

History Revealed – The Meaning of the Destination ImagiNation® *Declaration of Independence*

It's all about the TEAM!

On a midnight in July, just outside Philadelphia, PA, the DDevelopers for the 1999-2000 DI Program Materials needed a break from a long day of writing *Team Challenges* at the kitchen table. Because several of them had never seen the Liberty Bell, the group decided a late-night field trip to The City of Brotherly Love was in order.

Once downtown, the DDevelopers walked by Independence Hall, famous for being the building in which the U.S. Declaration of Independence was signed, signifying freedom for the thirteen colonies from their mother country, Great Britain. They gazed at the Liberty Bell and read about how it rang on July 8, 1776 to call townspeople to hear the reading of the Declaration of Independence. Other symbols of the colonists' deeply desired freedom still stood tall on the old cobblestone street. Liberty seemed to ring out even then, in the quiet of the night.

Feeling inspired, one of the DDevelopers cried, "Let's call the no interference form The Declaration of Independence! It's the team members' way of saying, 'We want freedom to do this ourselves! We can come up with our own solution! We don't need grown-ups or our friends to tell us what to do! We can be independent!'" And thus your Destination ImagiNation® *Declaration of Independence* was born. A DI symbol of liberty. A document declaring freedom. A unity of support shown by the signatures of alliance. A team choosing its destiny for itself.

The American Heritage® Dictionary defines Independence as, "the state or quality of being independent."¹ Dictionary.com Unabridged adds, "freedom from the control, influence, support, aid, or the like, of others. Synonyms: See freedom.

Philosophy: The power to exercise choice and make decisions without constraint from within or without; autonomy; self-determination.

Synonyms: 1. FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE, LIBERTY refer to an absence of undue restrictions and an opportunity to exercise one's rights and powers. FREEDOM emphasizes the opportunity given for the exercise of one's rights, powers, desires, or the like: *freedom of speech or conscience; freedom of movement*. INDEPENDENCE implies not only lack of restrictions but also the ability to stand alone, unsustained by anything else: *Independence of thought promotes invention and discovery.*"²

The ability to stand alone. Unsustained by anything else. Independence. In Destination ImagiNation, the philosophy is promoted that its participants will learn to be independent thinkers, to be creative and critical thinkers on their own and as a team, to express "how they are creative" individually and collectively. DI participants develop the confidence to stand alone. They are not afraid to be "unsustained by anything else." DI provides the environment -- the program and the process -- for this to occur, safely, with nurturing, with

fun, with challenge. DI team members deserve the safe space to think, generate, focus, try, maybe succeed quickly, or maybe fail and thus think again. Learning through failure, learning through dedicated effort to reach desired goals reinforces positive growth in independence. There is freedom in DI – freedom of more than one solution, freedom for originality in every solution, freedom in applying thinking and Creative Problem Solving skills.

As an adult involved in DI, whether as a Team Manager, an Appraiser, a Membership Coordinator, a friend, or in any other role, it is hoped that you embrace this philosophy as well, and that you, in your support of the participants, give them what is rightfully theirs – autonomy, invention and discovery -- and honor their *Declaration of Independence*.

¹The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition
Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

²Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.0.1)
Based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © 2006 by Random House, Inc.

**The Destination ImagiNation® *Declaration of Independence*
Understanding its Meaning
Respecting its Claim**

It's all about the TEAM!



Artist: John Trumbull
Oil on canvas, 12' x 18'

Commissioned 1817; purchased 1819; placed 1826 in the Rotunda

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence

Team and Team Manager

First things first:

1. Show and read among yourselves and then with team members' parents the Destination ImagiNation *Declaration of Independence* form
2. Read and discuss among yourselves and then with team members' parents the pages in *Rules of the Road* about Interference
3. Next, try these activities to comprehend DI's intent and its philosophy of independence for its participants.

Understanding its Meaning

Study with your team members the history of the U.S. Declaration of Independence:

1. Review the history of the document. Use these web sites to help:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence

<http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/declaration.html>

<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/>

The Continental Congress included in the document a list of how they felt King George was willfully infringing upon the colonists' rights.

2. Make a list of your rights as a DI participant. Identify how others might attempt to willfully or unintentionally infringe upon your rights.

3. Role-play the history of the writing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence by adapting the situation to your DI team. Write your own Team Declaration of Independence. Ring a “liberty bell” and invite those who surround your team to hear the reading. Later, have a team ceremony where each team member signs the Team Declaration of Independence. What does this document mean to you? To your team?
4. Generate ideas about how to educate others about what your Team Declaration of Independence means. Generate a list of phrases or sentences that you could say to others when they try to give you suggestions on how to improve your performance, make better props, or mention things to include in your solution. Focus on a few of those ideas and develop a strategy to use them, in case the need arises.
5. Discuss how your Team Declaration of Independence relates to the DI *Declaration of Independence* form. During the program season, how might you explain this required form to other people? How might you politely convey your desire to “do DI on your own,” and decline their assistance?

Respecting its Claim

Team:

- Honor your pledge and the trust of your fellow team members by not asking anyone other than a fellow team member for ideas or help with your solution.
- Honor your promise by finding a polite way to tell people who are not on your team that they cannot help with your solution.
- Ask to be taught skills, not a solution.
- Be proud to be independent. Be proud to keep your promise.

Team Manager:

- Honor the pledge of your team members by not willfully infringing with ideas or help with the team’s solution.
- Educate team members’ parents and any other adult or team friend about the team’s independence and the right of the team to “do DI” on their own.
- Teach or find someone to teach skills, not the solution.
- Be proud that your team is independent. Be proud to keep your and their promise.

Parents and other Adults:

- Honor the pledge of your team members by not willfully infringing with ideas or help with the team’s solution.
- Teach or find someone to teach skills, not the solution.
- Be proud that the team is independent. Be proud that the team members are learning life skills that will enrich them and serve them throughout their lives.