

Personal Responsibility (I)

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1 The Statement

A statement I've made that I think is important and valuable regarding personal philosophy and personal responsibility is:

"No one will ever be as responsible for what you do as you are."

I tend to favor philosophies that emphasize personal responsibility and accountability for your actions. I think people are often inclined to cite circumstances or external pressures for justifying poor behavior or decisions. I think, ultimately, the way a person behaves at the critical moment of decision is most important. The past conditions of course inform the decision, but the morality or character of a decision or action cannot be judged based on offenses against the decision maker. Carrying the resentment of past slights or using the excuse of some frustration in present decisions is at best a weakness of character.

This is obviously a very stoic, harsh standard of judgement. I recognize the importance of past conditioning or emotions in determining a person's state and behavior. I think my statement gives leeway for other influences. This isn't really a quantitative statement, but whether my proposal indicates a plurality or majority, many other influences can be important.

The major qualm I have about my statement is regarding deception or conditioning. Suppose a person is conditioned with a falsehood or even a poor or incorrect attitude or position regarding something. I don't know if there is a reasonable modification or defense of my statement in this case. Perhaps it would have to be modified to accept the conditioning, then the morality of the circumstance be re-evaluated? This quickly becomes an issue of determining a moral standard or moral framework again. Relativistic morality would present a simple solution, but is not appealing to me, at least.

Anyways, for me, this is always about individual responsibility and volition over merely accepting the instruction of others without moral evaluation or acting because of past offenses against oneself. This was inspired by [the CriticalDrinker's video on Falling Down](#) specifically, the important line spoken by main character Bill, [one of the Drinker's favorite lines](#). This case in particular indicates what I am inclined to label an abdication of moral agency. Bill has evidently left the definition of what's good to do to some "they" (not to be overly mocking here, we all often perform similar acts), and has been surprised to find he is not in accordance with what is broadly considered moral (a standard which he seems to ultimately sympathize with, of only because of its acceptance by apparently trusted characters).

What you do is ultimately on your shoulders.