

## Is independence possible?

*R*ight away: This question can be answered with both a yes and a no. How is this seemingly unclear answer to be understood? Just like the question: in a relative sense! Independence refers to someone or something.

As long as there are risks in our lives, there is a dependence on unknown, threatening events. We do not have everything in our hands. A risk concerns things or events that are not in our control, not under our control.

The opposite of risk is security. Human behaviour is therefore based on a willingness to take risks on the one hand and a need for security on the other. One of these two basic attitudes prevails overall and plays a significant role in shaping the person concerned. Behaviour is subject to the law of repetition through the basic attitude and thus becomes a habit that determines the course of life to a considerable extent.

We like to blame others for the course of our lives. We then explain it as a consequence of the decisions and behaviour of people with whom we have had some kind of dealings. If this or that person had behaved differently, our lives would have turned out differently — we then think. In other words, we have put the responsibility for ourselves on other people and are only passive, externally controlled beings. Is that what we want to be? Not really, as most people probably assume! Do we feel safe in such a situation? Hardly. Thus, through dependence, we have gambled away both freedom and security.

It is commonly said that security can be gained at the price of freedom. "Give up some of your freedom and your need for security will be satisfied" is the apparent wisdom that others use to gain power over us. The crux of the matter is: they only get this power over us if we give it to them. But if we do not, while they insist on exercising this power, the truth emerges: they act against us by force or under the appearance of justice, proving that their offer of security was empty, deceptive talk. A lie! One way or another, security

cannot be bought by surrendering or losing freedom. A promise to the contrary is an illusion or even a fraud. Never will anyone without a correspondingly strong emotional connection to you be more concerned about your safety than you are, let alone someone who doesn't even know you. So why then not consciously deal with the risk, why not live with it, why not befriend it rather than sacrifice something to it, whereby it cannot be eradicated but only magnified with a probability bordering on certainty?

Moreover, statistically speaking, most of what is feared does not happen. So about 80 per cent of what we fear is unreal. On the other hand, we do not know the extent of the misfortunes that will actually occur. A large part of what we encounter unwelcome does not announce itself and falls upon us unexpectedly. This should convince us that it is sensible to perceive life itself as a risk and to beware of the delusion that one's life or even one's goods can be completely secured.

There is probably no human being on earth who would not have to admit to having occasionally suppressed his reason by something he might call an "urge", and everyone can consider what his life would be like if the suppression of reason by such forces were a permanent condition. The consequences of being completely driven by "drives" far exceed the unavoidable risks of life, for they prove to be a sure path to relative or even general ruin. This shows a security with a negative sign, which one acquires through a false understanding of freedom.

Let's keep in mind: senselessly multiplying and increasing one's risks is hostility to reason. This shows itself in two ways, namely on the one hand by voluntarily entering into dependencies and on the other hand by not countering one's known risks with a fact-based, planned way of life. Those who avoid these two forms of behaviour thereby gain — in friendship with reason — the freedom to achieve independence for themselves, but only in relative quality.

Relativity, i. e. relatedness, is a quality that is inseparable from many concepts. However, this does not at all mean that they cannot have a clear con-

tent. Whether they do or not is up to us. In this sense, we are dealing here with the term "independence". Through our thoughts and actions, we fill concepts with content, emotions and associative links. We can shape what we ourselves, individually, understand and feel under "independence". We can associate with it the experience of taking ourselves by the nose and not feeling like we have to be led by others.

When we want to find out what we want, it often proves helpful to define what we don't want. Do you associate the word "addiction" with unpleasant ideas? Let's do a little exercise: put a sheet of paper in front of us and grab a writing tool! Let's write down what comes to mind when we hear the word "dependence"! Different people may come up with different things. For you, what is important is what comes out of your mind.

It can be assumed that you have already experienced a lot of dependency. It will therefore not be difficult for you to connect this description of a state with events in your life. It may also include certain constraints.

Perhaps it will become clear from your notes that blackmail or even venality have attached themselves to the word "dependence". Whatever the case may be, it will become clear what makes a warning sign for you and that a path might be better for you that does not give rise to such a warning sign or at least gives the fewest occasions to do so. This is then the path of freedom of design, of independence, on which there are risks, as on any, but on which you yourself operate the wheel.

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