

This is probably something ingrained in your psyche - that you do not let other people down. It is held as a high value in our culture to always follow through, to put others before yourself, to be of service to others and never let them down.

You do not let down your country - you rather lose your life fighting for it and protecting it.

You do not let your friends down - you come through for them no matter what.

You do not let your family down - you are there for them through thick and thin.

This all sounds so very noble and so very good - and so it is when it comes from a place of inner freedom. However, for most people this value has never been lived fully from a place of clarity and freedom. Most people unconsciously martyr themselves out of fear of being seen as or labelled a bad person - because this is what you were taught. If you do not martyr yourself, give up your needs, not notice your feelings, then you are BAD. We would rather be dead than bad and so we give up on ourselves and let ourselves down in order to meet the expectations, demands and whiny needs of others, even if this is NOT in their best interests or ours. We foster dependency, we support wars, we repress our souls, we do what is unconscionable in terms of obeying tyrannies, we do terrible bad things, because "we do not want to let others down." We stay in corporate job situations that exploit and use us, because we do not want to let *them* down. We put up with addictions and make excuses for the bad behavior of others, because we do not want to "let them down." We do not want to set limits with others because it will be seen as "letting them down."

When we blindly obey in order to not be "bad people," and get the reward of being seen as a "good person," we do not meet our real needs or even know them, and we are certainly not meeting the needs of the other person - we are merely disempowering and enabling them to remain dependent on our steadfast reliability and sense of false responsibility.

the operative word that I am using is "blindly." Again the dictum, "The unexamined life is not worth living," applies here. To live a life of blind servitude and martyrdom to the whims of others, is not to live your life at all. It is to deny your life, split from your young soul's needs and feelings, and live in defense your whole life. We are working here with the archetype of the martyr. In early childhood we are taught to deny our own feelings and needs and serve those of our family only. And then we live by this forever.

However real love and maturity, sees not only the needs and feelings of others, but is fully in tact with, and connected to one's own feelings and needs. Maturity does not mistake real need with demands and wants and tactics to get one's own way. Real maturity obeys the gut, the inner feelings and perceptions, and does not violate the inner in order to appease the outer.

When we are fully and lovingly connected to ourselves, **do not let ourselves down**, do not ignore our own gut, intuition, feelings and we know our needs, then by definition what we do externally will be the right and loving thing for others too - **even if they do not like it, because**

**it is not what they think they want. And they will not like it,** because they will be losing a willing slave to their demands and have to start growing up and meeting their own needs.

It is very important to really understand the difference between wants and needs. Wants are tragic strategic attempts to get a need met. Wants are about addiction to defense to ease underlying pain that I refuse to acknowledge and take responsibility for in myself. Wants are control tactics and reflect the immature soul that cannot yet meet its own needs. To want and control others into giving you what you want reflects a total disconnect from ones' own needs and feelings and a childish and desperate attempt for someone else to ease the pain of that inner child. This is not to be judged - just seen, heard and acknowledged. For more on this I highly recommend reading about it in the numerous websites on Non-violent communication based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg.

Dealing with this particular dynamic is working with the archetype of the martyr. The dark side of the martyr, is the unaware (dark) is the one who blindly obeys the demands of others out of sense of obligation, rooted in the fear of being bad, or being shamed and punished and for the reward given by the other and self of being regarded as "good." In this sense the martyr is merely a victim and we glorify victims. The whole of the Christian religion reflects this understanding. We die for others at the expense of our own soul so that we get our just reward of being seen as good and one day going to heaven.

The light side of the martyr is the one who is "true to Self," even if others despise, kill and hate you for it. Even if there is punishment and rejection from others. It is the clarity of self-knowledge that allows for an inner relationship of love, respect and never letting oneself down. This is to truly live into the fullest expression of the Martyr. The one who does what is internally right and loving, no matter the external consequences. It is the commitment to always obeying the law of love and never succumbing to the laws of fear. This requires courage, nobility, empowerment, inner loving relationship, clarity and vision. Try this on this month. "I will not let my own soul down, ever again." Just watch internally, what happens with this commitment.