

FREE YOURSELF FROM THE PAST

Living in the past can either mean reliving your previous victories or defeats. Neither is a very enjoyable way to live. *The past doesn't need to be a limiting, self-imposed prison.* Avoid letting your earlier years taint the future. It's unnecessary to continue reliving painful experiences.

The past is largely responsible for who you are today. But are you allowing it to define you?

CONSIDER THESE IDEAS FOR HOW TO BREAK FREE FROM THE PAST:

1. **Learn from your past missteps.** The great thing about your past is all the opportunities to learn. You can look back and take note of your strengths and weaknesses. Even better, you can note the types of errors you tend to make and avoid repeating them.

2. **Accept your mistakes.** Past failures are merely undesirable results. Learn from them and let them go. They no longer exist outside the confines of your mind. They can only live on and affect you if you keep them alive.

3. **Focus on the present moment. *An effective way to let go of the past is to focus on the present.*** While you're washing the dishes, think about getting those dishes clean rather than focusing on the inappropriate comment you made 6 years ago. The present is the only thing that's real. It only makes sense to give it your full attention.

- When you find yourself focusing on the past, make an inventory of the items in your immediate environment. It will bring your focus back to the present.

4. **Create an exciting life.** You might be focusing on the past because your present isn't interesting or inspiring. Be bold and create a life that's worthy of your focus and attention. ***If your life is exciting enough, just about everything in the past will be boring by comparison.***

- Set some goals and create a compelling future as you achieve them.

- Try something new and exciting. Give yourself something to look forward to.
5. **Contribute to others.** Giving your time, money, and energy to a worthy cause is a wonderful way to bring your attention to the present moment. Add meaning to your life by finding someone to help.
- Enjoy the process of making someone's life better. You'll be less likely to dwell on your own challenges, too.
6. **Expect progress to be uncomfortable.** Change is frequently uncomfortable. It's a part of human nature. Even climbing out of bed can be a chore some mornings. But, the more discomfort you're willing to endure, the more quickly you can move your life forward. *Advancing your life is one way of freeing yourself from the chains of the past.*
7. **Remind yourself that you've grown and developed over the years.** Our opinion of ourselves seems to become stable in our early twenties. If you're 45-years-old, that opinion is certainly outdated.

- Develop a perspective of your capabilities that's both current and accurate. You might realize that you're underachieving.
- Recognize all the changes you've gone through. You'll likely realize that choosing an unsuitable college major 20 years ago isn't an accurate predictor of your decision-making abilities today.

Are you still living in the past or allowing the past to negatively influence your present and future? ***Take the initiative to free yourself from the past and all the restrictions you're allowing it to impose upon you.*** Live your life in the present and look forward, rather than backwards. Free yourself from the past!