



## **Pack Your Own Parachute**

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When I was a kid, my dad was in the National Guard, and he was a jumpmaster. That means he not only jumped out of planes but convinced others to do it as well. On jump weekends, we would pack up the van and drive out to some pasture in the country and watch the troops jump. It was both exhilarating and terrifying to watch. I have never jumped, but my dad has always told me that I must pack my own parachute if I ever do. His philosophy is you don't hand over the responsibility for your own life to someone else.

I recently hired a coach. I had heard her teach and liked her style. She coached in an area around weight loss with which I wanted help, and she is a Master Coach certified through the same school I attended. It seemed like a great fit.

I went to the first call, and it wasn't at all what I expected. This particular coach used more than one method, and I had no experience with the other methodology. I brought some of my journaling and work that I had done on my issue. She looked it over and said, "Do you want some feedback on this work? I don't want you to feel judged."

So, immediately, I felt judged. It affected my ability to concentrate on the rest of the session and the value I could get from it.

Now, I had paid for these sessions, and I wanted to make sure I got the value. I started doing more journaling and work around why I had that defensive reaction. I realized that I expected the coach would think all of my work was amazing and would recognize my insight into myself. I wanted her approval, praise, and validation.

Is that what I was paying her for? No! I was paying her for feedback on where I am blind to specific issues, and that is what she gave me. However, I couldn't receive it because I was searching for validation and approval.

Realizing this sent me back to my future sessions with an open mind and open heart, ready to receive insight and wisdom. And the coaching is fantastic. It is changing my life.

But here's the thing. I was expecting my coach to pack my parachute for me. Instead of validating my journaling and working on managing my mind, I wanted her to do it for me. If I didn't get that support from her, I made it mean I was unworthy. Basically, I wanted her to

pack my parachute for me by telling me how great I was. I didn't take the time to do the work myself.

So, I can hear you asking how I can equate looking for a little validation to the life-saving technique of proper parachute packing.

Because how we do one thing in our lives is how we do all the things. As humans, we use the same basic decision-making processes and apply them indiscriminately and repetitively. When we constantly look to others for approval or wonder what they think of us, and then we make our decisions based on what we think they think, we don't have our own back. We don't learn what we honestly think about ourselves, our goals, and our abilities.

And, trust me, no one else is spending much time really thinking about what is best for you. Your family and friends, and mentors mean well, and they may love you. But this is your life, not theirs. They have their own demons to slay, and that is where they spend their time. And, if they aren't spending their time making their own life amazing, how could they know what you should be doing with yours?

When we expect others to show up with the validation, the praise, and the confidence in us, we hand them the power to decide our success and limitations. We base our worthiness on the reflection of ourselves we see in their eyes.

What are you doing because you think it will improve someone's opinion of you, but you don't enjoy it or find meaning in it? Where are you giving your time, your most precious resource, away to others, so you don't have to stand for how you want to spend your time?

When you let someone else pack your parachute, you give them the responsibility for it opening at the right moment. When you give someone else authority over how you spend your time and energy, you give them responsibility for your life.

Think about who you are relying on to pack your parachute. Are they equipped to determine your worth, ability, and success? Or is that a rock-solid foundation you want to create for yourself?