



## Who is Responsible for My Life Anyway? YOU MEAN IT'S UP TO ME?

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The only person responsible for the quality of your life is you.

For many of us, our initial response to adversity, is to search for someone or something other than ourselves to blame. When life throws down it's challenges or we are not satisfied with specific areas of our lives, we try to find a way to blame anyone or anything else - our parents, our boss, our job, even the economy. It has to be someone else's fault! When obstacles arise, or we are deeply challenged in some way, we put our clear thinking and better judgment aside, and cast about for a place to offload responsibility for the mess we find ourselves in. Rather than reflect on how we may have contributed to our current situation, we spend inordinate amounts of time and energy looking for ways to absolve ourselves of responsibility for our own lives!

Your happiness and success in this life is your responsibility.

To achieve success, you must clearly believe that you have the power to shape your own life. You must also believe that outside factors do not prevent you from achieving your goals. It is a mistake to make other people responsible for your feelings and behaviour. When we engage in destructive behaviour, it is our choice and the results are our responsibility. The smoker with a terrible cough often blames the cigarettes, rather than taking responsibility for his own choice to smoke.

If you're not getting the results you want, it may be useful to consider choosing a different response to old situations. Most of us react to situations in predictable, habitual ways. By always reacting the same way to our partners, our children, our colleagues, we will always get the same result. When we react habitually to familiar situations, we are not consciously choosing our behaviour, and then we wonder why nothing ever changes. In order to regain control over our responses, we need to ensure that each choice we make is a mindful one that reflects

### *What is Life Coaching Anyway?*

Over the past few years there has been an explosion in the level of interest of coaching in both the personal and professional spheres. But, what exactly is coaching anyway?

Sometimes it is easiest to talk about the things that it is not. It is not therapy, counseling, or mentoring. It does not attempt to fix, direct, or provide advice. Rather it is a tool that empowers people to grow and flourish in any direction that they choose. It is a process that allows clients to find their own answers, their own way.

Coaching provides an opportunity for people to examine their life situations honestly, and without fear of judgment. The focus is on positive change and discovering the resources already within the client to move them forward to their next best level.

You can expect coaching sessions to be completely focused on you. Your coach is trained to see the very best in you, even when you can't see it yourself. Your coach will act as your partner to help you achieve a clearer, more accurate sense of yourself, help you to determine what you really want in your life, and encourage you to consistently practice actions that will help you to realize your dreams. Your coach will focus on your strengths, challenge your perspectives and hold you accountable for putting your plan into action.

So, what is coaching anyway? Well, it's a service designed for anybody who wants to create positive change in his or her lives. Simply put, it is having a partner who will work alongside you as you discover your own answers, and create the life you were meant to live. That's coaching!



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what we want or need right now.

Successful people take action to achieve their goals. Inaction is also a form of relinquishing responsibility for your life. Remaining passive and waiting for something to happen to you, and not doing what is necessary to create what you want, will not create your desired result. Inaction toward a goal can be as destructive as habitual responses are. If you choose not to maintain your car (inaction), you cannot blame the car when you are left stranded on the side of the road.

So what makes taking responsibility for our own lives so difficult? The hard part is that if you want a different outcome, something has to change. And change is hard. It involves risk, it's uncomfortable, and there is often a certain amount of fear that accompanies change. Change can cost money, take time, and require a fair amount of energy. The choice becomes staying where you are and accepting life as it is, or taking a leap into action, stepping out of your comfort zone, and moving closer to your desired future.

So, how do we get started?

A great way to get started is to do some self reflection. Next time you ask your child to pick up his clothes off the floor, take note of your own reaction to what happens. If the typical response is to pick them up yourself because you've been through this scenario a hundred times before, notice your own habitual response. Once you are aware that your habitual response is to do it yourself and then complain afterwards, then simply becoming aware of how you typically respond allows you to make a mindful choice. You can then look at how you contribute to this ongoing pattern, and understand that it will not change until you change your response to it. In this case, you contribute by always picking up the clothes yourself. You have a belief about this situation that if you don't do it yourself, it will never get done. This belief, that your child will never do it, drives your behaviour and your habitual response. Once you're aware of your pattern, then you can consider what you might do differently that might create a different outcome. After trying a different response - perhaps leaving the clothes and creating some consequences for the child, then you will be in a position to assess whether your new choice is working or not. Obviously this is a simplistic example, but the concept remains the same for many situations.

By responding in a more mindful and less automatic manner, you are more likely to create the outcome you desire and be more responsible for your own life. Briefly, here are some questions to ask yourself next time you find yourself responding to a familiar situation in a predictable way.

1. How do I contribute to this situation?
2. What were my beliefs on this issue?
3. How well is that belief serving me?



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4. What might be a more useful belief?
5. What do I need to do differently?
6. What is/isn't working?

If we are to take responsibility for our own lives, we need to act in ways that produce more of what we do want, and less of what we don't want. And that means responding mindfully to situations and avoiding the habitual reactions that we would normally have.

The quality of your life is up to you. It is your responsibility!

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Catherine is the founder of UpShift Coaching, a private life coaching company that provides individuals and groups with the tools and support they need to design the best possible future they can create for themselves. Prior to her career in coaching, Catherine worked in the health care industry as an Occupational Therapist. In addition, she is a

Personal Trainer Specialist certified by Can-Fit-Pro, and also holds a certification as a Nutrition and Wellness Specialist. With her background in health care and her wide range of other wellness training, Catherine is well suited for, and passionate about coaching people who want to create real and positive change in their lives.

Catherine holds certifications from both Adler International Learning, and the International Coach Federation.