

YOU ALWAYS HAVE ANOTHER OPTION

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Dear friend,

A little epiphany I had: you always have another option in life, regardless of how trapped, enslaved, or stuck you might feel!

So I started to watch *Spartacus* by Stanley Kubrick and man, was blown away. There's this scene when the gladiators are forced to fight to the death, and it seems to the gladiator slaves that they have no other option. There's two pairs. With the first pair, one of the guys kills the other guy. But the second pair (Ethiopian guy with Trident vs Spartacus), the Ethiopian has the option to kill Spartacus, but refuses. Instead, he throws his trident at the Royalty spectators, and attempts to kill them instead. Unfortunately, the Ethiopian dies in vain.

It's one of the most heroic scenes I've ever seen in a film. Why? The Ethiopian guy made his own option: to *not* kill Spartacus. The prior two gladiator slaves didn't even know that was an option. The only thing that "forced" the other two gladiators to kill one another was the fear of death or punishment by the masters.

But friend, let us realize — if we don't have a master who is threatening to punish us by disobeying by killing us, why do we feel like we have no "free will" in life, and why do we feel trapped in life?

Honestly, I think a lot of our self-imposed slavery in life (working jobs we hate, staying connected with toxic family or people in life, not trying something new, etc) is due to our own self-imposed fear, and also by not realizing we have more options in life than we know exists!

So this is super empowering to me. Why? It means we have ultimate free will! Ultimately, we can do whatever we want in life. The only thing holding us back is fear of death, fear of imprisonment, fear of being exiled, fear of punishment, fear of social stigma, and fear of loss of resources, money, influence, power, etc.

I'm starting to realize just how wise and practical my best friend Seneca was: he constantly trained himself to think about death, and also not to fear being a slave by always adjusting his mind to the worst-case scenario.

For myself, I'm very grateful. I live right now in a society where I can technically say (almost) whatever I want, without fear of imprisonment without trial or without fear of being killed or exiled from my country. To be realistic, the only practical thing I have to fear is negative judgments from others. But other than that, I have ultimate free will to live my life the way I desire; to do what I desire, and to *not* do what I desire!

Of course in real life, there are always consequences to your actions (or consequences to what you decide *not* to do).

For example, if I have a toxic father, and I decide to cut him out of my life cold turkey, of course the consequence is he is going to be very angry and hate me. That is to be expected. But I shouldn't let the fear of him hating me, or the fear of my feeling of being a "bad son" or a "evil/unethical human being" hold me back! Honestly, most of modern Christian morality, most modern religion, consumerism, or any "ism" is just a prison for our mind, if we follow it blindly without challenging it.

For example, a lot of Asians and Asian-Americans (myself included) are prisoners of Confucianism. We have been indoctrinated as since we were children that we must always be loyal to our parents and family, no matter what. That it is simply "the way of life", and we cannot question this. Also that if we disobey, we are somehow "evil" and perhaps will be punished in some sort of hell/afterlife.

But once you realize that hell or eternal punishment after death doesn't exist; what is holding you back?

Ultimately I believe in you, the individual. I believe in the individual human being to do great things on planet Earth. I believe in myself, and everyone around me.

Everyone has the power to do great things, and to put a dent in the universe. However I think a lot of us have been feared into submission, just like how you beat down or domesticate a wild wolf into becoming a (fat and lazy) house dog-pet. And also we have kind of been screwed by society, our parents, and societal values which has been shoved down our throats since we were children. Or for a visual image, think of the babies in the Matrix movie, with feeding tubes forcibly shoved down their throats.

There's always another option; break yourself free from the slavery of your mind.

When you feel your back up against the wall, always ask yourself:

What's another option I can take in life, which I don't see... yet?

YOU'RE INFINITE! ERIC