



Ways in which you may be victimizing yourself

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While we tend to think of people who have suffered from crime, or abuse, or obvious unfairness as victims, these are not the only situations that can result in victims. Anyone trying to get you to do something you really don't want to do, and don't need to be doing, is victimizing you. And this is not necessarily because they are waving a gun in your face. Something as subtle as advertising or education can lead to victimization. If you don't think about what you really want and what is truly right for you, and you go along with social pressure, you may be allowing yourself to be victimized. And don't forget that you can also victimize yourself. It happens more often than we think. Victims live their lives according to the dictates of others. "Others" can include family, colleagues, friends, schools, and society at large. There is a world full of people who would love you to live the way they want you to. And some are adept in the art of getting you to do just what they want without you having any idea that you are being manipulated.

So consider some of the following examples to see if you really are driving your own bus, or you are conforming to the dictates of others without considering if this is really your choice.

1. If you are thinking to yourself that you cannot do something because you are not clever enough then consider whether you are victimizing yourself. Who said you are not clever enough to do what you want? Is that really your opinion or the opinion of someone else? When you talk yourself out of following your dream because of the opinions of others, you are letting yourself be a victim.
2. If your approach to life is passive then you are acting like a victim. You cannot sit back and wait for things to happen; for opportunities to magically appear out of the air. You have to get out and make things happen. You need to get involved in life. You victimize yourself when you choose a passive rather than an active approach to life.
3. When you spend all your time rehashing your past and letting a negative past limit you, you are victimizing yourself. Whatever your past has been it does not have to be your future. You victimize yourself when you refuse to get over the past. What is past cannot be changed, so wanting it to be different isn't going to help you. By all means understand your past and the impact it has had on you. Grieve for what has been lost. But don't stay in your past. You have to move on.
4. You victimize yourself when you don't ask for what you want - be it a raise, promotion, or even your favourite meal. People are not mind-readers. No matter how much someone likes you, or even loves you, if you don't ask for what you want the chances are very good they don't know what it is. It is not arrogant to ask, unless you do so in a very demanding and aggressive way. If you don't ask no one knows, and you don't get what you want.
5. You victimize yourself by continually comparing yourself to others. There is no one else like you. Most people get that. What they battle to get is that their path through life is also unique. And so if they are not at the requisite state in their career or relationships at

particular ages, they feel like failures. You are unique and so is your journey. There is no fixed timeframe for you to be at particular point. You also victimize yourself when you allow others to make comparisons. Don't allow it. Who are they to know where you should be in life? How do they know what your path and purpose are in life?

6. You victimize yourself when you allow yourself to be with negative and miserable people. Negative, unhappy people just spread their negativity and unhappiness to everyone around them. And without being aware of it you take in their negative vibes and misery and it affects you. If you have to interact with such people, for example you work with them, then keep your interactions to a minimum, don't take part in their grumpiness, and make sure you find and interact with positive people whenever you can.
7. You victimize yourself when you don't take care of you. If you always eat badly, never take time off when you are ill, never take vacations, and just generally never give yourself a break, then you are victimizing yourself. Victims don't treat themselves well. They usually don't consider themselves to be worthy of good treatment. If you don't take care of yourself then other people pick up on this and get the message that they in turn don't have to treat you well. Not only do you victimize yourself, but you encourage others to victimize you too.
8. You victimize yourself when you go against your gut feel because others are putting pressure on you to choose differently. Almost everyone knows deep inside of them what is right for them. There are many people who will tell you that the decisions they regret are the decisions they took that went against their gut instinct. When you ignore what your body and mind are telling you is right, and cave in to pressure from others to do differently, you victimize yourself.



If you engage in any of these victim behaviours you probably do so out of habit. But like other habits, these can be changed. After you have become aware of what you are doing, and what you need to change, you practice new habits until they become the norm. The key first step is awareness. If you find yourself going, "yes, that is me", to any of these, you probably don't even know you are doing this until the event is over. So practice identifying the situations where you are most likely to be a victim or to victimize yourself. And then practice being different. Practice different words and actions to change the habits. All being a victim does is keep you from being you; from doing what you want and need to be doing. No one, least of all you, benefits from being a victim.