



“Four Reasons Why You Shouldn’t Forfeit Your Personal Rights”

By Mary Ellen Mann, LCSW

I am saddened at the resistance I perceive in some of my Christian clients when I give them the “Personal Bill of Rights.” Most of us have learned that the good news of the gospel derives from the fact that sinners forced God into an agreement to save us from our terrible selves.

This mindset encourages the boundary-less lifestyle I see so many believers adopt. For example, my client who was sexually assaulted, struggled with the idea that her emotions of distrust and hesitancy were actually fortifying her wisdom. She had misunderstood those telling emotions as being judgmental—a sign of weakness and sin. When she understood that the Holy Spirit operates within our felt emotions to provide counsel and discernment, she began to live in a wiser and more confident manner. She also began to realize that God wants to use her senses and intelligence to protect her. In a nutshell, she began to trust that God was on her side.

Four Reasons Why You Should Live by the Personal Rights (provided on page 51, 52 in From Pain to Power)

1. **To be an example.** Would you want your grand/children, nieces, or nephews to know and live by the Personal Bill of Rights? If you answered yes, you need to lead by example and live by them.
2. **To show God’s empowering love.** People are attracted to confidence and power. When we live by God’s power, we attract people to HIM! People will see in us what is true of Him: strength, authority, grace, and fairness.
3. **To let go of what isn’t yours.** God allows for human choice, and human choice can be destructive. When you take responsibility for you, you know clearly when something is not your responsibility. We live much less confused.
4. **To share unity, not breed entitlement.** You are not more rightful than anyone; you are as rightful. Besides closeness & unity with God, it is for freedom that He has set us free. (Galatians 5:1)

We sing of freedom when we live on our Personal Rights! Personally, Maya Angelou inspires rights-based living in her poem,

“I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”

The caged bird sings
With a fearful trill
Of things unknown
But longed for still

And his turn is heard
On the distant hill
For the caged bird
Sings of freedom

Please read "The First Step to Reclaim Your Identity (after sexual violation)" for a partial list of Personal Rights