

WHAT IS THE KEY TO Freedom?

By Deepak Chopra

Freedom: The power to think or act without restraint; the capacity to exercise choice.

One of the most crucial aspects of life is the notion of freedom and the notion of bondage. Ultimately, our goal is to experience freedom, but to understand what freedom is we first have to understand what bondage is. What does it mean to be free and what does it mean to be in bondage? To be in bondage is to be stuck in this or that possibility, having lost the ability to choose from an infinite range of responses. What is the bondage to? The bondage is always to our own boundaries, to our own beliefs and conditioned responses. Boundaries and beliefs are nothing more than ideas that we have accepted as truth. When they are rigid and inflexible, they become the prison walls that we inadvertently construct around ourselves.

Most people live their entire lives in bondage. They are a bundle of nerves and conditioned responses, which are constantly being triggered by other people and circumstances into predictable outcomes. To be free of bondage, we have to break down conditioned responses, go beyond boundaries, and experience the boundless. What is freedom? Freedom

comes from the experiential knowledge of our true nature, which is already free. It comes from finding out that our real essence is the joyful field of infinite consciousness that animates all of creation. In freedom, we understand that life is the meaningful coexistence of all opposite values. We may experience happiness or we may experience pain, but we do not get attached to pleasure and we do not recoil in fear of pain. In freedom, we even lose our fear of death, because the belief in mortality is just a spell that we have cast upon ourselves.

The real you is immortal; it is beyond birth and death. The real you is your spirit, not your ego. When you identify with your spirit, you are free of every limitation, including the limitation that you are a person trapped inside a body for the span of a lifetime. Your spirit dwells in the timeless, eternal moment; it is the unchanging essence of pure consciousness itself. When you recognize that, you no longer want to live in the memories of the past or the imaginings of the future. You want to live in the present moment, where you can exercise the power and freedom of choice. The

whole purpose of living in freedom is to enjoy the choices that you make in every successive moment of the present. Therefore, the key to freedom is to become the silent witness, which is the ever-present awareness that witnesses everything. The silent witness is awareness itself. Awareness, aware of itself, is presence, profound wisdom, and peace. When you are free, you identify with your inner self instead of your self-image. Within this freedom lies the ability to spontaneously put your attention on those choices that bring joy to you, and also joy to others.



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