YOU HAVE TO GIVE UP ALL YOUR EXCUSES

Ninety-nine percent of all failures come from

People who have a habit of making excuses.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

Chemist who discovered over 325 uses for the peanut

If you want to create the life of your dream, then you are going to have to take 100% responsibility for your life as well. That means giving up all your excuses, all your victim stories, all the reasons why you can’t and why you haven’t up until now, and all your blaming of outside circumstances. You have to give them all up forever.

You have to take the position that you have always had the power to make it different, to get it right, and to produce the desired result. For whatever reason—ignorance, lack of awareness, fears, needing to be right, the need to feel safe—you choose not to exercise that power. Who knows why? It doesn’t matter. The past is the past. All that matters know is that from this point forward you choose—that’s right, it’s a choice—to act as if you are 100% responsible for everything that does or doesn’t happen to you. I create that? What was I thinking? What were my beliefs? What did I say or not say? What did I do or not do to create that result? How did I get the other person to act that way? What do I need to do differently next time to get the result I want?

If something doesn’t turn out as planned, you will ask yourself, how did

A few years after I met Mr. Stone, Dr. Robert Resnick, a psychotherapist in Los Angeles, taught me a very simple but very important formula that made this idea of 100% responsibility even clearer to me. The formula is:

**E+R=O**

**(Event+ Response= Outcome)**

The basic idea is that every outcome you experience in life (Whether it is success or failure, wealth or poverty, health or illness, intimacy or estrangement, joy or frustration) is the result of how you have responded to an earlier event or events in your life.

If you don’t like the outcomes you are currently getting, there are two basic choices you can make.

**1. You can blame the event (E) for your lack of results (O).** In other words, you can blame the economy, the economy, the weather, the lack of money, your lack of education, racism, gender bias, the current administration in Washington, your parents, your wife or husband, your boss’s attitude, your employees, the system or lack of systems, and so on. If you’re a golfer, you’ve probably even blamed your clubs and the course you played on. No doubt all these factors do exist, but if they were the deciding factor, nobody would ever succeed.

Jackie Robinson would never have played major league base-ball, Barrack Obama would never have become president of the United States, Sidney Poitier and Denzel Washington would never have become movie stars, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer would never have become U.S senators, Bill Gates would never have founded Microsoft, and Steve jobs would never have started Apple Computers. For every reason why it’s not possible, there are hundreds of people who have faced the same circumstances and succeeded.

Lots of people overcome these so-called limiting factors, so it can’t be the limiting factors, so it can’t be the limiting factors that limit you. It is not the external conditions and circumstances that stop you—it is you! We stop ourselves! We think limiting thoughts and engaged in self-defeating behaviors. We defend our self-destructive habits (such as drinking, smoking, and not getting enough sleep) with indefensible logic. We ignore useful feedback, fail to continuously educate ourselves and learn new skills, waste time on the trivial aspects of our lives, engage in idle gossip, eat unhealthy food, fail to exercise, spend more money than we make, fail to invest in our future, avoid necessary conflict, fail to tell the uncomfortable truth, don’t ask for what we want—and then wonder why our lives don’t work.

**2. You can instead simply change your responses (R) to the events (E) – the way things are—until you get the outcomes (O) you want.** You can change your thinking, change your communication, change the pictures you hold in your head (your images of yourself and the world), and change your behavior—the things you do. That is all you really have any control over anyway. Unfortunately, most of us are so run by our habits that we never change our behaviors. We get stuck in our conditioned responses—to our spouses and our children, to our colleagues at work, to our customers and our clients, to our students, and to the world at large. We are a bundle of conditioned reflexes that operate outside of our control. You have to regain control of your thoughts, your images, your dreams and day dreams, and your behavior. Everything you think, say, and do need to become intentional and aligned with your purpose, your values, and your goals.

IF YOU DON’T LIKE YOUR OUTCOMES,

CHANGE YOUR RESPONSES

Let’s look at some examples of how this works.

I remember living in Los Angeles during a terrible earthquake. Two days later, I watched as a CNN reporter interviewed people commuting to work. The earthquake had damaged one of the main freeways leading into the city. Traffic was at a standstill, and what was normally a 1-hour drive had become a 2- or 3-hour drive.

The CNN reporter knocked on the window of one of the cars stuck in traffic and asked the driver how he was doing.

He responded angrily, “I hate California. First there were fires, then floods, and now earthquake! No matter what time I leave in the morning, I’m going to be late for work. This sucks!”

Then the reporter knocked on the window of the car behind him and asked the second driver the same question. This driver was all smiles.