

On Empowerment

If you wanted to help someone feel empowered to take control of their circumstances, their life, and to make improvements, would you tell them that everything they want to do is within their power to reach for and possible to achieve, or would you tell them that before they can reach for what they want, they must wait for other people to act first? The latter approach seems incredibly foolish to me if our goal is to increase empowerment. Why? Because it's completely self-defeating. How can someone feel empowered if you tell them they have no power? It's tautological, really. To feel empowered, you must feel the power to act. Talk about barriers imposed by others cannot create empowerment, true or not. So why do so many "advocates" (not all) of disadvantaged groups employ this foolish strategy? Methinks empowerment may not be their goal, after all. And that's today's two cents.