

SELF-EMPOWERMENT IN RECOVERY



PART ONE
EMPOWER YOUR
LIFE IN 30 DAYS

Life is love. Enjoy it.
Life is beauty. Praise it.
Life is spirit. Realise it.
Life is song. Sing it.
Life is a mystery. Unfold it.
Life is a challenge. Meet it.
Life is a goal. Achieve it.
Life is an adventure. Dare it.
Life is a sorrow. Overcome it.
Life is a tragedy. Face it.
Life is a game. Play it.
Life is a duty. Perform it.
Life is an opportunity. Take it.
Life is a struggle. Fight it.
Life is a journey. Complete it.
Life is a puzzle. Solve it.
Life is a promise. Fulfil it.

‘What is Life?’
(Extract/variation from Hindu scriptures)

Empower your life in 30 days

The **EMPOWER YOUR LIFE PROGRAMME** is a guide to help you to reclaim your personal power and wellbeing.

Without our power and wellbeing we cannot realise our dreams. If we have a clear vision of what we want from life, then we can create goals to ensure that that vision becomes our reality.

The programme is split into a two-part toolkit and you are about to embark on part one. This is the foundation. It instils good habits, and it is recommended that after the first 30 days you carry on with these processes. Much progress can be seen in a 90-day continual use of these processes.

Later on, if you wish, you can progress to part two, which will provide you with a blueprint for the five stages of empowered goal-setting. This takes you through the entire process of setting your goals – from understanding what you need, what your purpose is and what you want to create, to developing your objectives and translating them into a practical month by month plan. It also gives you tools to deal with internal resistance and keep momentum going when you are working towards your goal. *(Part two of the toolkit is also available at www.cjwellings.com)*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Catherine Dixon is a wellbeing coach, therapist and teacher. She has been in professional practice for nine years. She currently works within the NHS, other public bodies and in the private sector. A background in business, corporate training and IT recruitment informs her practical, solutions-focused approach.

She created an employability foundation course called *Empower Your Life!* This teaches individuals who were homeless the essential self-empowerment skills required to make a positive new start in life, to find employment, return to education or start up a business. The programme was developed by asking entrepreneurs about what personal skills were essential in business, together with feedback from clients who have successfully recovered from alcoholism and poor health. *Empower Your Life* was first introduced as a goal-setting programme in January 2008, as part of the aftercare strategy for a rehabilitation organisation. This has resulted in continuing abstinence and individuals returning to work and moving on in their lives. EYL is used with groups of entrepreneurs and business owners to empower their personal and business goals.

Catherine holds qualifications in several therapeutic disciplines. She graduated in shiatsu in 2001 and acquired further qualifications to practise acupuncture for common ailments and ear acupuncture. She is a Chi Kung teacher (London College of Chi Kung) and a licensed trainer of energy therapies (the AMT). She runs post-graduate training programmes all over the UK for therapists and is a clinical supervisor for the Ear Acupuncture Register. She trained in cognitive hypnotherapy at the Quest Institute and is a registered member of the National Council of Hypnotherapy, the General Hypnotherapy Register and the General Hypnotherapy Standards Council. She is a member of the NHS Directory of Complementary and Alternative Practitioners (No 6378).

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Self-empowerment in recovery

Part one – Empower your life in 30 days

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'Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.'

Marianne Williamson

Introduction

What does empowerment mean?

Feelings of disempowerment

Introduction

This toolkit is designed to help you acquire essential self-empowerment skills. It will help you to make healthy choices and learn to structure your life to reach personal objectives.

It will guide you through the information you need, and provide exercises and tools that enable new skills to be developed, sustained and maintained. It has been written especially for those who have achieved either abstinence or a controlled level of substance use, who are in a stable phase and want to make different choices. It is equally relevant to anyone wanting to create a new lifestyle.

It is written in two parts:

Part one focuses on the basic need to feel better about yourself and your health. This is a prerequisite and a foundation to being empowered. You will be encouraged to acknowledge your own improvement by filling in an entry and exit questionnaire.

Part two is a goal-setting process. It builds on the foundations set in part one and moves you forward. This process takes another 30 days.

This skills training is essential in recovery because even with support mechanisms in place such as relapse prevention training and aftercare initiatives (SMART Recovery and AA), there is an ever-present risk of slipping back to old familiar coping mechanisms when stressful circumstances occur, because robust coping mechanisms and skills have not been developed. This can be devastating to the individual's wellbeing, not to mention the ongoing treatment costs.

Learning and developing self-empowerment skills breaks the final cycle of dependency which is inherent in all addictions. This allows you to take personal responsibility, create empowering life goals and equip yourself with the internal and external resources to succeed in your objectives. This is particularly relevant

when self-reliance and stability are essential to return to employment, take up the major care or parenting roles, or persevere further education goals.

WHAT IS EMPOWERMENT?

We are not born empowered; we become empowered. We become empowered when we feel confident in our capacity to look after ourselves, trust our decisions and cope with demanding and stressful situations. We are empowered when we make healthy, self-honouring self-supportive choices that are congruent with personal values and beliefs.

An empowered individual is committed to personal growth and sets goals and objectives which they know they can fulfil. An empowered individual takes complete responsibility for their health and wellbeing and puts time, effort and priority into personal care. An empowered individual is able to manage their time and levels of motivation, and can communicate effectively and diplomatically.

Feelings of disempowerment include:

1. *Feeling that you have no power to take control of your life*
2. *Disregarding the importance of self-care in maintaining health and wellbeing*
3. *A sense that your position in life is not validated or important or equal to anyone else's*
4. *Low self-esteem and self-worth*
5. *Limiting and negative beliefs about yourself*
6. *A sense of personal stagnancy which leads to a chronic lack of motivation, boredom and futility*

Essential skills for empowerment

7. *An inability to see the future differently*
8. *An inability to gain a different perspective on life and life experience*
9. *Lack of structure in life*
10. *No motivating and exciting life goals*
11. *Insufficient guidance and support to ensure that plans are acted upon and reviewed*
12. *Inability to handle ongoing pressure and stress*

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN DEVELOPING AN EMPOWERED STATE?

To overcome the above and the negative programming that goes with them requires learning seven basic complementary skills.

Skill one: Self-care

Nurture, protect and respect your health. Monitor your energy levels, understand what sustains you and what drains you. Health is created on four levels:

1. *physical (your body)*
2. *mental (how you think and rationalise)*
3. *emotional (how you feel and relate to yourself and others)*
4. *spiritual (your higher self, purpose)*

Choose healthy food, water, exercise, meditate to keep you mind positive and focused. Simplify your life and choose circumstances, environment, friendships and relationships that fully support you. To lead a healthy life means that you accept yourself as you are, even when

you are not in the place you want to be. Self-acceptance with focus on personal growth is the basis of health and wellbeing.

Skill two: Self-awareness

Get to know yourself very well and become your own best friend. Understand your strengths and vulnerabilities, your talents, skills and resources. Understand what you truly value, what are your needs, motivations and fears. Learn how you learn and your learning style. Learn what you need to learn.

Skill three: Clarity and vision

Understand what you want to create in your life, create a clear and unambiguous vision of it, and plan how to get there. Set goals and objectives with realistic plans and timeframes. Become a doer and set a daily agenda in alignment to your goals.

Skill four: Total self-commitment

Commit yourself without reservation to your goals. Develop self-reliance and self-discipline to achieve them. Begin to rely on yourself and take responsibility for all that you do. Commit to do your best in the circumstances you have. Commit to learning new skills. Commit to personal growth, development and resourcefulness.

Skill five: Self-belief and self-esteem

Achievements, commitment care and positive beliefs develop inner faith. Understand you can choose your belief and choose ones that empower you. Commitment to values and beliefs develops self-esteem.

Skill six: Self-management

Manage your time and your energy. Focusing your efforts will always bring you the best results. Stay present, yet know what you want in the future and learn from your past. Learn how to deal with stress and motivate yourself. All of this involves self-management and becoming a very resourceful individual. This also includes emotional self-management and containment.

About the programme

Who is this programme for?

Skill seven: Communication

Communicate effectively and assertively and engage and interact with others truthfully, diplomatically, directly and assertively without needing to dominate or acquiesce to the other party.

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Over the next 30 days you will work through a set of processes that will leave you looking better, feeling great and having a much clearer sense of focus. This toolkit has been written to help you feel good about being you. When you feel good it is much easier to look at more challenging life goals and challenges. Missing out the self-care aspect is one of the reasons big life goals fail, because we don't simply have the energy to put those plans into action.

Please hold judgement about whether the processes work until you have completed the 30 days. The material has been developed through working with hundreds of clients and from their continual feedback. Behavioural psychologists agree that it takes 21 days to free ourselves from most unwanted habits and establish new ones. Thirty days of continual practice ensures that change can grow into something stronger. Every month that you follow with these processes will further reinforce these habits, until they are a way of life for you.

All the information on how to look after ourselves is already out there. If we Google 'better health' or 'feel good', a thousand websites will appear battling for our attention! Visit any bookshop's health and wellbeing section and you will be overwhelmed with choice. So why don't we use it? Because we need a supportive and practical process, we need guidance and we need encouragement.

This toolkit does not promise a magical, quick-fix technique. It offers a simple process of growth to commit to good habits. It assumes that we are

what we practise and that we do have free choice, even in the most difficult and trying of circumstances. We are not victims and we attract everything into our life, either good or bad, at a conscious and unconscious level.

This programme is best used in combination with a four-week coaching package, yet it can also be used as a self-help tool. Many people embark on a self-help programme without adequate support and loose enthusiasm and end up giving up. To break this negative cycle of 'learned helplessness' the coach will guide and support you with tools that can help you through even the most entrenched aspects of resistance.

WHO IS IT DESIGNED FOR?

Most people would benefit from the energising and feel-good effect of this 30 day programme, yet the material is particularly suitable for individuals who have recently lost their job/ been made redundant; individuals who are recovering from an addiction or illness and need to really focus on self-care, individuals who need to create a new life due to circumstances such as children leaving home or ending a relationship. I would be very interested to hear your feedback.

Catherine Dixon, January 2011