

A 3D topographic map of a mountain range, likely the Sierra Nevada, rendered with a color gradient from blue (low elevation) to yellow (high elevation). The map is shown from an isometric perspective. The text "Self-Determination" is overlaid in a large, bold, black font with a slight drop shadow, centered horizontally across the middle of the image.

Self-Determination

What do you think Self-Determination is?

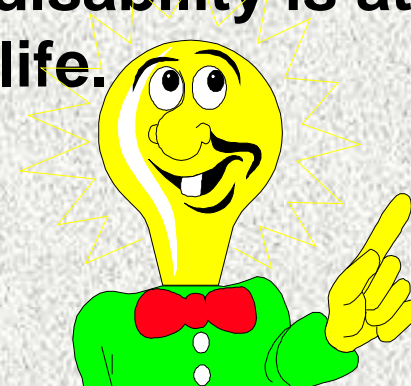
Self-Determination means that a person makes his or her own decisions, plans his or her own future, determines how money is spent for his or her supports, and takes responsibility for the decisions he or she makes.



The Philosophy

The Self-Determination movement started in Europe in the 1960's by people with developmental disabilities and parents who wanted more control over how they received services and supports and how they lived their lives. It has grown into an international movement.

The Self-Determination philosophy is a belief that a person should have choice and control over all areas of life. It is the idea that services are based around the individual, not the other way around. The person with a disability is at the heart of decisions made about his or her life.



There are 4 main principles:

Freedom

Authority and Control

Responsibility

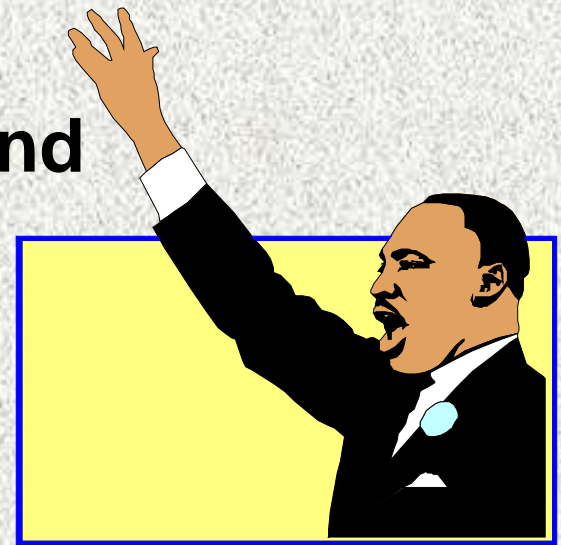
Support

Freedom means...

To live a meaningful life in the community.

To live how we want and decide what is best for our own lives.

To be able to make decisions (and mistakes) for ourselves.

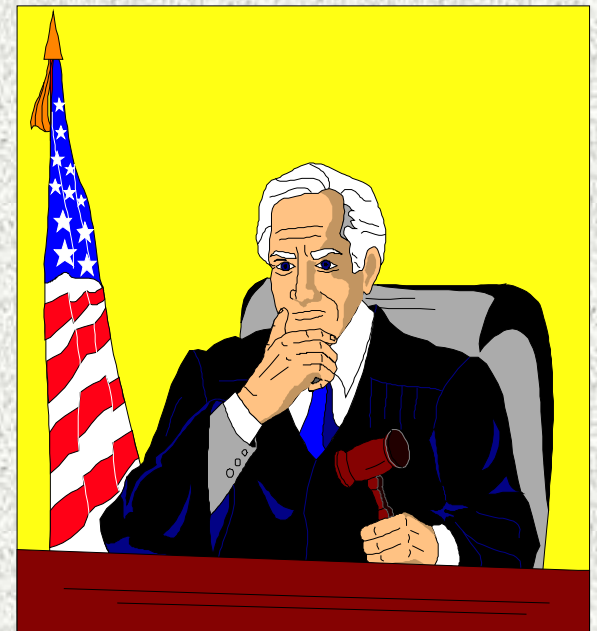


Authority and Control

Control over the support we need and the dollars needed for that support.

Control of our own lives. Having the right to direct our lives and live the way we want... just like anyone else.

**There is a great saying...
“Nothing about us, without us!”**



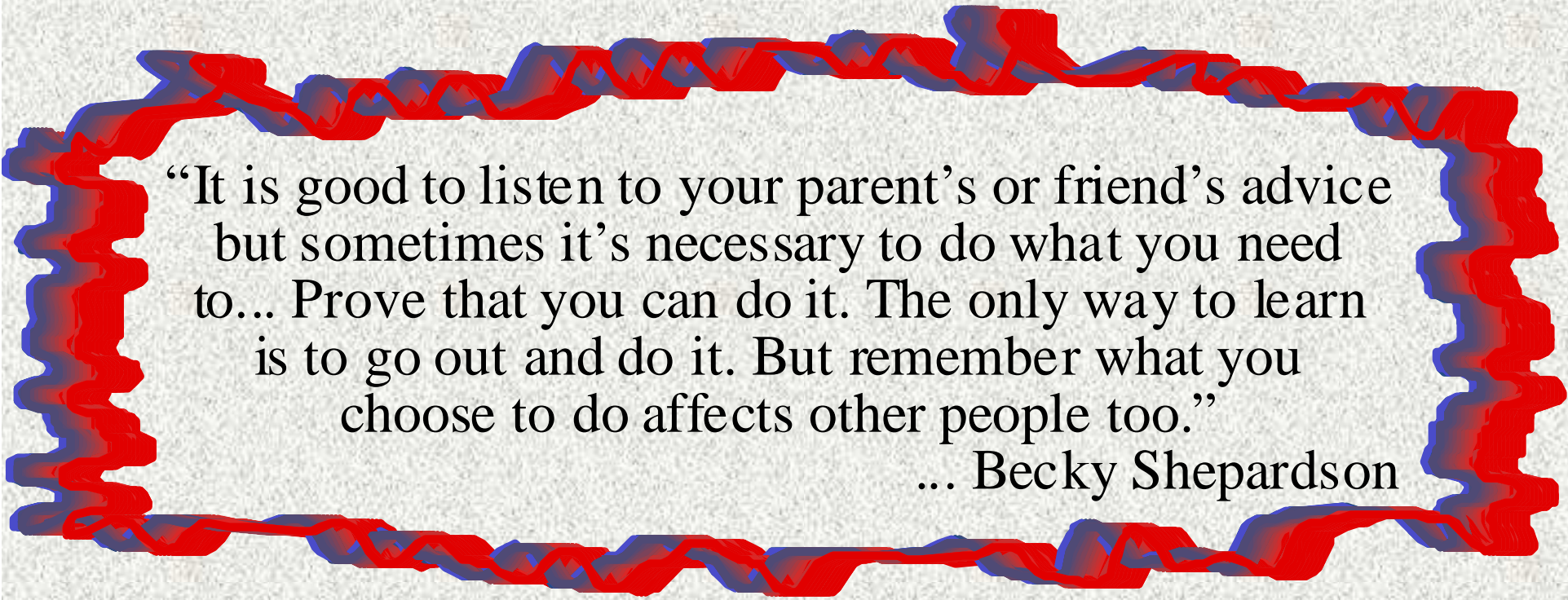
Responsibility...

Take responsibility for our own actions. That also means to accept the consequences... these may be good or bad.

Take responsibility for the use of public dollars. (Don't waste money.)

Take responsibility for our own lives and be a participating citizen.





“It is good to listen to your parent’s or friend’s advice but sometimes it’s necessary to do what you need to... Prove that you can do it. The only way to learn is to go out and do it. But remember what you choose to do affects other people too.”

... Becky Shepardson

Support

To have the support to organize resources in ways that are life enhancing and meaningful for you.



To have the support to live your life the way you want and do the things you want.

What can Self-Determination mean for you?

Having the determination (or drive) to do things for yourself.

Setting Personal goals.

Knowing when to ask for help.

Having the courage to dream big and go after your dreams.

Learning who you are, what you want and how to make it happen. (This is a lifelong process.)



There are so many meanings. If you ask 10 people what Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy means, you would get 10 different answers. Everybody seems to have a slightly different definition of what it means to them.

Here is what one person had to say...

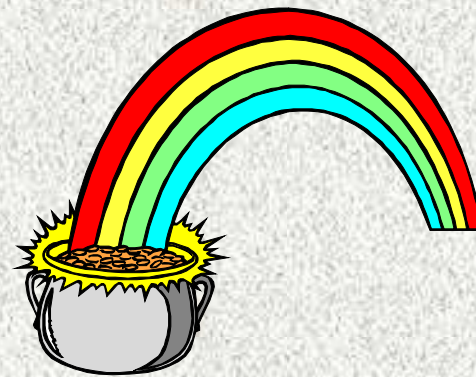
What it means to me...

“For me, self-determination and self-advocacy are interwoven. You can’t have self-advocacy without self-determination, and vice versa. It is much more than the freedom to live our own lives the way we want. It’s having the knowledge and vision of something better, but most of all, it’s having the courage to go after that vision and to stand up and take control and responsibility for our own lives.

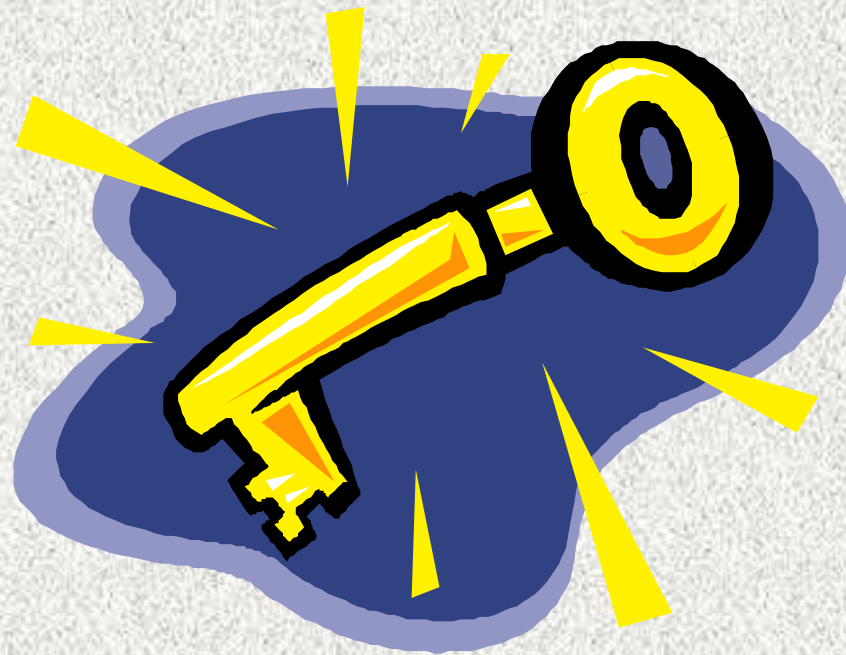
It’s about empowering ourselves and others to make a difference. For me, that means living my life and having a career like anyone else, going out and letting people know that people with disabilities are no different than anybody else, and we can do whatever we put our minds to.”

...Ann Blackburn

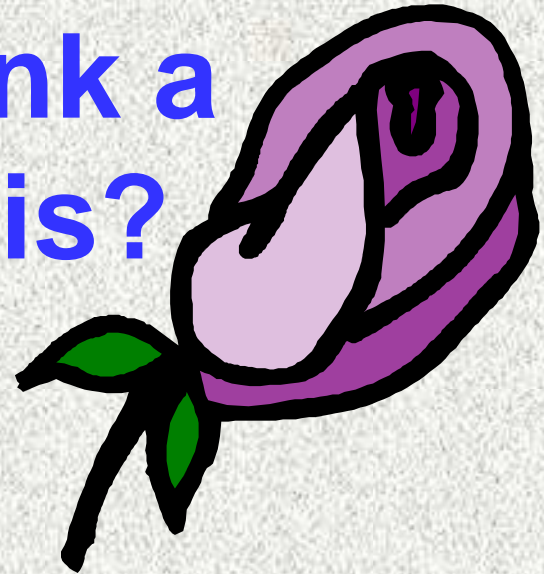
Self-Determination looks at the big, overall picture of your life. Self-advocacy is a way to bring those big ideas into your own life by making it personal. You can bring the four points of Self-Determination together by practicing Self-Advocacy.



Self-Advocacy



**What do you think a
Self-Advocate is?**



**A Self-Advocate is someone who
speaks up for themselves.**

How can Self-Advocacy help you?

Teaches you about your rights and responsibilities.

Teaches you how to be independent... Like living on your own or getting a job.

Lets you know it's ok to ask for help when you need it.

Teaches and gives you the confidence to stand up for yourself and letting others know you are just like anyone else...with hopes and dreams.

Teaches you to advocate for others.



**There is no one way to become a self-advocate
and strong leader.**

**Often a good way to learn is by other people's
examples.**

Link up with well-trained advocates.

**Speak out and be persistent...
you know the saying, "The squeaky wheel gets the
grease."**

Know yourself and your strengths and weaknesses.

**Remember, you can't become a self-advocate
overnight... it's a life long process.**

How can you put Self-Advocacy to use?

Educate people! Tell YOUR story! Nobody knows your life better than you.

Talk to family and friends.

Speak to groups.

Get connected – sometimes it isn't what you know but who you know.

Go to workshops or classes.

Sit on a board or committee.

Write to your legislator.

Speak up for yourself and others.





Questions?



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