

## LESSON 25: EMPOWERMENT

### Vocabulary Word:

Empowerment — The process of gaining the knowledge, skills, confidence, and autonomy to take control of one’s life, make informed decisions, and achieve personal goals.

### Lesson Content:

When a federal judge says “I sentence you to the custody of the attorney general,” we lose personal autonomy.

While we serve the sanction, other people enforce policies that influence our lives. Those policies will tell us:

- » Where to sleep,
- » With whom we share small spaces,
- » When we eat,
- » What we eat,
- » How we communicate, and
- » How we spend our time.

All of us will have to make it through 24 hours every day and roughly 365 days every year. What we choose to do with our time will determine whether we empower ourselves or allow the institution to govern our lives completely.

If we learn to empower ourselves, we take a giant step toward our preparation for success upon release.

To empower ourselves, we acquire the necessary tools, knowledge, and confidence to take control of our life, make informed choices, and work toward achieving personal goals. The daily lessons in our course Preparing for Success after Prison put considerable emphasis on showing the value of developing the following skills:

- » Building a more robust vocabulary,



- » Becoming better writers,
- » Improving our communication skills,
- » Critical thinking,
- » Being self-directed.

By working toward personal development in those areas, we can overcome obstacles, build resilience, and create a brighter future. They empower us. On a personal level, I can attest to how those skills opened higher levels of liberty and success after I completed 9,500 days in federal prison.

For that reason, I consider empowerment crucial for personal development:

## **Self-Awareness:**

Empowerment starts with self-awareness. It involves recognizing your strengths, weaknesses, values, and aspirations. By understanding yourself better, you can identify areas for growth, set meaningful goals, and take ownership of your journey.

## **Knowledge Acquisition:**

The more we learn, the more we empower ourselves. It requires actively seeking information, learning new skills, and expanding our understanding. You become better equipped to make informed decisions and navigate challenges by continuously acquiring knowledge.

## **Building Confidence:**

Empowerment and confidence go together. As we empower ourselves, we believe in our abilities, embrace a positive mindset, and challenge self-limiting beliefs. By building self-confidence, we can overcome self-doubt, take risks, and persevere through setbacks.



## Taking Action:

Empowerment involves taking action toward goals. It requires setting clear objectives, breaking them into manageable steps, and creating action plans. By taking consistent action, we can make progress and realize our potential.

## Seeking Support:

Empowerment is not a solitary journey. It involves seeking support from others, building a network of positive influences, and surrounding yourself with individuals who uplift and inspire you. Connecting with others allows us to access valuable resources, gain insights, and cultivate community.

**QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES: IN ONE HOUR, ANSWER AS YOU DEEM APPROPRIATE.**

How do you understand the concept of empowerment?

Why is empowerment important for personal development, particularly during imprisonment?

Share an example of when empowerment helped you overcome a significant obstacle or achieve a goal in prison. How did it contribute to your personal growth?

How can embracing empowerment help you prepare for a successful life after release?

What strategies can you employ to enhance your sense of empowerment during prison?

## Activity:

Think about a goal or aspiration you have for your future. Write it down and describe how achieving that goal would empower you. Reflect on



the knowledge, skills, and actions you need to develop to make progress toward that goal.

Identify one area in your life where you want to experience greater empowerment. Write down specific actions to empower yourself in that area, such as seeking relevant educational opportunities, connecting with supportive mentors, or setting small achievable goals to build confidence.

Remember, empowerment catalyzes personal development, resilience, and positive change. By embracing empowerment during prison, you can tap into your inner potential, make informed choices, and create a fulfilling future. Your journey towards post-release success begins with empowering yourself today.



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Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619  
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / [www.PrisonProfessors.org](http://www.PrisonProfessors.org)  
Email: [Impact@PrisonProfessors.org](mailto:Impact@PrisonProfessors.org)