

PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT IS...

A way of looking at yourself, other people, and the world around you and a way of living your life that is actively developed by you as a “proactive” (rather than a “reactive”) player in your own adult life and involves ongoing awareness, conscious decision-making, accountability (for who you are and what you do), respect for yourself and others, proactivity, empathy (for yourself and others), optimism (about yourself and others), the ability to discover and become the person you actually want to be (and really are), and the willingness to be truly emotionally close to those in your life who are important to you.

Created by you and in you as you go through your life and are willing to recognize and intervene in the destructive thought and behavior patterns that you learned at an earlier time in your life (i.e. your toxic shame) and replace them with healthier thoughts and actions.

A **“life script”** that is written by you for yourself that promotes self-esteem, self-confidence, self-respect, and the potential for personal growth and healing and genuine intimacy with others.

Based on a set of more realistic and life-enhancing core beliefs about you and the world around you that you develop (with the help of others whom you can trust in the present) when you actively challenge and work to change the bad habits, the negative messages, and the destructive **life script** that were programmed into you as a child. These new and more positive core beliefs communicate to you and generate a belief that:

...You are competent, capable, worthwhile, lovable, and emotionally connected to other human beings

...The world is generally a safe place where you can trust and count on those whom you choose to have in your life

Developed in your ongoing life by your own positive, affirming, and nurturing self-talk that says things like:

...I am a competent, capable, and worthwhile person even if I'm having difficulty in my life right now

...I am lovable and I deserve love and respect in my life (although I understand that I cannot demand this from others or force others to give these to me)

...I will make mistakes from time to time, but I am still okay even when I make these mistakes and I can work hard to learn from them and do something different in the future

...I don't like what just happened here, but I can figure out how to do something about it

...I can handle this situation even though it is difficult for me at this point

...I feel really overwhelmed by what's going on these days, but I have people in my life who care about me and can help me get through it

...My behavior was hurtful and/or irresponsible, but I'm still a good person and I can take responsibility for what I did and apologize or make amends in some way and then learn from what I have done

...What she said really hurt my feelings, but I can talk with her about it, tell her how I felt, and try to understand what was going on for her at that moment

...This too will pass

AN EMPOWERMENT-BASED LIFESTYLE LEADS DIRECTLY TO:

The recognition and acceptance of who you really are as a “whole person” (what you feel, think, want, need, and do) and of what your core values are (which you then are actually willing to work hard to live by)

Differentiating your core identity from your mistakes, “flaws,” “defects,” shortcomings, insecurities, and problems

An intense feeling of relief that arises from the idea that you are, at your core, a lovable, valuable, competent, and worthwhile person which allows you to take full and clear responsibility for yourself and, at times, to experience painful feelings (i.e. a healthy sense of guilt and remorse) about your behavior and your life without continually shaming, judging, and condemning yourself

Spontaneity and freedom of self-expression that stem from a true understanding and acceptance of who you truly are

A sense of feeling “grounded” and “centered” and the ability to “be yourself” no matter whom you are with or what is going on around you

The ability to tap into your own personal power which allows you to work at and change your own destructive attitudes and behaviors that you learned at an earlier time which interfere with who you really are and want to be in the present (rather than trying to blame and focus on others and exert power and control over those other people in your life)

Very real remedies, problem-solving, and resolution so you do not need to continue to add (in your adult life) to the legacy and burden of toxic shame from your past

A genuine and comforting connectedness with other people and the idea that you (and they) are part of a larger universe where you have responsibility and compassion for yourself and others

The strongly-held belief that both you and others can “improve,” change, heal, and grow