

Our Personal Bill of Rights

By a certain stage in our recovery we begin to discover that we have rights as individual human beings. As children and even as adults we may have been treated by others as though we had few or no rights. We, ourselves, may have come to believe that we had no rights, and we may be living our lives now as though we have none. As we recover, however, we can put together our own personal "Bill of Rights" that can confirm for us the rights that we do *in fact* have. We give up those rights *only* if we decide to. You may wish to consider whether you have any of these rights, and any others that come to mind. Many of us put this list of rights in a conspicuous place where we can read it often.

1. I have numerous choices in my life beyond mere survival.
2. I have a right to discover and know my <i>Child Within</i>
3. I have a right to grieve over what I didn't get that I needed of what I got that I didn't need or want.
4. I have a right to follow my own values and standards.
5. I have a right to recognize and accept my own value system as appropriate.
6. I have a right to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe or violates my values
7. I have a right to dignity and respect.
8. I have a right to make decisions.
9. I have the right to determine and honor my own priorities
10. I have a right to have my needs and wants respected by others.
11. I have a right to terminate conversations with people who make me feel put down and humiliated.
12. I have the right not to be responsible for others' behavior, actions, feelings or problems.
13. I have a right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
14. I have a right to expect honesty from others.
15. I have a right to all of my feelings.
16. I have a right to be angry at someone I love.
17. I have a right to be uniquely me, without feeling I'm not good enough.
18. I have a right to feel scared and to say, "I'm afraid."
19. I have the right to experience and then let go of fear, guilt and shame.
20. I have a right to make decisions based on my feelings, my judgment or any reason that I choose.
21. I have a right to change my mind at any time.
22. I have the right to be happy.
23. I have a right to stability i.e. "roots" and stable healthy relationships of my choice.
24. I have the right to my own personal space and time needs.
25. There is no need to smile when I cry.
26. It is OK to be relaxed, playful and frivolous.
27. I have the right to be flexible and be comfortable with doing so.
28. I have the right to change and grow.
29. I have the right to be open to improve communication skills so that I may be understood.
30. I have a right to make friends and be comfortable around people.
31. I have a right to be in a non- abusive environment.
32. I can be healthier than those around me.
33. I can take care of myself, no matter what.
34. I have the right to grieve over actual or threatened losses.
35. I have the right to trust others who earn my trust.
36. I have the right to forgive others and to forgive myself.
37. I have the right to give and to receive unconditional love.
38. What other rights can I think of?

