



TESS Newsletter

Accordance to Article 7  
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Episode 103

“ Turning Possibilities into Realities ”

## Building a Global Movement for Change [UNSG]: The Promise (part 35)



**"Working Hard at Working Smart" (part XLVI)**

# 2014 : Raising the Bar: The Power of Responsibility



“We need to empower our people so they can take more responsibility for their own lives in a world that is ever smaller, where everyone counts...We need a new spirit of community, a sense that we are all in this together...”

William, Jefferson, “Bill” Clinton, 42nd U.S. President

## The future we want: The Promise: The Force Beyond

### Motivation: The Power of Responsibility

*By Jeff Herring*

One of the things I've noticed about successful people is that they have a clear understanding of the relationship between cause and effect in their lives. Successful people understand that if they want something, they have to do all the necessary things to get it.

**"If I do this, then that will happen. If I don't do that, then this will happen." This important skill allows successful people to anticipate and plan for the future.**

#### **Our culture teaches the opposite of responsibility**

Unfortunately, we live in a culture that teaches the opposite of responsibility. If something good happens, it's luck. If something bad happens, it's definitely someone else's fault, certainly not mine.

**The belief that we are not responsible sabotages all the power that can be found in taking responsibility for our lives.**

When it comes to understanding the power of responsibility, there are three main areas we need to understand. The first has to do with the concept of maturity, the second involves something I call "the ability to respond," and the third has to do with four things for which we are always responsible.

#### **Maturity**

We are born male or female. We must choose to become men and women. One of the best definitions of maturity I've ever heard is that we become a man or woman when we take responsibility for our lives. This involves taking responsibility for our attitude, choices and actions. More on this later.

Author and speaker Edwin Louis Cole offers us five characteristics of someone who is immature and/or irresponsible. See if any of these sound familiar -

- ◆ demanding your own way
- ◆ insensitivity to others
- ◆ believe and act like you are the center of the universe

- ◆ temper tantrums
- ◆ unreasonable - can't be reasoned with

If you notice yourself in any of these characteristics, read on, because here come two ways to begin to take responsibility.

#### **React vs. Respond So What Are We Responsible for Anyway?**

So what are we responsible for anyway? I'm glad you asked. In all but the most extreme of situations, we are always responsible for these four things -

**Our attitude** - Even in really crummy situations, we can still control our attitude. If you are stuck in traffic, you can yell and curse, honk your horn and rail against whoever built the roads. Or you can listen to music or a tape, have a conversation, or watch other people react. Either way, you're stuck in traffic.

**Our choices** - Each of us is given the power of choice in our lives. Yet we so often and so easily give it up. Seizing control of our choices is one powerful way to take responsibility for our lives.

**Our actions** - Because we have the power of choice, we have control over the actions we choose to take. I realize that what I am saying may be heresy to some in our "victim mentality" society. That doesn't make it any less true, however.

**The consequences of our attitude, choices and actions** - Here's the scary part. Many times we don't have control over the consequences. Once a cause is set in motion, it can be difficult or impossible to stop. We are still responsible for the consequences. That's why it's so important to take responsibility for our attitude, choices and actions.

**Maturity, responding instead of reacting, and taking control of our attitude, choices and actions.**

**That's a prescription for accessing the power and strength of responsibility in our lives.**

## What Causes a Lack of Responsibility?

People duck responsibility for reasons ranging from simple laziness or a fear of failure, through to a sense of feeling overwhelmed by the scale of a problem or a situation.

Whatever the reason, if people fail to take responsibility, they'll fail in their jobs, they'll fail their teams, and they'll fail to grow as individuals. All of this makes it important to address the issue.

## Signs and Symptoms

Sometimes it isn't obvious when people are shirking their responsibilities, but there are several signs to watch out for.

*These include:*

- ◆ Lacking interest in their work, and in the well-being of the team.
- ◆ Blaming others for mistakes and failures.
- ◆ Missing deadlines.
- ◆ Avoiding challenging tasks and projects; and not taking risks.
- ◆ Regularly complaining about unfair treatment by team leaders and team members – and engaging in self-pity.
- ◆ Avoiding taking initiative, and being dependent on others for work, advice, and instructions.
- ◆ Lacking trust in team members and leaders.
- ◆ Making excuses regularly – they may often say "It's not my fault," or, "That's unfair."

## Make No Excuses

*By Susan M. Heathfield*

Excuses for failure, excuses about your choices in life, excuses about what you feel you have accomplished fuel dysfunctional thinking – and consequently, undesirable actions and behaviors. Making excuses instead of taking one hundred percent responsibility for your actions, your thoughts, and your goals is the hallmark of people who fail to succeed.

Part of the power of taking responsibility for your actions is that you silence the negative, unhelpful voice in your head. When you spend your thinking time on success and goal accomplishment, instead of on making excuses, you free up the emotional space formerly inhabited by negativity.

The next time you catch yourself making an excuse, whether for the late project, the unmet goal, or the job you work, gently remind yourself - no excuses. Spend your thought time planning your next successful venture. Positive thinking becomes a helpful habit. Excuses fuel failure.

## Making a difference...

**Do more than belong: Participate.**  
**Do more than care: Help.**  
**Do more that believe: Practice.**  
**Do more than be fair : Be Kind.**  
**Do more that forgive: Forget.**  
**Do more that dream: Work.**

William Arthur Ward (1921-1994)  
 Author, Educator, Motivational Speaker

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**The journey continues...**