

GLOBAL SENSE

*Awakening Your Personal Power
for Democracy and World Peace*

Judah Freed

**An update of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*
to renew hope in these times that try our souls**

**Foreword by Thom Hartmann
Preface by David Wann
Afterword by Dr. Vandana Shiva**

Who's Who, Bibliography and Study Guide

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In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense.

– THOMAS PAINE

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Had the spirit of prophecy directed the birth of this production, it could not have brought it forth at a more seasonable juncture, or a more necessary time.

– THOMAS PAINE (2nd edition of *Common Sense*)

INTRODUCTION

Why update Common Sense?

PERHAPS the sentiments contained in the following pages are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor. A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom. But tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason.

So Thomas Paine began his introduction to *Common Sense*, which voiced the vision of the Enlightenment movement in the 18th century. Paine's radiant reasoning fits the Global Enlightenment movement of the 21st century. I've updated his essay to help us define a new vision of democracy that puts our highest ideals into practice today.

Back in 1776, a dark time for the friends of freedom, Paine's essay revived hope and inspired action. For all progressives and libertarians today who mourn the loss of freedom, who want to restore democracy by uniting personal growth and politics, this update of *Common Sense* likewise can renew hope and inspire action.

Common Sense persuaded colonial Americans in 1776 to fight for independence. Without Paine's essay, historians agree, the American Revolution would have failed for lack of public support. Kings and other masters, Paine argued, unduly claim for themselves the right to decide our future for us. He believed that an abuse of power calls into question the right of the abuser to hold power. Those suffering abuses have a natural right and a moral duty to reject their abusers.

Similarly, we have a right and a duty examine our personal habits and look into why we worship our rulers. Do we create governments to rule us so we can avoid responsibility for ruling ourselves? In this book we'll expose what I call *authority addiction*. We'll see how our hidden fears drive us to sacrifice liberty for security.

In the pages ahead, we'll see how a global sense of our natural interactivity empowers us to evolve the habits of personal and social responsibility that can sustain democracy and world peace. Indeed, I'll assert, *peace and democracy are personal growth issues*.

I began writing *Global Sense* after the "9/11" attacks in 2001, yet the ideas voiced in the book have been evolving within me for three decades. The writing therefore contains subtle layers of meaning that I hope reveal new delights each time you read the book.

My most difficult task in updating *Common Sense* was expressing Thomas Paine's love for freedom and democracy while shifting his passionate call for national war into a compassionate call for world peace. *I've been transformed by writing this book. My prayer is that you will be transformed by reading it.*

Like Paine, I've chosen to avoid personal comments about today's leaders in this essay, placing principles before personalities. Neither praise nor blame of living persons changes our current situation.

Also, I see no need for pressuring anyone into agreeing with me. Those who now feel hostile to global thinking might one day come to adopt this worldview on their own, unless, as Paine warned,

too much pain is bestowed on their conversion.

The cause of peaceful democracy is the cause of all humankind. The outcomes of pivotal events in society and the world today affect the interests of all who care about sustaining life on earth.

Many circumstances have, and will arise, which are not local, but universal.... Laying a country desolate with fire and sword, declaring war against the natural rights of all [hu]mankind, and extirpating the defenders thereof from the face of the earth, is the concern of every [hu]man to whom nature hath given the power of feeling.

Regardless of gender, race, religion, class, or party, a call of alarm for the future of freedom is long overdue. Among those working to rebuild hope for democracy and world peace, gratefully stands,

Judah Freed,
Denver, Colorado
Summer 2006

*The discipline of desire is
the background of character.*

– JOHN LOCKE

1. Personal Democracy

FEAR, rage and grief consumed me when two hijacked airplanes slashed into the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001. Standing dumbstruck before my television screen at home in Denver, I watched the live news feed from New York at 9:03 AM as United Flight 175 banked gracefully into the south tower and burst into a ball of flame. When the twin towers collapsed that morning, the debris cascading down looked like two inverted mushroom clouds.

As the days wore on, TV news began to echo the drumbeat of war emanating from the White House. Because I've worked for years as a journalist reporting on media and politics, because I've studied and taught the tools of public relations and propaganda, I saw an ominous trend. With Americans feeling terrified, the president was pledging an "endless war on terrorism" while implying the air attack justified a crackdown on U.S. society—for our own safety, of course.

I picked up my phone and called my representatives in Congress. I left messages urging them not to sacrifice our civil liberties on the altar of homeland security. They did not call back.

In the weeks that followed, I began drafting an essay on the future of democracy in America and the world. I wrote that most of us are ripe for plucking by tyrants because we feel afraid and insecure. As I wrote, I confronted my own dark shame and pain, the hidden shadow of self doubt that for years has kept me small and weak.

In late September, I recalled using Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* in 1997 as the framework for an essay at my new website on the need for democratic governance of the Internet. In a flash of insight, I saw that Paine's classic work was a perfect vehicle for talking about how global thinking empowers us for freedom. Inspired by Paine as if he was leaning over my shoulder, whispering in my ear, I started writing this book, voicing my soul while praying to touch your heart.

SOME writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different, but [they] have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher. Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil, in its worst state an intolerable one.

In this way Tom Paine opened *Common Sense*. His ideas still ring true today. By seeing the difference between society and government, we can discover our personal power to shape the future.

The history of society is the story of humanity learning to accept responsibility for liberty. If people governed their own lives sensibly, there would be no need for a high government to control our lowest impulses. If we all lived with compassionate regard for one another, if we loved and respected others as we want to be treated, we'd barely need any government at all. That's not our current reality.

Our reality today is a world filled with hate, violence, exploitation, and suffering. Why? Society reflects the web of mass consciousness woven daily by what we think, say and do. Our daily actions impact ourselves, our families, workplaces, communities, nations, and planet. The harmful habits of our minds and hearts are reflected in society, and society reinforces those harmful habits in us. It's a vicious circle. To break the cycle, we need to transform our consciousness. Happily, such a worldwide change in our thinking is happening now.

In an era of globalization, two specters haunt our world, the spirits of absolute tyranny and genuine democracy. We live in the spectrum between. On one side are corporations and religions ruling us through puppet governments that prey upon our addiction to authority. On the other side is a grassroots movement for peace and democracy through enlightened spiritual awareness of our global oneness. Which way goes society and government depends on which way goes each of us. *Our daily choices decide the fate of life on earth.*

Once we accept our global “interdependence” as a fact of life, as naturally as dawn follows night, we recognize our personal and social responsibility for managing our personalities, our societies and our governments. Acknowledging our innate oneness with life inspires us to live more consciously and cooperatively, so kings or other masters are not needed. Awakening to a global sense of our unity in a diverse community is our best hope for democracy and world peace.

In these times that try our souls, as humanity faces dismal dangers, too many of us make Big Government a social necessity by refusing to practice *mindful self rule* and *personal democracy*. We resent our governments for limiting our freedom, but we glorify forceful power. We praise democracy, but we elect men who would be kings.

Why is there a disconnect between our ideals and our realities?

Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* says we’ve become cut off in our communities from our families, friends, neighbors, and democratic structures. He feels our stock of “social capital” (our connection with one another) has fallen sharply, impoverishing our societies.

Richard Bellah argues in *Habits of the Heart* that modern life has become cut off from healthy feelings of community by “narcissistic individualism.” We’re so wrapped up in instant gratification that we lack any language to discuss our rights and duties in a republic.

As a solution, I propose reviving the ideas of Thomas Paine and other Enlightenment thinkers. Updated by terms from communication theory and personal growth, we’ll gain a neutral vocabulary to discuss how to govern ourselves sensibly in a global society. If we can agree on a fair plan for self government, all humanity might prosper.

SOCIETY has long been ruled by a worldview that makes sense of life by assuming a king must govern us. Now we’re evolving a new view of life. Due to the emergence of “global thinking,” Paine’s 18th century vision of a free society makes sense in our 21st century.

To understand why *Common Sense* made sense at the dawn of the United States, and why it still applies to us today, put yourself in the place of those reading Thomas Paine’s essay in 1776.

The colonists’ rights as citizens under the English Constitution had been revoked by “mad” King George III, who probably suffered from variegate porphyria.* Parliament only made matters worse with the Stamp Act, Tea Act, and other “intolerable acts.” As Thom Hartmann

* For more info: http://www.porphyrifoundation.com/about_por/history.htm

chronicled in *Unequal Protection*, Americans hurt by tyranny united behind the protest, “No taxation without representation.” The people wanted a fair say in making the laws governing their lives.

Massachusetts rebelled in early 1775, so English ships blockaded Boston Harbor. When British soldiers killed American colonists at nearby Lexington on April 19, this “massacre” confused and terrified Americans in all of the colonies. They likely felt much like modern Americans felt in 2001 after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Most colonial Americans expected to reconcile with England and stay under the crown, but a faction wanted to break away. Members of secret “committees of correspondence” wrote letters advocating *independency* for the continent. They were like the writers on Internet blogs and listservs today urging democracy and world peace. Then as now, the friends of liberty struggled to make their case.

Just as Americans learned that King George III had declared all the colonies in rebellion, out of nowhere on January 10, 1776, appeared a pamphlet entitled, *Common Sense*. The public impact was electric. Historians affirm this was the right message at the right time.

Thomas Paine’s four-part essay defined the nature of government, rejected monarchy and hereditary succession, told why reconciliation with the king would be irrational, and showed how Americans could win a rebellion against Britain. The essay further urged a declaration of independence and offered a plan for writing a national constitution. As a truly free country founded on democracy, Paine wrote, America would become a beacon of hope for the world.

Common Sense shifted public opinion in favor of the revolution. George Washington said the essay erased his lingering doubts about leading the rebel army. Why was *Common Sense* so powerful?

PAINE distilled into common language the ideas and ideals of the Enlightenment thinkers in the 18th century. Their views flowed from the Age of Reason in the 17th century, which arose from the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, which sprang from the Renaissance in the 15th century, which revived Greek and Roman philosophy after a millennium of medieval darkness in Europe.

The invention of modern printing had upset the cultural applecart. Popular books on classical thought recalled Plato’s wholistic view of life and Aristotle’s deconstruction of reality into its tiniest classifiable

parts. These books restored the use of reason based on the syllogism: *If A = B, and if B = C, then A = C*. Using logic, “freethinkers” and scientists like Benjamin Franklin applied René Descartes’ and Francis Bacon’s useful tool for critical thinking—The Scientific Method:

1. Create a working hypothesis or theory from all available facts.
2. Test the hypothesis fairly (tests must be repeatable by others).
3. Impartially and rigorously analyze the test findings.
4. Revise the hypothesis to fit the findings (return to Step 1).

Freethinkers read *The Principia* by Sir Isaac Newton, who saw an apple fall straight to earth (not on his head) and deduced gravitation. Newton supported Copernicus and Galileo, who said our planet goes around the sun. Man on earth was not the center of the universe, as the Church had taught. Reason was gaining power over religion just as the *Magna Carta* had given the law power over the king.

SUCH trends raised a vital question: Can we live without kings?

Thomas Hobbes’ 1642 book, *Leviathan*, said that we’re all selfish animals at constant war in a world where life is “nasty, brutish, and short.” To control our animal impulses, we need absolute kings not subject to any laws, for “might makes right.” (Hobbes’ views guided Big Brother in George Orwell’s novel, *Nineteen Eight-Four*. Hobbes likely would praise today’s “homeland security” laws.)

Baruch Spinoza shared Hobbes’ cynicism, yet his 1677 *Ethics* saw benefits from more individuality and civil liberties. Spinoza imagined society providing so much gratification that state oppression was not needed to keep us in line. (His views guided Aldous Huxley’s novel, *Brave New World*, where people are soothed by *soma*. Spinoza likely would praise the media banality mollifying the masses today.)

For the record, Spinoza later influenced Friedrich Nietzsche, heir to amoral Machiavelli. Nietzsche promoted individual autonomy and a “superman” ruled only by ambition and expedience (a moral stance adopted by Nazism), where the only sin is getting caught. We see this utilitarian morality today in those seeking power at any cost.

Countering justifications for tyranny in the Age of Reason were voices of hope for our human potential in the Enlightenment.

John Locke’s 1690 *Two Treatises on Civil Government* said people and the state are ruled by *natural law*. In nature, each of us is free and equal, although different. We’re each our own moral judge. Moral self

discipline must guide the “pursuit of happiness,” which sensibly leads to cooperation, not competition. Our selfish urges naturally give way to a regard for the common good. (In modern management lingo, just as Hobbes favored “Theory X,” Locke favored “Theory Y.”)

Government is powerless without the consent of the people, Locke said. To protect us from a state abusing its power, he advocated the principle of *checks and balances* in government constitutions.

If any state represses or denies the citizens’ natural rights, Locke asserted, a revolution in such cases is not only our civil right under natural law, but it may be our moral duty.

Locke influenced Jean Jacques Rousseau, who in 1762 published *The Social Contract*. “Nature never deceives us,” he wrote; “it is we who deceive ourselves.” Yet nature lacks morality or law in itself, so good people exist only if society makes them good through a social contract. Prone to competition, we may *agree* to cooperate.

Rousseau urged a “social compact” for democracy, warning that the majority is *not* always right. What is right? Religious and political morals often conflict, and religious leaders tend to abuse their power. So, he called for the *separation of church and state*.

Rousseau favored moral self mastery. “Never exceed your rights,” he wrote, “and they will soon become unlimited.”

If a state acts in an immoral way, Rousseau said, that government violates its social contract and ceases to be legitimate, losing the right to wield authority over us. “Force does not constitute right; obedience is due only to legitimate powers.” Fully convinced that might does *not* make right, Rousseau agreed with Locke that if the state loses its legitimacy, a revolution becomes a public necessity.

Inspired by Locke, Rousseau and other Enlightenment thinkers, Paine said in *Common Sense* that British rule in America had become illegitimate. He called for a violent regime change. His essay struck a resonant chord. The people responded with passion.

MANY of us today think our leaders in the U.S. and in other lands likewise have broken the social contract by waging corrupt wars, by revoking our civil liberties, by abetting environmental destruction in a heedless pursuit of profits. We contend that our governments are no longer morally legitimate. Yet we call for a *peaceful* regime change, for we know that the real revolution starts within ourselves.

Criticism of the government is not enough to cause social change. Without a realistic vision of a better world to inspire us with hope, we will not do the inner growth work that yields cultural shifts. This book is my contribution towards that empowering global vision. I advocate “mindful self rule” and “personal democracy.” What do I mean?

Mindful self rule is the fine art of making ethical or moral choices about how we want to live. For example, when I’ve chosen over the years to recover from addictions to tobacco and debting, that’s a form of mindful self rule. When I’ve chosen to sit beside a river to feel inner peace and commune with the God of my understanding, that’s a form of mindful self rule. When I’ve chosen in the privacy of my heart to honor my family, friends and neighbors as equal souls with free will, that’s definitely an act of mindful self rule.*

Personal democracy is the art of expressing mindful self rule in the world. If you seek a job in accord with your social or ecological values, that’s personal democracy. If you boycott products made with slave labor, that’s personal democracy. If you volunteer in a school or literacy center, that’s personal democracy. If you protest abuses of our human rights, that’s personal democracy. If you vote your conscience on election day, that’s definitely an act of personal democracy.

Inner self rule and outer personal democracy interact. In Taoism, the feminine *yin* energy stimulates masculine *yang* energy as *yang* stimulates *yin*, forming a dynamic loop. In the very same way, self rule stimulates personal democracy as personal democracy stimulates self rule.



What if our inner choices and outer actions are in conflict? Takeo Doi describes our struggles in *The Anatomy of Self*. Japanese culture, for example, marks a difference between outer face (*omote*) and inner truth (*ura*). Social standards and mores (*tatemaie*) may disagree with our inner knowledge of what is natural and right (*honme*). Conflicts between the self and the society twist us into knots. A need to resolve the tension, I know from experience, makes us gullible to the appeals of shoguns, messiahs and other masters promising us the soft comfort of mindless obedience—the opposite of mindful self rule.

Practicing mindful self rule and personal democracy hinges upon understanding the nature and power of *communication*. We’ll see in Chapter 15 how we use communication to make sense of our lives

* I have deliberately decided in this book *not* to hyphenate “self-rule” and related compound terms, so we’ll be more alert to the autonomy of the individual self.

and our world. We'll learn how splitting our perceptions lets us filter out awareness of unpleasant truths about ourselves, such as how our self hate gets twisted into hatred toward others.

What matters here is knowing that we each form our personalities and societies through all the ways we interact daily. *Changing how we communicate changes the world where we communicate.* So, treating others with more love actually creates a more loving world.

On this planet where we each live and breathe and have our being, we each are a "co-creator." What we do to others, we do to ourselves. We may admire the Golden Rule, but do we live accordingly?

Global interactivity means that each of us is globally powerful, perhaps infinitely powerful. *Saying we are powerless is our excuse to avoid responsibility for using our global power wisely.*

If love is the glue that holds life together, expanding our capacity for love expands global unity. Seeking inner peace helps create world peace. Liberating ourselves liberates the world. This is why Benjamin Franklin said, "Who is powerful? He that governs his passions."

IN THIS opening chapter, I've laid a philosophical foundation for the update of *Common Sense* that follows. This was needed because schools rarely explain abstract ideals like "freedom" or "democracy." We rarely hear that *we can change the world by changing ourselves.* So, what's the plan from here?

In Part I, where Paine looked at the nature of civil government, we'll apply his ideas to self rule and personal democracy.

In Part II, where Paine refuted monarchy and hereditary succession, we'll challenge "male rule" and "authority addiction."

In Part III, where Paine argued against serving a king, we'll argue against enabling authority addiction in the world or in ourselves.

In Part IV, where Paine showed how to win national independence, we'll see how to use our global interdependence to win world peace.

In other words, the first half of this book identifies our common problems, and the second half suggests practical solutions. If you stay with me on this journey, you will feel more empowered.

Our goal is self liberation. A free society follows.

*That government is best which governs the least,
because its people discipline themselves.*

– THOMAS JEFFERSON

6. Genuine Democracy

KINGS and other masters can hold onto power only when enough of us consent to obey them. What if more of us release our craving to rule or be ruled? Could we mature into genuine democracy?

Cynicism about direct democracy is unfair and a deceit, because such an open government has never been tried in any modern nation. Our experiments in freedom have not yet been so bold.

Democracy on earth is far from perfect, but praise the progress we have made so far. We've come a long way. The progress resulted from our growth as human beings. This is why the governments in the U.S. and other democracies have not been as oppressive as in the nations ruled by absolute kings, dictators or warlords. Paine said it plainly:

Laying aside all national pride and prejudice in favor of modes and forms, the plain truth is, that [the ascent of liberty] is wholly owing to the constitution of the people, and not to the constitution of the government.

Do we want to live within nations where the people instead of the government have the final say? We now get an indirect vote on laws by electing lawmakers. What if those we elect instead must draft laws for our ratification? Instead of a signature by the president enacting laws, what if a vote by the people is required to enact our new laws? *Are we ready for government by the consent of the governed?*

The good news is that the elements for real democracy are falling into place. Already we're guiding leaders with public opinion polling. Already diverse legislatures place referendums on ballots for voters' approval. Already grassroots initiatives (despite corruptions) allow us to bypass legislatures entirely and appeal directly to our fellow voters. Further, the Internet could let us vote on any proposed law, whether from a national legislature or a town council. Why not build on these advances to make true democracy a way of life?

There are risks on the path to direct democracy. What can prevent the government from manipulating public opinion in collusion with mass media? Also, what can prevent leaders from perpetrating online vote fraud? More primal, more perilous, is Internet voting technology too far ahead of our capacity to use it wisely?

If we want to enjoy genuine democracy someday, let's work for it now. Evolving the necessary maturity may take many generations to achieve. I've been working on my own growth for decades, and I still have a long way to go. Yet given the progress I've seen within myself, I'm convinced that humanity can and will mature enough so that one day a global network of open democracies can and will emerge.

More good news is that a global enlightenment movement already is teaching us that we're all interconnected. This awareness is causing us to think about the local to global consequences of our choices. As a result, more of us on earth are starting to practice mindful self rule and personal democracy, even unwittingly. This offers hope.

The spiritual power for moral self determination already dwells within us all. Why delay the dawning of global consciousness when we'll heal our childhood traumas and learn how to live in peace? If the separate fingers of one hand can work together, if individuals can live together in a peaceful community, so can nations.

Realize any vision with realism. Let's begin by getting clear about our compulsive need to be ruled by kings and other masters. Here is how Paine raised the subject at the end of Part I in *Common Sense*.

For as we are never in a proper condition of doing justice to others, while we continue under the influence of some leading partiality, so neither are we capable of doing it to ourselves while we remain fettered by any obstinate prejudice. And as a man, who is attached to a prostitute, is unfitted to choose or judge of a wife, so any prepossession [or bias] in favor of a rotten constitution of government will disable us from discerning a good one.

Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.

– JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

10. Authority Addiction

WHY do the habits of our hearts and minds compel so many of us to worship kings and other alpha male masters? Why do we trust them despite all the muted alarms in the back of our minds screaming at us to run for our lives? Why do we sacrifice liberty for security?

Tom Paine had keen insights into the psychology behind tyranny. Please recall his remark about passing crowns from fathers to sons.

If there are any so weak as to believe it [the divine right of kings], let them promiscuously worship the ass and lion.

Why do we not care if a king is bad or good so long as he's a king? Is any king better than no king at all? Paine referred to a dependence that modern psychology labels as an "addiction." To coin a phrase, the central problem is *generational authority addiction*, an unhealthy relationship with power passing from generation to generation.

We're enculturated to believe a social meme that we're incapable of ruling ourselves responsibly. Each generation of parents teaches their children to believe that we're all too stupid or imperfect or too corrupted by original sin to be trusted with freedom. Living in an unfree world, distrusting our impulse control, we've been raised to think we need a king or master to tell us what to do and keep us safe. Our insecurity is why we give away our power to leaders.

Dysfunctional power habits rule us. While we act from habit every day, like how we walk or talk, we're looking here at the habits behind dictatorships. For sharp clarity, *The True Believer* by Eric Hoffer and *Escape from Freedom* by Erich Fromm tell how culturally entrained reliance upon authority enabled the rise of totalitarian states like Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Soviet Russia, or Communist China.

Most of us have consented to a social contract based on the power habits we learned from our parents and our peers. Our parents were shaped by their parents and peers, and so on back to mythic Eden.

Focus on the family. No matter how we describe human origins, any reasonable person can agree that our parents' genes and actions implanted in us our core personality habits. We are a blending of both nature and nurture, heredity *and* environment.

Authoritarian governments start in authoritarian homes. Like adult children of alcoholics inherit addictive traits that they pass on to their children, the childhoods of all dictators likely were scarred by shame, blame and abuse from their parents. A boy beaten by his father may become a bully or become the target of bullies (as I did). The roots of authority addiction lay in our earliest survival mechanisms.

In terms of neurobiology, a genetic trait or a life experience causes the hypothalamus in our brains to release protein peptides that form emotional connections in our neural network. Repetition reinforces these links. If parents often berate a child, this can implant self-hate reactions that may take years of therapy to overcome.

Embedded neural patterns lead to addiction. Scientists have found that if a living brain is displayed on a PET scanner, what's seen with the eyes now and what's recalled as memory flash *equally* across the visual cortex like lightning storms on earth as seen from space. When peptide-driven emotions from memory compel how we react to live experiences now, if we can't stop our reaction, that's an addiction. An example is the man who tries to seduce every pretty woman he meets, a trait that Patrick Carnes calls a sex addiction. In essence, addictions are how we avoid our memories of emotional pain.

FOR insights into the nature of authority addiction, let's study the term, "*codependency*." Author Stephen Covey asserts our personality development cycle from infancy to adulthood ideally would progress from *dependence* to *independence* to *interdependence*. We'd mature into Maslow's "self-actualized" individuals. If we get stuck between dependence and independence, that's codependence.

Codependency is the compulsive need either to have another take care of us *or* to be a caretaker of someone else. A codependent person is not autonomous and self sufficient. This is why Jefferson advised, "Never trouble another for what you can do for yourself."

An example of codependency is a cigarette smoker sitting in a bar with matches at his elbow while calling for a light from the bartender, who retorts, "Want me to smoke it for you, too?"

People in codependent relationships need the *external validation* and compliance of one another to feel secure. Each is the “enabler” of the other’s harmful habits, such as buying the booze for an alcoholic. Either or both parties in the relationship feel they alone are the victim. Contemplate the futile absurdity in desperately hoping to feel secure by trying to please those who can never be pleased by anyone because they feel so displeased with themselves.

In *Facing Codependency*, author Pia Mellody identifies five major symptoms of codependency: Low self esteem with difficulty loving oneself; lack of healthy boundaries with difficulty protecting oneself; an inability to meet one’s personal needs with difficulty in self care; confused self concept with difficulty disclosing personal information appropriately; lack of moderation in self expression with difficulty acting appropriately to our age and social circumstances.

Codependency author Melody Beattie defines more traits: Always feeling angry or hostile (a defense against fear, pain, sadness); making unreasonable threats to get our way; seeking to control or manipulate others; shifting blame away from ourselves onto others; playing the martyr to prey on others’ pity; or trying to control all those around us because we feel so out of control inside ourselves. Codependents also get absorbed in others’ problems, offering unwanted advice, insisting upon solving other people’s problems for them. We can behold such toxic behaviors in governments as well as in individuals.

TRYING to meet our unmet childhood needs, we adopt whatever social roles help us to feel secure. Like actors in a play, we act out our scripted authority roles from childhood in every social setting. Our roles evolve as we evolve, but we stay within our range.

Transactional Analysis in psychology labels three abusive power roles—*persecutor*, *rescuer* and *victim*. The trio is locked in a “drama triangle.” Persecutors need victims. Rescuers need victims. Victims need persecutors, so they can be rescued. All three roles are traps, and I can attest to how all three roles leave us drained.

Here are four other power roles common in authority addiction:

We may be a *leader* who feels safe only by being in total control, harming those we govern, wishing to be both feared and adored.

We may be a *follower* who feels safe only when obeying a leader, fearing to think for ourselves, too timid to be our own boss.

We may be a *rebel* who feels safe only when fighting authority or else causing an uproar, mistaking aggravated attention for love.

We may be a *hermit* who feels safe only by refusing to be a leader, follower or rebel, by isolating ourselves, trying to be invisible.

All these roles are natural, perhaps necessary in a healthy society. Problems occur when we become so obsessively attached to any role that we feel compelled to perform that role all the time, like always having to be the boss at home or at work. This is why addiction is a chronic disease of immature impulsivity and selfishness.

We rely on split perceptions to deny our authority addiction. In the Tarot is a card called "The Devil." A horned figure on a throne holds chains looped loosely around the necks of a man and woman. They could lift off the chains, but they stand in mute bondage. They can't even conceive of freedom. In the same way, we are all born free, but everywhere we are enslaved in chains of our own choosing.

HOW do I know about the problem of authority addiction?

Back in 1971, I was recruited in Denver by a spiritual community called the Unified Family, which followed the teachings of a Korean master. I liked the group's ideal of uniting humanity into one family, but in retrospect, I really joined because of the acceptance I felt from the group members. I desperately needed to feel so loved.

Within a year after I joined the Family, the founder came back to America and reorganized all the centers nationally under a new name, The Unification Church. I was told to drop out of school, quit my job, and devote my energies to recruiting new members and fundraising. I was in too deep emotionally to question my orders.

My devotion helped me rise in the church. After service on a bus team supporting 16 new centers from Detroit to New Orleans, I was appointed by the master, Sun Myung Moon, to start a center in West Virginia. My job was to win new members while seeking allies in the churches and local to state governments.

After five months of failure, never recruiting anyone and barely keeping the new center afloat financially, I was demoted and sent to Kentucky. For seven months I bounced between the church centers in Lexington and Louisville, growing increasingly restless. I kept failing to recruit any new members, so again I was demoted. I was sent to a "mobile fundraising team" selling flowers on street corners.

Unhappy with my plight, wanting to raise my status in the church, I tried to recruit my Uncle Moses in San Francisco. A brilliant lawyer, he turned the tables on me, asking if I believed in the church because I *wanted* to believe. And did I truly believe? I had to ask myself, could I never recruit anybody because, as a Jew, I never really believed that Rev. Moon or *anyone* could be the Second Coming of Christ?

The seed of doubt planted by my granduncle grew into a forest of distrust when Moon launched a multi-million dollar public relations push supporting President Richard Nixon during the Watergate crisis. When the White House tapes were released, my disbelief reached the breaking point. I fled from the church in the summer of 1974.

Over the next decade, through journal writing and then counseling, I forgave the “Moonies” and myself for what happened. I recognized and accepted that I joined a religious cult because of low self esteem. I then evolved the theory of “authority addiction,” and this awareness has helped me reclaim my personal power.

These lessons were reinforced after I entered journalism in 1976. I became a big fish in Denver’s small pond as a newspaper columnist and editor. So many new writers came to me for advice that I started a business in 1982 charging for my “wisdom.” My arrogance caused the venture to fail by 1984, leaving me deeply in debt.

As an authority addict, my insecurity first drove me to serve a king and later to be a king served by others. I learned how emotional bonds ensnare servants and masters alike, forming a sick symbiosis. Leaders crave followers as followers crave leaders. This dysfunctional loop of *codependent despotism* is evident in any authoritarian regime.

EVERY dictator is an authority addict with childhood boundary issues. We can blame our past for our authority addiction, but it does nothing to alter our current situation. We also can blame despotism on genetic or physical sources, like the disease of George III, but is our biochemistry the *cause* or the *effect* of our personalities?

Recovery from any addiction begins with breaking the old neural patterning behind our addictive behavior. If we overeat, for example, dieting is futile until we can release the unconscious conditioning that equates food with emotions. To replace neural links that harm us with neural links that benefit us, we first need to become conscious of our compulsive habits; then we can change our obsolete behaviors.

Can we change our inherited or learned habits with medicines or deprogramming? Rather than trying a “technological fix” employing pharmaceuticals, genetic therapy or Skinnerian operant conditioning to modify our authoritarian behavior patterns, let’s go within and do our personal growth work to get “clean and sober.”

Personal growth is our due diligence for democracy. Among our options are 12-Step programs, diverse modes of psychotherapy (such as gestalt, logotherapy, cognitive-emotive therapy, or psychodrama), peer counseling, Reiki, prayer circles, or journaling. Worthy personal growth gurus include Carl Jung, Viktor Frankl, Albert Ellis, Carolyn Myss, and others. Any approach may work, *if we do the work.*

Recovery starts by admitting we are powerless over our addictive urges, which are cunning and baffling. We realize that no other person can remove our shortcomings for us, so we ask for help from God, as we understand God. Instead of controlling others, we ask God to help us control ourselves. Instead of egotistical self will, we seek to know God’s will. We experience a spiritual awakening.

As we travel the long road of recovery from authority addiction, our minds and hearts are transformed. We feel serenity or inner peace, which gives us more power to change our behavior. This shift inside is amplified as we start thinking globally. We find a balance between accepting we’re powerless to prevent the urges rooted in our past pain and the clear knowledge that our natural global interactivity makes us powerful enough to respond to those urges in a new way.

The journey from darkness into light may take the rest of our lives. We may stumble often, but we keep on keeping on. By accepting total responsibility for the effects of our personalities and our life choices, we can and we will liberate the world by liberating ourselves.