

The Value of Independent Facilitation and the Citizen-Ship

By Melodie Cook

When it comes to figuring out who I will be
It requires deep listening to what's important to me
Paying close attention to my strengths and my gifts
And walking beside me through struggles and rifts.

Being a citizen isn't just about rights
It's about contributions and feeling valued, as I find my life.

**With Independent Facilitation there is one thing we know
They will walk with us as our life ebbs and it flows.**

I need exclusive attention to my gifts, to find my place
To become spiritually present and contribute as I take up MY space.

When I can lead the way, it builds validation and trust
But in well-meaning systems there are borders, that make it rough.

So, to find my unique way to the Citizen-Ship
I must find an independent travel agent, who I can walk with.
One who helps me take pride, be defiant, creative and confused
One who is not part of a system that finds it difficult to move

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It takes rebellion, protest and critical thinking
To raise consciousness and make sure that my Citizen-Ship isn't sinking.

The path to identity and presence it seems
Requires an edginess and freedom, outside an agency's seams.

It takes intentionality just to discover my voice
People walking beside me as I make the choice
I need support through discouragement, fears and despairs
I need to find the right tribe to help me conduct my affairs.

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But planning through an agency, well-meaning as they may seem
Can lead to **them** defining my culture, my tribe and my themes.
And instead of my tribe, my voice and my beat
I may end up walking down a one-way street.
The path to who I am must be judgment free
And when things happen, I need room to wonder what it's teaching me.

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And when my struggles occur, they will even step back
Allowing me and my tribe to figure out my track.
And in an ironic way, they help me find peace
As they help me navigate around these systems, that claim expertise.
When it comes to our lives no two dreams look the same
Nor does the pathway to get there, that a system can claim.

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And as my Facilitator helps me it only makes sense
That instead of being the director, they become my audience.
My Facilitator supports me and my tribe through both accomplishments and strife
Because only my tribe can help me navigate, the ship that is my life.

**With Independent Facilitation there is one thing we know
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Picture images from Pixabay

This poem is dedicated to the people and families who I know and have had the honour of watching as they take up their Citizen-Ship journey with the assistance of Independent Facilitation. I would also like to thank Marleen Crawford, Maria Ala and Michelle Friesen, family leaders from Windsor and Essex County, for sharing their personal insights and experiences as inspiration for this poem. Melodie