

# Take Personal Responsibility for a Better Life



We are the sum of all our choices in life. Oh sure, things happen to us that are outside our control, but we still choose how to respond.

Our lives become exactly what we make out of them. We can either let life beat us down or we can choose to accept personal responsibility, take appropriate action, and live a better life.

I'll admit that I've been guilty of feeling sorry for myself when life deals me a bad hand, but I also realize that my successes have come when I take responsibility for my results and make things happen. Personal responsibility is a choice. We can and must choose to take personal responsibility for our lives to improve them.

## Make the Choices that Lead to a Better Life

There are choices we can make that will lead to better results. Notice that I say better results. I'm not saying that if you do these things that nothing bad will ever happen to you. Things still happen, but these choices will help you deal with whatever life hands you in a much more productive manner which will lead to a better life.

### 1. STOP BLAMING OTHERS.

I could make a whole list of people that I have blamed for the less than desirable parts of my life. If I'm honest, I have to admit that I have blamed my parents, my wife, my business partners, my children, and I'm sure numerous others for my own failings. In reality, I make the choices in my life. No one else is responsible. If I want things to be different in one area or another, then I have to buck up, be a man, and decide to change things for the better. **This is what personal responsibility is all about.**

### 2. NO MORE EXCUSES.

Marcus Stroup once said, "There aren't nearly enough crutches in the world for all the lame excuses." How true this is! We are all guilty of making excuses. I seem to have one for every day of the week. Some of my favorites include:

1. It is because my parents got divorced when I was young.
2. I don't have a choice because he/she...
3. It is impossible to get ahead when...
4. It wasn't my fault. I tried, but...

Do any of these sound familiar? What excuses do you make to elude personal responsibility for your situation? Excuses are lame. When we choose to make an excuse rather than follow-through in a difficult situation, then we are simply rolling over and accepting defeat.

### **3. STOP WHINING AND PLAYING THE VICTIM.**

I have a two-year old daughter. Sometimes, she whines and fusses incessantly because she isn't getting her way. I guess this is why they call it the terrible twos!



Adults act like two-year olds at times too. We whine when we don't get promoted. We whine when we have a car accident. We whine when our spouses don't act like we want them to. "Oh, poor me, why has this happened to me?" This is the mantra for many who fail to accept personal responsibility.

Whining is useless. It is destructive. It doesn't accomplish a doggone thing. Sure, it is okay to grieve for a brief period when things don't work out your way, but the only way things are going to get better is if we stop playing the victim and start taking positive action toward a better life. Nobody's going to do it for us.

### **4. REALIZE THE PAYOFF FOR BAD BEHAVIOR.**

All our behavior that we repeat has a payoff. Sometimes we don't realize what the payoff is, but it is there. What's the one bad habit you can't seem to stop? What payoff do you get by continuing to behave in that way?

As an example, when I lose my temper and yell at my kids, it often gets them to be quiet and go in the other room. The payoff I get is immediate relief from the noise and distraction of whatever they are fussing about. However, in the long run, this is destructive behavior. It teaches my kids that I won't listen. I don't believe in being a pushover as a parent, but I do believe that our children model our behavior. I have seen it in my children.

I do not want to teach my kids that the way to deal with behavior you don't like in others is to yell and intimidate. I have to find another, more productive way to resolve the situation and get the payoff I desire. Once you realize the payoff that you want, then you can find a better way to achieve it.

### **5. ACCEPT PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BE ACCOUNTABLE.**

We have to accept that we are solely responsible for our lives. We make the choices that lead to the results we get. No matter what the situation, we decide how to react to it. We can blame others, make excuses, whine, and behave badly or we can be accountable and take positive action.

If you have a situation in your life that you don't like, then fix it. Change it. You may think that you can't. Well, it is likely that you think this way because you believe that there is only one acceptable solution and you can't or won't do that. When in fact, there are probably a ton of ways to improve the situation. Start brainstorming, reading books, and asking others about ways to make adjustments and improvements in your situation.

Small, incremental changes can often lead to great results. Remember, we aren't after a perfect life. We want a better life. Stop waiting for the perfect solution and start improving! The first step is to accept responsibility for your situation and to be accountable to yourself for it.

#### **6. TAKE POSITIVE ACTION.**

You'll never get anywhere in life if you don't take a step in the right direction. Several small steps add up. As I stated above, small, incremental actions toward a goal will translate into progress. You will build momentum and before you know it a hopeless situation will start looking a lot better. It might take a little time, but at least you will be doing something to make things better.

Once you gain some ground, then you might have the confidence to take a bigger step. Big steps can lead to giant leaps! If you start today and stick with it, you will be amazed what progress you will have made in a short time. I took action when I started this blog at the beginning of the year. It has been a series of small victories. Slowly the momentum built and now things feel poised to take off. What action are you going to take today to improve your life?

#### **7. MAKE THE BEST OF IT.**

I am always impressed with those individuals that seem to make the best of every situation in life. There aren't many of them, but you know one when you see one. People like Christopher Reeve and Michael J. Fox. Both of these guys had very successful careers going when tragedy hit their lives. They both came up against insurmountable odds that totally changed their situation. Both lost their careers. Neither wallowed in self-pity. Both took positive action to make the best of the situation. Amazingly, they did something to not only help themselves, but to help others as well.

This is really the epitome of making the best of it. There are no better examples. If you can raise your head high enough in a bad situation to see your way to not only help yourself, but to help others that suffer from a similar plight, then you have graduated to the highest level of personal responsibility.



### **Personal Responsibility Is the Path to a Better Life**

The only way to move beyond our present condition to a better life is to accept personal responsibility for our situation and *choose* to make things different. Whatever your station in life, there is room for improvement.

Albert Einstein is quoted as saying, "The world we have created is a product of our thinking; it cannot be changed without changing our thinking." I hope you will choose to examine your thinking closely today and maybe change your mind to accept greater personal responsibility!

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