

## Taking Responsibility for Your Life

Taking responsibility for your life can be a challenging proposition. It is, in fact, one of the toughest decisions a person can make particularly now at a time of economic hardship. Making excuses and blaming circumstances is the easy way to handle life's problems. Responsibility, on the other hand, now that can be tough. Why is this hard? Taking responsibility is hard because it takes courage.

The distortion of making excuses is that they feel real. When you are sick with an illness and you use that condition as an excuse for your life, it feels real. If you have no money, it feels real. If you have no companionship and that is important to you, it feels real. Our excuses, feel real. This makes excuses hard to let go of.

The other interesting thing about excuses is we all have one. When life gets tough, we all have a tendency to use an excuse to rationalize why we can't make a change for the better. We say things like, "But you don't understand my past, I have had terrible things happen to me." Another excuse I have heard is, "If only I didn't have this in my life to deal with right now."

Personally, I have a really good excuse. Many years ago my wife and I had fertility problems. We struggled to have a family and faced month after month of heartache and disappointment. We tried everything including invitro fertilization without success. Just when we were about to give up and move on to adoption, the invitro fertilization treatments worked and we are now the proud parents of a miracle boy named, Luke.

One year after Luke was born; my wife became pregnant on her own. We were so happy because for years the doctors considered us pathetically infertile. Pregnant at last without any outside help. For the first 2 months of this pregnancy, I imagined a little girl. I named her, saw her in my mind playing piano and even dreamed of where she would go to college.

Twelve weeks after my wife became pregnant, we had a miscarriage. From ecstatic to devastated. We were heartbroken beyond description. The experience led to a period of depression for both of us. I am telling you this because I have a good excuse. I used the excuse to drink and be depressed. Finally, I realized something. I realized I was the only one who could change my depression. I realized both the problem and the solution could be found in me and nowhere else. I have since learned to say, "It is all up to me, every bit of it, me."

What I discovered from this upset was personal responsibility. The first lesson of taking responsibility for my life was not to blame. I learned not to blame outside circumstances for life's misfortunes. Responsibility then led me to explore and integrate all of the virtues discussed in these articles. For instance, I focused on being grateful for what I have and not focus on what is missing. I looked for opportunities to be kind, generous, forgiving and to have a sense of humor. I learned the value of deep breathing and

meditation. An amazing thing then happened. My depression and fear resolved. No medications and no expensive remedies.

I merely decided to take responsibility that the problems and solutions to life are found within. The solutions were available everyday and did not cost any money. Wow, I thought, my life had changed from inside-out. Taking responsibility can empower you to also change your life for the better. So drop your excuses (which I am sure are good ones) and take responsibility. It begins today with you, every bit of it, you!

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