

How to Take One Hundred Percent Responsibility for Your Relationship so that it Nurtures and Sustains You

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Taking one hundred percent responsibility (as an individual) for everything that shows up in your relationship is a process filled with grace and moments of insight. At our workshops, this idea of one hundred percent responsibility invariably meets resistance from those who refuse to let their spouse off the hook from everything they ever did that was rude, disrespectful, hurtful, or selfish. Because it can instigate real change, creating peace, contentment, and empowerment at the same time, it is worth it.

The first thing to do when learning to take this level of responsibility for your relationship is to let yourself off the hook from having to be perfect. It is a process and you will only frustrate yourself if you make it not all right to sometimes fail at your intention. Taking this level of responsibility for any relationship in your life, you will find you can improve every relationship.

The second thing to do is for you to teach you a new inner dialogue. The next time your spouse, friend, or employer is rude, disrespectful, hurtful, or selfish, take responsibility by claiming inside yourself that you created this. A voice inside will argue with you that you did NOT create it. It will shout that it is his entire fault (or her entire fault)! This kind of argument setting up inside you is normal. It is all right to indulge the argument for a time. Eventually, though, you need to move on to the third step.

The third step is to try again. Every time you attempt to take one hundred percent responsibility for creating whatever shows up in your relationship, go deeper. Using the example of a husband whose wife is chronically rude to him, the next level might be acknowledging that you created this hurt from her because you taught her it was OK to treat you this way. From there you may be able to go deeper still or you might blame yourself instead of her. You might feel like a jerk for allowing such disrespect. The risk at this step is being angry with both the other person and yourself!

The next steps are all about trying again, going deeper and deeper. Although it may take many attempts that occur hourly or over a period of days, you eventually want the inner dialogue to sound something like this:

I created this. I have actually created this kind of disrespect a lot in my life. This type of disrespect, this is my issue. I can do something about it. I do not have to continue making it all right for people to treat me this way.

If I am attracting this kind of disrespect, how must I really feel about myself? How do I disrespect me? I am going to get in touch with how I disrespect myself and I am going to explain to my wife that I am done with hiring her to be rude to me.

This is my issue. The degree to which I manifest it in my life will tell me how I am doing in terms of increasing self-respect and decreasing disrespect. It is that simple.

The more you practice this level of taking responsibility, the more you will see your world turning up differently each day. Another way to use this technique makes it a healing technique for those relationships with which you cannot get together for closure or healing. Whether separated by death or circumstance, this technique used the same way heals.

For instance, years ago I (Sarah) participated in a weekend workshop with an instructor whom I perceived to be a bully. I was one of several on the receiving end of her bullying and I deeply resented it. For a variety of reasons, although the rage and resentment clearly showed on my face and in my body language, I refrained from lashing out and chose to get through the weekend as best I could. Because of my passive aggression, I spent months beyond that weekend periodically imagining how I wish I had told her off. With every fantasy, my rage grew and the vehemence with which I told her off inside my head got uglier. My blood pressure would rise and I probably experienced dumps of cortisol in my body because the fantasy was so real!

I ended every one of those fantasies with internal dialogue trying to take responsibility for what I created. Invariably, I would make myself stop the inner turmoil because I could not get past feeling like a victim.

I finally got tired of the cortisol dumps in my system and simply quit gratifying myself with the daydreams. Time helped because I never had to be around her again. Whenever I would revisit that weekend I would seethe a little but mostly found myself embarrassed that I had allowed me to be treated so badly. I shifted from being furious with her to feeling frustrated with me. That did not yet get at taking one hundred percent responsibility for creating that relationship in the way it showed up in my life.

Then recently during church out of seemingly nowhere I thought: When I feel bullied, that is my issue. The thought immediately brought this instructor to mind. However, that one thought was all there was and I knew I was finished with the struggle. End of sentence, end of thought, full stop. With that perfectly clear insight, I completed processing what I experienced as one of the most shaming and frustrating relationships of my life. When I feel bullied, that is my issue.

That statement does not lead to chewing on fantasies about that weekend. I have no desire to figure out what I wish I had said and done. I simply get that I am responsible and when I feel bullied, it is my issue.

I do not like bullies. I do not know how I will react the next time I come across one. I do not want to create one crossing my path anytime soon! However, if I do come across another bully, I look forward to seeing how I react differently because of this process. In the meantime, this distant, past relationship with this instructor no longer haunts me.

It is a process filled with grace and moments of insight. Taking one hundred percent responsibility for how your relationships show up in your life can change your life!

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There is a secret to relationship success that is direct, simple, and effective. We and others have used it to transform marriages that felt burdensome and hurtful into marriages filled with love and satisfaction.

You can discover this secret for yourself in the e-workbook called *Creating the Love You Want: Five Unique Steps to Improve Your Marriage*. Go to <http://www.CreateTheLoveYouWant.com> and order your copy right now. With it, you can begin making a difference for yourself tonight!