

## *Healthy independence is . . .*

**Freedom from external forces.** A person with healthy independence doesn't let their environment or circumstance dictate their behavior. If a fight breaks out, they can keep their head. If someone insults them, they don't need to insult back—they can return right for wrong. When all the lemmings are headed over a cliff, they can go the other way. They don't try to be different on *principle*, but when integrity requires it, they *can* be different. They aren't tied to any kind of programming—be it religious dogma, upbringing, or cultural fads and norms. They think for themselves.

A truly independent person feels free to interpret experiences constructively. They won't indulge in irresponsible, blaming, or victimized attitudes. They won't turn away from love because they had a bad experience, however painful. They can *love* in an *unloving* world, be generous in a greedy world, and bring sanity where there is none. Healthy independence means: no matter what you're handed in life or how you're treated, you stand firm on your soul's true values, and be the change you want to see.

**Freedom from internal reactions.** Healthy independence starts in the mind. If you're a slave to reactivity, you're in no position to follow your heart. Because, as you know, our heart's responses are often *opposite* from our emotional knee-jerk reactions—like a woman

who runs away when she falls in love; or a man who withdraws when he's sorry. An independent person directs their life in a way that makes their heart happy.

*"I may not be in the best mood, but this mood is not going to define me or limit me. I will rise above it, and be a constructive and loving person anyway."*

**Freedom from the past.** Many people live their lives as if their past holds a gun to their head, telling them, "Because you did bad in the past, you'll *always* do bad in the future. You failed once, you will fail again." Would a person of healthy independence allow themselves to be controlled by their past? No way! They're free to change direction, forgive and forget, overcome old habits. They can make a break from the past, let go of it, and live *free* of it.

**Freedom to love.** In healthy independence, you stand free of every box and live by heart, with true integrity. You are free to live and love as the person you *are*.

Healthy independence is different than hyper-independence. People of healthy independence can serve without feeling degraded, and respond to the needs and desires of others *happily*. They will take plenty of initiative to be a source of goodness in the world and in their relationships. Free of imaginary chains, they will know themselves, give of themselves, and freely love.

HEALTHY  
INDEPENDENCE