

Controlling Your Destiny

By Silver Rose

When you think about influence, what comes to mind?

Many of you think of influential people as those who are in high-level positions—at work, in politics, at church, and in your community. Sometimes it seems you need lots of money to wield influence. (It certainly doesn't hurt.)

Or do you think of influence as the ability to control circumstances? If you are influential, you wield greater control. BINGO! Influence *does* give you more control over circumstances.

Why am I so passionate about finding the most effective ways to impact circumstances? Primarily because there was a long period of my life during which I felt out of control; I felt like a victim. It felt awful. When you are a victim, you lack the ability to do something about what's happening to you.

When did you have a similar time in your life?

At the heart of what we all want is control over our own destinies. If you ever wonder why some homeless people are adamant about staying on the streets versus accepting shelter when it's offered, it is often because they are determined to control their own destinies.

Controlling one's own destiny is why I am so crazy about the power of questions. Without a doubt, the easiest and most impactful way to increase your influence has to do with asking the right questions—of others and of yourself.



When I was feeling victimized, I often wondered, “Why me?” or “What did I do to deserve this?” Here's the problem with questions like that. **When you ask your mind a question, it will answer you!** So you can imagine the kinds of negative answers I was given in response to those questions.

I wish I had known some alternative questions:

- What can you do today to make things just a little better?
- What are three things about your life that you like?
- Where in the world did that missing sock go?

I have a similar wish about my work as a manager and as a parent. Instead of giving others instructions and suggestions, I wish I had asked questions that empowered them. I see now that my team and my children wanted control over their destinies and that too often I robbed them of that. Maybe they couldn't control the things required of them (we all have rules and laws we have to follow)

but certainly they deserved to have some influence over *how* they performed their assignments.

You needn't be in charge of others to influence them. You have daily opportunities to influence. In fact, you already do—the question is are you influencing in a positive direction or a negative one?



What was the best part of your day?

As you go about your work and your life, start noticing situations where a good question could influence your or someone else's day toward the positive.

Here's an example: instead of asking, "How was your day?" ask, "What was the best part of your day?" This is a particularly good question to pose at the dinner table with your family but it can be used in other situations as well. However you utilize it, the conversation will turn in a wonderful direction. I'd love to hear from you after you do this. What were the results?