

Personal Leadership

Taking responsibility for our choices

We always have a choice in the way we approach and respond to difficult situations – for many, taking responsibility for their choices is the hard, risky bit. And unless you're prepared to recognise the possibilities challenges pose, you'll crumble into 'poor me, it isn't fair' or 'it's not my problem'.

When we give away responsibility, we give away our power to make a difference and so rely on others to fulfill our needs. This can only lead to dissatisfaction when they don't deliver, resulting in blame and sapped energy levels.

By taking back our personal power – through choice – we can break the blame cycle and focus on what's really important.

There are always at least three choices:

1. To consciously make a choice

This means taking full personal responsibility for what happens to us. It means not blaming others and living with the results. This is the only way to be fully prepared for the consequences of our actions.

2. To 'choose' to go along with someone else's choice

If we do this consciously and we take responsibility for our part then we've made a choice. You'll often hear people say 'it wasn't my choice' or 'if it was up to me' – these people end up blaming others when things go wrong and being stuck with what to do next.

3. To do nothing

This is still a choice, although usually not recognised as one. We think by not making a choice that we protect ourselves from consequences but there are always consequences. Better to actively choose to 'do nothing' but prepare ourselves mentally for the consequences.

Think of a decision you're about to make and ask yourself

- *What choices are available?*
- *What are the excuses/beliefs I hold that limit my choices?*
- *What is stopping me choosing what I really want?*
- *What am I missing that would give rise to more choices? Use 'what-if' scenarios e.g. What if it was going to be easy?*

Blame only keeps us stuck and powerless so start getting into the habit of taking full responsibility and making conscious choices...you never know what opportunities might surface.

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