

# 1 The Notion Freedom

## 1.1 What human freedom is not

The term "freedom" is used to describe very different desires and dreams, which are often inconsistent, and which also imply more convenience and the right to be reckless. What freedom is not, even if some of it would be tempting, can be quite easily listed:

1. Human freedom does not mean that everyone can do whatever they want.

2. Freedom is not freedom from rules.

Rules and conventions can be a source of freedom if they help avoid unnecessary conflicts and ensure smooth processes. Being able to determine rules for this purpose is an essential part of freedom.

However, establishing good rules requires qualifications. Defining rules inadequately creates a lack of freedom. Freedom therefore also requires the ability to change rules. It requires democracy. One thing is undeniable: freedom needs good rules.

3. Freedom is also not freedom from challenges.

Challenges are inevitable in life. It becomes dangerous when challenges are experienced as overchallenging. The greater the challenge, the more freedom (competence, cooperation, and resources) are needed to overcome it.

4. Freedom is not freedom from responsibility.

You can only be responsible for what you have the freedom to achieve it. Therefore, anyone who has the freedom to achieve something cannot evade responsibility for it.

5. Freedom is clearly not a state in which one doesn't have to take care about anything.

The extent of freedom determines the extent of responsibility and thus the area one has to take care of.

This is why freedom can also be over-challenging, if ideas, competencies, cooperation, and resources are insufficiently developed.

6. Freedom is not a right to shield oneself from an uncomfortable reality.

"No one has the right to a life unburdened by challenges."

That would be the right not to have to face uncomfortable challenges. Claiming this right is often already an expression of surrender to a challenge. A flight response.

a. Life clearly doesn't take place in a hotel room with room service and a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door.

b. Freedom is not a vacation where one can delegate all responsibility.

But being able to go on vacation is part of freedom.

Freedom is the possibility of making life more worth living in reality as it is and as it could be.

It is not enough to know what freedom is not. But it may prevent us from raising false claims.

## 1.2 What human freedom means

The substance of human freedom is composed of:

- one's own orientation,
- one's own abilities,
- cooperation with others and their orientations and abilities,
- and the available means for a desired project.

This leads to the following definition:

**Freedom is the justified feeling of**

- **having sufficient orientation and abilities,**
- **and finding sufficient supportive cooperation and means,**
- **to master upcoming challenges,**
- **and to be able to develop, pursue, and apply one's own interests, inclinations, talents, and creativity.**

Reasons:

- Without orientation, it remains unclear what to do and why. Action can be blocked if a goal and direction are lacking.
- Without developed skills you cannot implement, what your orientation requires.
- Without cooperation and support from others, most things in this world cannot be realized.
- Challenges are inevitable and unavoidable; they must be mastered.
  - o You can't choose them.
  - o You have to react to them, and
  - o You have to prepare for them so as not to be overchallenged by them, because being overchallenged leads to a loss of control and thus a loss of freedom.

For feeling free two basic human emotional needs claim to be regarded:

1. People want to be able to cope with their challenges. They don't want to experience failure and being overchallenged. They want the needed competence for their own safety and protection.
2. Without interest, capabilities and creativity, the motivation would be lacking to shape one's own life and, in return, to demand freedom for this purpose.

The driving second emotional need is

that everyone has own talents that are worth exploring, that are perceived as appealing and inspiring, and therefore demand development and frequent application.

Developing one's own talents and applying them creatively while pursuing one's own interests proves to be a driving and guiding desire in life. It demands the freedom, the time, and the opportunities to live for them.

These two human emotional needs are also the core of the answer to the initial question for orientation: "What do people want in their lives and why?" and "For what do they want to be free?"