

Stop the Victim Act. You Aren't Your Trauma.

Your Trauma
is not who you are.
You are the wise one
who stands tall,
learns from it,
and becomes stronger.

**We aren't our trauma. We are the
Awareness that observes the trauma.**

If we believe we are that trauma, we will immerse ourselves in it, swim in it, and that's all we see. On the other hand, if we are the observer – the witness of it – we experience it from a different perspective where it becomes but one momentary piece of life that we can process through, make it out the other side, and move on with life. Awakened. Stronger. Wiser.

Reacting defensively to trauma keeps us stuck.

If I believed I was my trauma, I would have given up on this life years ago. My life, as with many of you, has been filled with challenging situations that overwhelmed me with doubt, confusion, and hours spent visualizing all the horrible, dramatic, possible outcomes. While this may have been mentally entertaining and felt emotionally justified, in the end it was self-defeating.

The scenario goes something like this. Once we examine all possible terrors that await, we begin reacting to them, setting up defenses, gathering fellow drama-loving troops to agree with how egregiously we have been treated, and set out to attack. Of course, the situation will escalate. This is then pointed out as proof that we are right to be outraged. Whew! What a waste of potential and energy. It never works to our advantage. Instead it serves to reinforce our belief that we are a victim.

We were born to be in charge of our life.

As a child we may be at the mercy of adults and society, but somewhere along the line it's time to stop being a victim-child, and to accept accountability for our decisions, choices, and outcomes. *Our past is not who we are today.* We are what we learned (or didn't learn) from our past. If we learned, it was life well lived, regardless of how it played out at the time. If we are repeating ineffective behaviors, we are still a student of that particular lesson.

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Self-Improvement is essential to reach our potential.

When my father was in his eighties, my daughter Dana and I sat down one weekend to interview him about life. I asked him where someone went to learn how to handle situations when he was growing up in the early 1900's. His response was, "We went to the bible. It was the only book available for help. Of course how it was interpreted varied depending on the family." At the time of this conversation, I was working with Dale Carnegie training and coaching individuals and corporations into better human relations and cooperation. So Dad added, "We didn't have options like you offer today, where people can take seminars and read books on how to improve.

These days there are so many more places I could learn how to live better." This was in the 90's. Today, there is a further explosion of books, seminars, classes, podcasts, online videos, websites, self-help groups, and varied spiritual organizations where we can learn how to handle life.

My life today would be radically different if I hadn't taken advantage of the many options out there to guide me through self-improvement. I've worked long and hard on myself, pushed way out beyond my comfort zone to expand into new options, failed and picked myself up again, and forged ahead. It's never easy to try new ways of living, but how else can we reach our potential?

Only you can set yourself free.

I see too many beautiful, caring people caught up in the net of victimization. It's time to cut through the web that binds you, set yourself free, and become who you were meant to be. There are friends out there waiting for you join them and others who need your example to inspire them into their own forward leap.

Take life into your own hands and make it happen. It's your life; Lead it.

