

INSIGHTS THAT MY CLIENTS HAVE TAUGHT ME

TWENTY-FIVE BELIEFS OF VICTIMS

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The only person you can change is yourself; therefore, you cannot, not be powerful. You can only create the illusion of powerlessness AND VICTIM-HOOD.

Humans are very ingenious when it comes to making themselves into victims. Being a victim has many benefits: you get to feel sorry for yourself and *try* to get others to feel sorry for you, you get to stay stuck (change can be scary), you get to “reward” yourself with overeating, over drinking, etc, you get to be physically and emotionally abusive and/or violent. These are just a few of the benefits of seeing yourself as a powerless person. I am sure that, if you try, you can come up with many more “benefits.”

The concept of empowerment has to start with you. You will never be able to empower others until you can empower yourself. The alternative to empowerment is violence. All physical and verbal violence, such as domestic, child or gang, comes from feelings of powerlessness. A person who feels powerless is the one who strikes out in violence. It is the parent who feels powerless to stop the baby from crying that is responsible for domestic violence. A husband who is afraid of losing his wife may resort to physical violence. If you want to change your community and the violence that you read about, you must start with empowering yourself.

It takes work to create the illusion that you are powerless. Here are just a few of the beliefs that I have seen people use to convince themselves that they are powerless, thereby providing an outlet for violence and dysfunctional relationships. Check to see if you have ever used any of these.

1. Blaming others. If someone or something can ruin your day or make you angry, then who has the power? Who gets to feel like a victim?
2. Expecting someone else to make you happy vs. making yourself happy and inviting others into your happiness. The only person you can make happy is yourself, vs. “I should make my mate happy.”

3. Living in the past insures that you will live with your regrets and feel powerless, since the past cannot be changed.
4. Living or worrying about the future is a guarantee of producing anxiety and a sense of powerlessness. Most anxiety, called stage fright anxiety, is the difference between here and now and someplace in the future.
5. By not accepting responsibility for your irresponsibility, you create the illusion of powerlessness. *If what you are saying and what you are doing do not match, you are lying.* Everything that you do is what you want to do. That does not mean you enjoy doing everything that you do. Deeds speak louder than words.
6. Blaming **fear** for not doing what you want to do. Fear has never stopped you from doing something you really wanted to do. Fear of the unknown is the result of not trusting yourself.
7. Blaming lack of motivation. Motivation is simply wanting to do something bad enough that you do it. If you do not do something that you say you want to do, it is because you didn't really want to do it or because it was not worth the effort.
8. Guilt is based on "I shoulds," that is expectations for yourself that you are not doing. (See motivation) Guilt is an option; it is 100% learned and what is learned can be unlearned. Whenever you feel guilty, you will set yourself up to be punished.
9. Depression feels like powerlessness but it is anger turned inward. Depression is a chemical imbalance, but so too is happiness. In most cases, it is not having an acceptable way of expressing your anger that causes the chemical imbalance. You cannot be angry and depressed at the same time.
10. Taking things personally. If you get your feelings hurt, it is because you have done one of two things wrong! Either you did not check with the person to make sure that you understood what they were saying (70% of the time it will be because you misunderstood and put a negative meaning of what the person said or did). Or, the person did mean to hurt your feelings. If that is true, then they have the problem and you are making their problem your problem. If someone can hurt your feelings, then you are powerless and someone is doing it to you.
11. Magical or wishful thinking creates the illusion of powerlessness. "Everyday in every way I'm getting better and better." "Just put it out there and it will come to you." "I'm waiting for my ship to come in." It is not enough to just focus on what you want to happen.
12. Discounting positive feedback, "If they really knew how bad I screw up, they would not say that."
13. Trying to manipulate yourself with name calling, "I'm so dumb. I'm lazy. I can't believe I'm that stupid." Etc. Or, they are excuses for not changing. "I'm a nervous person." "I can't do that, I'm a shy person." "I'm a private person." "I'm a fearful person." The labels you use often become self-fulfilling prophecies.

14. "I can't make a decision," is a lie. To make no decision is the decision to keep things as they are.
15. Expecting people to be mind readers. "People should know what makes me feel loved." "If you loved me, you would know what makes me feel loved." "If I have to tell you, then it makes it no good."
16. Using childhood survival techniques. What worked for you as a child usually won't work for you as an adult. For example: whining, temper tantrums, being passive, being aggressive, running away, etc.
17. Believing that people should do what you think they should do, not what they do. Holding onto expectations for people, then being angry, and feeling powerless when they don't live up to your expectations. "People should drive like I think they should drive, not how they drive." "My mate/kids should do what I think they should do, not what they do."
18. Negative self-talk and victim language, such as, "I can't, I'm so dumb, I'll just screw it up." "Nothing good lasts for ever." (Negative thinkers who are waiting for the other shoe to drop.)
19. Entitlement thinking or "What have you done for me lately?" You and/or the Government owes it to me. "The Government paid for my delivery but they didn't give me any diapers." "We should be living like the Joneses."
20. Comparing yourself to others. Have you ever noticed that you can identify people who are above you and people who are below you but no one on your same level? "Judge not, for in judging another you condemn yourself."
21. The need to be perfect or right is the fear of abandonment. The Perfectionist Creed: "I have to do it right. If I'm perfect, how can you leave me?" Being right (perfect) will never prevent someone from leaving you. If anything, that is the reason they will leave.
22. If you want a job done right, you need to do it yourself. "I can't trust others, so I have to do everything myself." You can't live up to your own expectations, how do you expect other to be able to do it?
23. Protecting yourself by lying: you protect things that are weak, and what you protect you make weak. The purpose of lying is to protect yourself from the other person's emotional reaction. For example, so you will not be yelled at or feel guilty if that persons starts to cry. Conclusion: "If I'm lying, I must be weak." The weaker you feel the more you will lie!
24. By being passive (nice), not being assertive and asking for what you want. Nice guys wreck lives, their own and others too. The purpose of being nice and never rocking the boat is so people will like you and you will not be abandoned.
25. By not wanting: He who never wants is never disappointed. But, he who never wants, never gets. This person is trying to protect himself from being disappointed, "I can never stand to be hurt that way again." They see emotional pain as terminal.

Now, compare your true answers to the list of the twenty-five belief questions in the EMPOWERMENT QUIZ. Most people have at least some of the victim

beliefs. The number of questions that you answered true to will determine how deep you are into being a victim. All twenty-five blocks to empowerment are biased on beliefs that you learned since you were born. If you no longer want to be a victim but have trouble changing your beliefs, take your list to a therapist and work with him/her to find new beliefs that will allow you to feel the power that is yours.

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