



YOUR KINDLE NOTES FOR:

The Choice: Embrace the Possible

by Edith Eger

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22 Highlights

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 6

Freedom lies in learning to embrace what happened. Freedom means we muster the courage to dismantle the prison, brick by brick.

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It's the first time I see that we have a choice: to pay attention to what we've lost or to pay attention to what we still have.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 43

We can choose what the horror teaches us. To become bitter in our grief and fear. Hostile. Paralyzed. Or to hold on to the childlike part of us, the lively and curious part, the part that is innocent.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 116

To be passive is to let others decide for you. To be aggressive is to decide for others. To be assertive is to decide for yourself. And to trust that there is enough, that you are enough.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 156

In those predawn hours in the autumn of 1966, I read this, which is at the very heart of Frankl's teaching: Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way. Each moment is a choice. No matter how frustrating or boring or constraining or painful or oppressive our experience, we can always choose how we respond. And I finally begin to understand that I, too, have a choice. This realization will change my life.

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Perfectionism is the belief that something is broken—you. So you dress up your brokenness with degrees, achievements, accolades, pieces of paper, none of which can fix what you think you are fixing. In trying to combat my low self-esteem, I was actually reinforcing my sense of unworthiness. In learning to offer my patients total love and acceptance, I fortunately learned the importance of offering the same to myself.

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self-acceptance: Only I can do what I can do the way I can do it.

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For me, learning that only I can do what I can do the way I can do it meant overthrowing the compulsive achiever in me, who was always chasing more and more pieces of paper in the hopes of affirming my worth.

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A good definition of being a victim is when you keep the focus outside yourself, when you look outside yourself for someone to blame for your present circumstances, or to determine your purpose, fate, or worth.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 225

Maybe to heal isn't to erase the scar, or even to make the scar. To heal is to cherish the wound.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 227

Now, on the eve of my return to prison, I remind myself that each of us has an Adolf Hitler and a Corrie ten Boom within us. We have the capacity to hate and the capacity to love. Which one we reach for—our inner Hitler or inner ten Boom—is up to us.

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I can make the choice that all of us can make. I can't ever change the past. But there is a life I can save: It is mine. The one I am living right now, this precious moment. I

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 237

Our painful experiences aren't a liability—they're a gift. They give us perspective and meaning, an opportunity to find our unique purpose and our strength.

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My first step in the dance was to take responsibility for my feelings. To stop repressing and avoiding them, and to stop blaming them on Béla or other people, to accept them as my own. This was a vital step in Captain Jason Fuller's healing too. Like me, he was in the habit of cutting his feelings off, of running from them until they got big enough to control him, instead of the other way around. I told him that he couldn't avoid pain by avoiding his feelings. He had to take responsibility for experiencing—and eventually expressing—them safely, and then for letting them go.

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In those early weeks of treatment, I taught him a mantra for managing his emotions: notice, accept, check, stay.

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Once he could name his feelings, Jason needed to accept that those feelings were his own. They might be triggered by someone else's actions or speech, but they were his. Lashing out at someone else wasn't going to make them go away.

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Then, once he was there with the feeling, he was to check his body response. Am I hot? Cold? Is my heart racing? How's my breathing? Am I okay?

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Once Jason was more adept at tuning in to his feelings, we practiced how to respond to them, instead of reacting. Jason had learned to live like he was in a pressure cooker. He kept himself under tight control—until he burst. I helped him learn to be more like a teapot, to vent off the steam. Sometimes he'd come to a session and I'd ask him how he was feeling, and he'd say, "I feel like screaming." And I'd say, "Okay! Let's scream. Let's get it all out so it doesn't make you ill."

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Time doesn't heal. It's what you do with the time. Healing is possible when we choose to take responsibility, when we choose to take risks, and finally, when we choose to release the wound, to let go of the past or the grief.

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I reminded myself that I was there to share the most important truth I know, that the biggest prison is in your own mind, and in your pocket you already hold the key: the willingness to take absolute responsibility for your life; the willingness to risk; the willingness to release yourself from judgment and reclaim your innocence, accepting and loving yourself for who you really are—human, imperfect, and whole.

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I used to ask, Why me? Why did I survive? I have learned to ask a different question: Why not me? Standing on a stage surrounded by the next generation of freedom fighters, I could see in my conscious awareness something that is often elusive, often invisible: that to run away from the past or to fight against our present pain is to imprison ourselves. Freedom is in accepting what is and forgiving ourselves, in opening our hearts to discover the miracles that exist now.

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And here you are. Here you are! In the sacred present. I can't heal you—or anyone—but I can celebrate your choice to dismantle the prison in your mind, brick by brick. You can't change what happened, you can't change what you did or what was done to you. But you can choose how you live now. My precious, you can choose to be free.
