

# Paradox of autonomy

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There is no research required to emphasise that freedom is important not just to humans but to any living being. But being aware of the enigmatic value of freedom is enlightening. A French study was conducted into how many people would be willing to spare the bus fare to strangers by using different ways of encoding the request. The words 'but you are free to accept or reject' doubled the amount people would give for the purpose. A spate of studies that had followed only confirmed such results.

There are linkages between freedom to choose, our aspirations, and inspirations and happiness.

We want freedom to choose our apparel, lifestyles, jobs, relationships and our spiritual faiths, the extent to which we want materialistic pursuits and the degree of self-competence that is required to pursue to achieve the desires. Freedom to choose is generally used to chase happiness, but we may experience the effects of hedonic treadmill, a term used by several who research happiness. Are we inspired by platitudes like 'stretch your boundaries' or 'nothing is impossible' even by unusual achievers? In this age of selfies and self-centric survival mode, are we influenced by various factors outside our psyche on important issues of life, without realising our strengths and limitations?

Consciously being aware of the value of autonomy is one of the ways to ensure that the illusions created by the paradox of autonomy is kept at bay.