

Make Life Harder



Every generation wants their children to have it easier than they did. But in doing so, are we setting them up for success? Or failure? Do they move into adulthood with a sense of empowerment or victimization? And how does this show up in the workplace? Let me back up. I define Empowerment as the capacity of an individual (or team or organization) to perform and it is based on two concepts: personal responsibility and personal accountability. The questions become, “Do our leaders expand authority through leadership practices, policies and procedures?” and “Do employees have a willingness to learn new skills and competencies needed to achieve the goals of the expanded delegation?” If these questions can be answered affirmatively, you are in a transformational organization. Parents, friends, coaches, and social influencers all tell us to go accomplish your goals — but are we empowered to do that? Are we willing to build our capacity, skills and education to reach what we want? However, if we grew up with people doing everything for us we will end up as dependent adults with skewed expectations. How can we change this?

Debrief the video with these questions and challenges: **Notes:**

- What struggles have shaped who you are?
- What have you learned from your failures?
- How do your struggles and failures influence your thinking and behavior today? (Share with a partner then ask a few groups to share with the large group.)
- What does personal accountability and responsibility look like for you? What are people saying and doing if they are personally accountable and responsible?
- What is your present level of personal empowerment? (If you don't know, you might solicit feedback from your colleagues/friends/associates.)
- If you are not achieving your goals, what are you willing to do to set yourself up for success?
- As a team, what can we do to become a more empowered team?

It doesn't matter what generation you belong to or what other characteristics of diversity you identify with, we don't have a lot of control over what happens to us, but we do have complete control over how we respond to it. What do you tell yourself about what you need to do to achieve success? What do you tell yourself if you fall short? “If they would have just...”, “That wasn't fair!” or “It's not my fault that ___ happened.” Are you taking ownership when failure happens? Or do you blame and shame everyone else for your missteps and failures? If you ask yourself, “Was there anything additional I could have done to help ensure success?” and the answer is YES, then you did not do all you could to create victory. Learn from that moment and change your behavior next time.

Ask “How can I expand my personal empowerment?”
William Guillory, Ph.D. offers suggestions:

1. Assess the quality of your performance. Does your performance fall below, meets or exceed expectations?
2. Assess your level of commitment. If your performance is below expectations and you are sufficient-

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ly skilled for your job, thoughtfully re-examine if you are committed to meeting the expectations of your job. If not, begin plans for doing something else.

3. Determine the new skills you require. If you are committed to meeting the expectations of your job, write a detailed plan of the new personal and/or professional skills you require based upon expanded responsibility and accountability.
4. Seek a mentor or a coach to assist you and hold you accountable to your commitment based on your consistently produced results.
5. Overcome your self-limitations. When you encounter a barrier, have your mentor facilitate your overcoming it. Remember, it is your responsibility to take charge of invalidating your self-limiting belief(s) by designing and performing non-comfort zone actions.

Find ways to increase your personal level of empowerment. If you do this every day, it changes the way you move through life. It changes who you are. It leads to a higher degree of success.


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