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## THE

## Success

## Principles

Jack Canfield

**YOU HAVE TO GIVE UP COMPLAINING**

*The man who complains about the way the ball bounces is likely the one who dropped it.*

LOU HOLTZ

The only coach in NCAA history to lead six different college teams to postseason bowl games, and winner of a national championship and “coach of the year” honors; now an ESPN football analyst

Let’s take a moment to really look at complaining. In order to complain about something or someone, you have to believe that something better exists. You have to have a reference point of something you prefer that you are not willing to take responsibility for creating. Let’s look at that more closely.

If you didn’t believe there was something better possible-more money, a bigger house, a more fulfilling job, more fun, a more loving partner-you couldn’t complain. So you have this image of something better and you know you would prefer it, but you are unwilling to take the risks *required to create it*. Complaining is an ineffective response to an event that does not produce better outcome.

Think about this . . . people only complain about things they can do something about. We don’t complain about the things we have no power over. Have you ever heard anyone complain about gravity? No, never. Have you ever seen an elderly person all bent over with age walking slowly down the street with the aid of a walker complaining about gravity? Of course not.

But why not? If it weren’t for gravity, people wouldn’t fall down the stairs, planes wouldn’t fall out of the sky, and we wouldn’t break any dishes. But nobody complains about it. And the reason is because gravity just exists. There is nothing anyone can do about gravity, so we just accept it. We know that complaining will not change it, so we don’t complain about it. In fact, because it just is, we use gravity to our advantage. We build aqueducts down mountainsides to carry water to us. And we use drains to take away our waste.

Even more interesting is that we choose to play with gravity, to have fun with it. Almost every sport we play uses gravity. We ski, skydive, high jump, thro discus and the javelin, play basketball, and golf-all of which require gravity.

The circumstances you complain about are all situations you can change-but you have chosen not to. You can get a better job, find a more

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Loving partner, make more money move to where the jobs are, live in a nicer house, and eat healthier food. But all of these things would require you to change.

Refer to this list on page 11. You could:

Learn to cook healthier food.

Say no in the face of peer pressure.

Quit and find a better job.

Take the time to conduct due diligence.

Trust your own gut feelings.

Go back to school to pursue your dream.

Take better care of your possessions.

Reach out for help.

Ask others to assist you.

Take a self-development class.

Sell or give away the dogs.

But why don’t you simply do those things? It’s because they involve risks. You run the risk of being unemployed, left alone, or ridiculed and judged by others. You run the risk of failure, confrontation, or being wrong. You run the risk of your mother, your neighbors, or your spouse disapproving of you. Making a change might take effort, money, and time. It might be uncomfortable, difficult, or confusing. And so, to avoid risking any of those uncomfortable feelings and experiences, you stay put and complain about it.

As I stated before, complaining means you have a reference point for something better that you are unwilling to take the risk of creating. Either accept that you are making the choice to stay where you are, take responsibility for your choice, and stop complaining . . . or . . . take the risk of doing something new and different to create your life exactly the way you want it.

If you want to get from where you are to where you want to be, of course you’re going to have to take that risk.

So make the decision to stop complaining, to stop spending time with complainers, and get on with creating the life of your dreams.

Pete Carroll, the coach of the NFL Seattle Seahawks football team, which won the 2014 Super Bowl, has three rules for his team :(1)ALWAYS protect the team; (2) No whining, no complaining, and no excuses and (3) be early. These are the rules of a Super Bowl championship team. They are worth adapting.

Jack Canfield

THE $2: 00 GAME

Here’s an exercise you can do in your home or in your office. Its one we do in ours and in our seminars. Find a large jar or a fishbowl and label it No BLAMING, No COMPLAINTS, No EXCUSES. Every time you or someone in your group catches themselves blaming someone else, complaining about something, or making an excuse for their lack of results, the offender has to put $2.00 in the jar-not as punishment, but as a technique to deepen everyone’s awareness that these behaviors have a cost.

YOU’ARE COMPLAINING TO THE WRONG PERSON

Have you ever noticed that people almost always complain to the wrong person-to someone who can’t do anything about their complaint? They go to work and complain about their spouse; then they come home and complain to their spouse about the people at work. Why? Because it’s easier; it’s less risky. It takes courage to tell your spouse that you are not happy with the way things are at home. It takes courage to ask for a behavioral change. It also takes courage to ask your boss to plan better so that you don’t end up working every weekend. But only your boss can do anything about that. Your spouse can’t.

Learn to replace complaining with making requests and taking action that will achieve your desired outcomes. That is what successful people do. That is what works. If you find yourself in a situation you don’t like, either work to make it better or leave. Do something to change it or get the heck out. Agree to work on the relationship or get a divorce. Work to improve working conditions or find a new job. Either way, you will get a change. As the old adage says, “don’t just sit there (and complain), do something.” And remember, it’s up to you to make the change, to do something different. The world doesn’t owe you anything. You have to create it.

YOU EITHER CREATE OR ALLOW

EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS TO YOU

To be powerful, you need to take the position that you create or allow everything that happens to you. By *create*, I mean that you directly cause something to happen by your actions or inactions. If you walk up to a man in a bar who is bigger than you and has obviously been drinking for a long

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time, and say to him, “you are really ugly and stupid”, and he jumps off the bar stool, hits you in the jaw, and you end up in the hospital- you created that. That’s an easy-to understand example.

Here’s one that maybe harder to swallow. You work late every night. You come home tired and burned out. You eat dinner in a coma and then sit down in front of the television to watch a basketball game. You’re too tired and stressed out to do anything else- like go for a walk or play with the kids. This goes on for years. Your wife asks you to talk to her. You say, “Later! I’m watching the game!”Three years later, you come home to an empty house and a note she has left and taken the kids. You created that one, too!

Other times, we simply allow things to happen to us by our inaction and our unwillingness to do what is necessary to create or maintain what we want:

* You didn’t follow through on your threat to take away privileges if the kids didn’t clean up themselves, and now the house looks like a war zone.
* You didn’t demand he join you in counseling or leave first time he hit you, so now you’re still getting hit.
* You didn’t attend any sales and motivational seminars because you were too busy and the new kid just won the top sales award.
* You didn’t make the time to take the dogs to obedience training, and now they’re out of control.
* You didn’t take time to maintain your car, and now you’re sitting by the side of the road with your car broken down.
* You didn’t go back to school, and now you are being passed over for a promotion.

Realize that you are not the victim here. You stood passively by and let it happen. You didn’t say anything, make a demand, make a request, say no, try something new, or leave.

YELLOW ALERTS

Be aware that nothing ever just “happens” to you. Just like the “yellow alerts” in the *Star Trek* television series and movies, you almost always receive advance warnings- in the form of telltale signs, comments from others, gut instinct, or intuition- that alert you to the impending danger and give you time to prevent the unwanted outcome.

Jack Canfield

You are getting yellow alerts all the time. There are *external* yellow alerts:

He keeps coming home later and later with alcohol on his breath.

The client’s first check bounced.

He screamed at his secretary.

His mother warned you.

Your friends told you.

And there are *internal* yellow alerts:

That feeling in your stomach

That fleeting thought that just maybe …

That intuition that said …

That fear that emerged

That dream that woke you up in the middle of the night

We have a whole language that informs us:

Clues, inklings, suspicions

The handwriting on the wall

I had a feeling that …

I could see it coming for a mile.

My gut feeling told me.

These alerts give you time to change your response (R) in the E + R = O equation. However, too many people ignore the yellow alerts because paying attention to them would require them to do something that is uncomfortable .It is uncomfortable to confront your spouse about the cigarettes in the ashtray that have lipstick on them. It is uncomfortable to speak up in a staff meeting when you are the only one who feels that the proposed plan won’t work. It is uncomfortable to tell someone you don’t trust them.

So you pretend not to see and not to know because it is easier, more convenient and less uncomfortable, avoids confrontational, keeps the peace, and protects you from having to take risks.

LIFE BECOMES MUCH EASIER

Successful people, on the other hand, face facts squarely. They do the uncomfortable and take steps to create their desired outcomes. Successful

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People don’t wait for disasters to occur and then blame something or someone else for their problems.

Once you begin to respond quickly and decisively to signals and events as they occur, life becomes much easier. You start seeing improved out-comes both internally and externally. Old internal self-talk such as I feel like a victim;I feel used; nothing ever seems to work out for me is replaced with I feel great; *I am in control; I can* *make things happen.*

External outcomes such as “Nobody ever comes to our store; we missed our quarterly goals; people are complaining that our new product doesn’t work” are transformed into “We have more money in the bank; I lead the division in sales; our product is flying off the shelves.”

SIMPLE ISN’T NECESSARILY EASY

Though this principle is simple, it is not necessarily easy to implement. It requires concentrated awareness, dedicated discipline, and a willingness to experiment and take risks. You have to be willing to pay attention to what you are doing and to the results you are producing. You have to ask yourself, your family, your friends your colleagues, your managers, your teachers, your coaches, and your clients for feedback. “Is what I’m doing working? Could I be doing it better? Is there something more I should be doing that I am not? Is there something I am doing that I should stop doing? How do you see me limiting myself?”

Don’t be afraid to ask. Most people are afraid to ask for feedback about how they are doing because they are afraid of what they are going to hear. There is nothing to be afraid of. The truth is the truth. You are better off knowing the truth than not knowing it. And once you know, you can do something about it. You cannot improve your life, your relationships, your game, or your performance without feedback.

Slow down and pay attention. Life will always give you feedback about the effects of your behavior if you will just pay attention. If your golf ball is always slicing to the right, if you’re not making sales, if you’re getting Cs in all your college courses, if your children are mad at you, if your body is tired and weak, if your house is a mess, or if you’re not happy-this is all feedback. It is telling you that something is wrong. This is the time to start paying attention to what is happening.

Ask yourself: How am I creating or allowing this to happen? What am I doing that’s working that need to be doing more of? Should I do more practicing mediating delegating trusting listening asking questions?