



## From Victim to Victor

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One of the readings that had a profound effect on my thinking was a chapter on Taking Responsibility that I encountered about 12 years ago. Now most people would consider me very responsible, but this chapter gave me some new insights. I thought back to six months earlier when I had accepted a job offer and started a new job only to discover a few weeks later that the recruitment agent and managers had provided incorrect information about the job. I confronted the recruitment agent who admitted the spec they were given was not what the job had turned out to be and I got a story about how the manager involved was a poor communicator. I was furious about this and while I was reading this chapter on responsibility this incident came to mind because I cast lots of blame re whose fault it was that I was in a job that was not what it was made out to be. At first I refused to listen to what my mind was telling me, and it was telling me, "Is there something you are not taking responsibility for?"

### ***Take 100% responsibility for your life***

A few weeks later I did get it. I started to realise that blaming everyone was not the whole story. While I was perusing the letter of offer something just seemed off. I got what some people call a "yellow alert". And I didn't act on it. I let it go although something was letting me know something was wrong with this offer. Yes, the company managers had misrepresented the job. However I did not take full responsibility for what I could have. I could have paid attention to that gut feeling that something was not quite right and asked some more questions.

This may be an unusual and not obvious example, however the more you are prepared to be responsible for your responses, the more you are in control of your life and the more empowered you are. When you take control of your life by realising that you are always responsible for your response, even if you are not always responsible for what happens, you empower yourself to change things that are not working for you. The more you empower yourself the more you can create the life you want.

### ***What can you actually be responsible for?***

Now sometimes you cannot be responsible for what happens. If you are looking for a job, you do all the homework and check the job is right for you, the culture and values fit, the manager is great with his people, and the team is excellent, you can still take the job and three months later the company restructures and you end up with a manager who makes Stalin look like Mother Teresa. There is nothing you could do to prevent that (unless you had some say in selecting the new manager). You did everything you could possibly do to end up in the right job. In this case your responsibility is to decide what to do in this situation. Do you try and work with the new manager? Do you look for something else? Are there other options you have?

### ***Blame, justification, or taking responsibility***

In life when something happens, we have three choices. We can blame, we can justify or we can take responsibility. When we blame and when we justify we give away our power. When we take responsibility we own our power. When we blame and justify we act like victims. When we take

responsibility we assume the role of victor. Justify means we make excuses for why we don't have what we want. For example, "I will never get far in life because I don't have a degree" is justification. It is using your education level to justify your career progress. We take responsibility when we look the situation squarely in the face and decide on the best course of action for us. We don't try and pretend things are not what they are. We don't spend our time finding people to blame. We don't spend our time making excuses for why things are the way they are. We decide what we can do to move forward positively and productively to improve our situation. We take charge. We take action. We do something. And in this way we own our power.



There are situations, plenty of them, where people do things wrong. If someone steals from you they have done wrong. You can blame them. But if that is your only response you are acting perpetually like a victim. When you decide what action you can take to stop people from stealing from you then you are taking responsibility. When you decide to get trauma counselling you are acting responsibly. You are saying what happened was not fair, but I am going to take actions that will give me my power back. No one is going to stop me from living the life I want to.

- Write down some situations where you see other people at work or at home laying blame.
- How successful are their lives?
- Where are they not taking responsibility?
- How could they take responsibility?
- Where in your life are you currently not taking responsibility?

Consider how responsible you are in each of the following areas:

- Your health
- Your choice of friends
- Your financial well being
- Your work
- Your relationships
- Your happiness

It is the start of a new year. It is a chance to leave behind what you need to leave behind and create the future you want. Wishing you a wonderful year and may 2015 be better than you could ever have imagined.