions and actions, whether right or wrong. After all, you are now the captain of your ship. Accepting responsibility for your decisions and actions will also prevent you from blaming others for poor decisions or actions.

Taking control of one’s life and yielding personal power in an assertive manner are the keys to empowerment...and the freedom to create the life you desire and deserve. So, don’t wait another minute. Take control today and watch your new life unfold!

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If you want to make positive changes in your professional life, and create the job or career you desire and deserve, then working with Executive & Life Coach, Sharon L. Mikrut, is the solution. Although her specialty is in partnering with nonprofit executive directors and managers to maximize their resources in a competitive environment, she is passionate about working with all individuals committed to personal and/or professional growth. Visit her website at <http://www.createitcoaching.org> or Nonprofit Professionals blog at <http://www.createitcoaching.com>, and sign up for her free monthly newsletter that provides information and resources designed to help you manage your nonprofit organization in a more effective and efficient manner. You can also visit her Empowerment blog at <http://www.createitcoaching.net>, and sign up for her free monthly life coaching newsletter.