

Freedom and Self-isolation

The word Freedom, at times can be an illusion or a deception. The English Dictionary states it as "The condition or right of being able or allowed to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited:

You could also say that freedom gives you the ability to make more choices".

In this current climate, you hear a lot of people saying that "it feels like I am in prison", or "I don't know what to do with myself" or "I feel like I am being controlled and decisions are being made for me". Another way of looking at it is that if the self-isolation does not happen, in the future people's freedom may be jeopardized.

Nelson Mandela said that when he was on the island for many years, he wasn't in Jail, as his mind was free. What he was saying is that jail is not four concrete walls, it is about the way that we think. It is also saying that we are fully capable of imprisoning ourselves and creating four concrete walls that seem impossible to penetrate.

This time we have to ourselves could be used as a time to reflect and make plans for our future. It could be a time to explore ourselves and maybe work out how it is possible to truly reach our potential. At times, everyday life can sometimes get in the way of that.

Maybe, the coronavirus, when it is over, will encourage everyone to appreciate their freedom, as at times we all are likely to take our freedom for granted, or perhaps we don't know what it truly means.

Freedom and Substance Use

Clients often say that they use substances to escape, or that when they are high it sets them free. They say this, although they know it is an illusion. After all, you would look really stupid if you were serving a long sentence in prison, escaped and then returned the next day saying you wanted to come back! That's what happens with substance use. Once the buzz has gone, you return to reality, and that's the reality that you were trying to run away from.

It's true that the buzz from substances allows you to create a different view of the world, but it is not possible to always have that view. It means that you wouldn't be able to live in the real world, and after a while you may feel the way that some people are talking about in enforced self-isolation and being dictated to by external forces how to live your life. In the case of substance use, you will feel that the authority, or the dictator, is the substance.

Freedom is wonderful if you are clear what you do with it. Many people want to leave prison because they are sick of being told what to do. Many people seek treatment because they no longer want to be a slave to their poison.

When you leave prison you now have the option to make different choices. When you stop using, you have the freedom to make different choices. If you do not make different

choices, the message you are giving yourself is that 'I cannot manage my freedom'. This will inevitably lead to a relapse.

So, in this time of 'self-isolation', take time to explore what freedom means to you, ask yourself, 'have I made the most of my freedom up to now?' and 'what is it I have to do to become the architect of my own universe?'

Christopher Robin

25.03.2020