

Is Freedom an External Phenomenon?

FREEDOM COMES in layers. As a toddler, freedom was the ability to run around without a walker or any other support. As a teenager going out without any guardian, or some days having no rules for school was freedom. In short, erasing any restriction or imposition creates freedom.

We are wearing masks to protect ourselves these days, yet we feel caged in wearing them. Not being able to travel is restrictive and many of us feel like we are imprisoned. Freedom is subjective.

Whereas we feel tied down in one place, Nelson Mandela found his freedom in a jail. He realized his liberation was in releasing biases, judgments, and anger towards others. That realization freed him inside, and he experienced real happiness.

He could not have experienced absolute joy had he not experienced pain, suppression, and darkness as his real prison. He continued his path to find his freedom, searching deep inside by overcoming his inner and outer enemies.

Slavery to his emotions was more potent an imprisonment than being enslaved by outsiders. It is through his internal freedom that he found his bigger purpose of life.

Freedom is the power to act, speak



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or think as one wants. But how often do we know what we want?

Most of us often subconsciously imitate the most prevalent norms from our surroundings and project them as our own. Having received what we have projected, we feel we are living and choosing freely. However, most times,

we recycle one another's thoughts and actions, falsely believing we are in charge of our lives.

It may come as a shock, but we disable the way of our freedom most times. Our thoughts, perceptions, and resistance create drama, taking us away from our space that brings real happiness.

A mind is a tool gifted to the human species to live intelligently, efficiently, and effectively. In my workshops, I often give an example of a cycle as a tool to reach from one place to another more efficiently and effectively than walking.

Imagine if the cycle decides to take us wherever it wishes! What kind of journey would we have? Sometimes uphill, sometimes downhill, and suddenly the cycle decides to stop in the middle of nowhere. It may seem fun and adventure initially, but then we are stuck if the cycle navigates us.

The same happens to us when our mind navigates us. We are 'happy' when our mind labels an event or a situation in our life as success and unhappy when it labels it as 'failure.' We go uphill and downhill with those labels and build our perceptions around it.

So, where is freedom for us? We may think we are free from any external sources, but often we are fearful to express ourselves freely. Our judgments, inner critic, and past setbacks weave horror stories and create fear in our lives.

This fear ties us and compels us to follow social norms more than our dreams.

Freedom does not imply choosing a path of a rebellion or a pleaser. Freedom is choosing a course of authenticity that will then align us to our true purpose of life. **BW**

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