

HOW POWER IS LOST THROUGH DISEMPOWERMENT

1. **Saying "I can't" when you mean "I won't."**
 - "I can't" means "I am powerless in this situation."
 - Saying "I can't do that" when you really can tells you and others that you are powerless.
 - Try saying "I won't" next time!
2. **Letting other's approval of you be more important than your own approval of you**
 - You will never gain everyone's approval, nor should you want to.
 - No one's approval of you is more important than your own.
3. **Always putting other people first**
 - If you do, you will always end up with the scraps.
 - If you are someone else's prime source of support, then by not taking care of yourself you are weakening that person's support system and may be unable to fill that role.
4. **Asking for permission inappropriately**
 - If you want to use something that clearly belongs to someone else, ask them for permission.
 - If ownership or accountability is in question, then go ahead and do it/use it as you choose.
 - If you are correct, your right to continue will be established.
 - If you are wrong, you can apologise and promise not to do it/use it again.
 - It is usually a lot easier to obtain forgiveness than permission.
5. **Not being clear about what you want**
 - You are always accountable for what you do but never accountable - to anyone - for what you feel or want.
 - Until you give yourself full permission to want what you want, and to want all of it, there is little likelihood that you'll give yourself permission to get it.
 - One tactic is to say what you want in the most direct way. Saying "I just wanted to say..." or "I only wanted to point out..." tells the listener that you don't have much faith in your choice.
6. **Credentialising**
 - This is the act of responding to someone else's expertise while neglecting your own.
 - Asking an expert who knows more about a particular subject than you, "What do you *think* I should do?" is fine; it elicits an opinion and is better than asking, "What should I do?" In the latter example, you disempower yourself.

7. Dealing in generalities

- To be better about getting what you want, you must be extremely specific about what the want is. For example, "I want to be happy" is very general; you need to state what it would take for you to be happy. "I want more responsibility" needs to be defined by "for what?" and "in what situation?"

8. Demanding guarantees

- If you refuse act without a guarantee, be prepared to stay where you are forever.
- Even where a guarantee is available, it doesn't promise success, it only tells you what recourse you have in the event of failure.

9. Asking a question when you wan to make a statement

- There is nothing wrong in asking a question when you want to gather information. However, when you want to state something, if you say "Don't you agree that...?" or "Isn't it true that...?", you lose power.
- In this way, you risk confusing the listener who doesn't know how interested you are in their response. You also risk the response, "I would never agree with that." Finally, you may find the listener perceives the question as manipulation and is less likely to give you a positive or honest response.

10. Being unwilling to say, "No"

- Of all the ways that people disempower themselves, this is the most obvious. As a result, you end up working three hours extra overtime when you didn't want to or you could be smack in the middle of a thirty-year marriage because you said, "I do" when you meant to say, "I don't."
- When you say "yes" but want to say "no", or when you withhold disagreement when disagreement is appropriate, you make yourself a victim.
- Saying "no" also has an effect on the other person. If you always say "yes" when asked for help, regardless of your personal commitments, willingness or ability to really help, then people may stop asking you at all. If they can't count on your ability to say "no" when you aren't available, can they really trust your "yes"?