



By Silver Rose

I will never forget the first time I saw the bumper sticker proclaiming the person inside the car as POWERLESS. I was appalled. In my late 20's then, I had been studying self-help books relentlessly with the singular goal of having complete control of every aspect of my life. When I saw that bumper sticker, I wondered aloud, "What kind of an idiot would proclaim to the world that they had given up?"

Fast forward to today. I can't say I've completely abandoned the battle but in my sanest moments I see with unflinching clarity that I have no control over anyone or anything. The only aspect I have any control over is how I respond to what life serves up.

Taken completely to heart, giving up the illusion of power can radically transform your life. Imagine how differently you might act if you understood:

- You cannot control anyone else's happiness including your spouse, your children, your co-workers or your boss.
- The driving instructions you're angrily giving to other motorists not only can't be heard but would likely be ignored anyhow.
- All evidence to the contrary, other people CAN think for themselves (even Congress!)

One of my very favorite quotes from my spiritual teacher Esther Hicks is, "An answer to a question no one has asked is a wasted answer."

Unsolicited advice is rarely followed and even more rarely welcomed. Usually it's not even heard. Speaking louder or slower doesn't change that. The core truth is you cannot teach someone something they don't want to learn. And even though people may love you or like you it doesn't mean they agree with you that you have the best answers.

Constantly telling someone what to do is insulting. You think you're showing that you care but the very clear message is, "You're too stupid to know what to do so allow me to take over. I'm much smarter." Is that really the message you want to give others, especially those you love?

When I consciously started to curb my attempts to "help" and/or control others, I had so much free time left I could have started a second business. How much time might you save if you started living only your life, and no one else's?

Passionate Self Care
Powerless

Every change starts with becoming conscious of what you're doing. Just for today start paying attention to all the ways you try and help others without them asking you.

For example, I am writing this on an airplane and my partner Bill is sitting next to me. He's looking at the in-flight video player menu to see if there's anything he might enjoy. He asked my opinion about one and I gave it to him. As he attempted to return to the main menu I had to restrain myself from leaning over and punching the right button for him. I know this is minor and Bill wouldn't have even minded. However, most would. Do that to a child and they *really* don't like it. Most would pull the video player away from you and loudly proclaim, "I KNOW how to do it!" You can't fool kids. They can hear the message underneath all that "helpfulness."

One of the best ways to find time to take better care of yourself is to stop doing for others what they can and want to do for themselves. I promise the world won't come crashing to an end if you let go of the reins.

We are, after all, powerless.

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