

## COMMITMENT & RESPONSIBILITY

### CHAPTER 3

## COMMITMENT & RESPONSIBILITY

RESPONSIBILITY is defined as “a moral obligation to assume the consequences of our choices”. EACH OF US IS FUNDAMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS/HER OWN EVOLUTION: thereby each of us is responsible for the outcome of our own “soul purpose”. Thus, only we are accountable for our own decisions and must accept the consequences of our actions and reactions. “Human Responsibility” does not mean that we are being held accountable for the decisions of others.

It may be a difficult notion to accept, but you have been responsible for your life since before you were born! You chose your parents, your family life and even the country in which you were born. As long as you have the slightest doubt about this, you will not be in a position to change your life. You must understand this concept and take full responsibility in order to become empowered enough to take control of your life.

If you are unhappy with the consequences of your decisions, change your decisions. ONLY YOU CAN CREATE YOUR LIFE! In understanding this fully, you will also understand that others are also solely responsible for theirs. Let them take on that responsibility for their own sake and yours.

The most precious gift parents can give to their children is self-responsibility. For example: a child decides not to go to school one day because he “doesn’t feel like it” and he asks his mother to write a note to his teacher stating that he is sick. What he is doing is making a decision without wanting to assume the consequences. In this case, the mother should write a note stating “My son does not feel like going to school today.”, and tell the child: “You have made the decision not to go to school today - I will not lie for you. If you don’t want to go to school, that is your decision, but be prepared to face the consequences.”

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A younger child may test his wings in other ways, for example: on a cold day, he wants to play outside without a jacket. The mother, knowing how cold it is, suggests that he dress warmly. The child refuses. It is unnecessary (and usually ineffective) to press the child any further. If she tells him he will “catch cold out there”, he probably will, but if she accepts that it is her child’s responsibility to live by his own decisions, she will tell him: “If you should feel cold, come back and get your jacket”. The child’s attitude will become completely different if he is handed the responsibility of making his own decisions. He will not catch a cold because he has not been programmed to do so - he is not thinking about catching a cold. However, as soon as he realizes that it is colder outside than he thought, he will simply come in and put on his jacket. It is our nature to make our own decisions and children constantly assert their right to do so. If a parent is constantly making his child’s decisions, the child will tend to do the opposite of whatever he is told.

How many parents feel they have failed in their parenting? Why? Their children have not met their expectations- they have quit school or become thieves, they’ve spent time in jail or become drug addicts, or gotten themselves in any number of predicaments. Parents who blame themselves have assumed they are responsible for the decisions and choices made by their children. This is contrary to one of the great natural laws.

Great universal laws have been eternally in place to manage the universe: they are the physical, cosmic, psychic and spiritual laws that will be maintained regardless of how we choose to behave. We will suffer the consequences of contradicting these laws by experiencing disease, accidents and unhappiness. Breaking physical laws results in very obvious consequences. For example, a person drinking a glass of poison because “it looks like water, so it can’t be bad”, finds out that his body will react violently. He has broken a physical law. Believing or not in a particular truth does not alter the truth.

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The Law of Responsibility is part of the Law of Love, touching the depths of the soul. We are each responsible for ourselves - our “being”, our “belongings”. Feeling responsible for the actions and feelings of others can result in our own feelings of guilt. This is very uncomfortable for us, even more so when the expectations we have toward others are unmet. Disappointment, anger and frustration are the result - all of which cause despair and disease.

Every situation you encounter in your life is an opportunity for growth and personal evolution. Having chosen your own parents and your children, you have intentionally brought specific lessons forward to be learned in your life. Failure to acknowledge or take responsibility that you have chosen those around you for a reason will cause a great deal of unpleasantness because you will not understand why “negative” things are happening to you in regard to them.

As a parent, the most important lesson you can teach your children, as early as possible, is that they are self-responsible. If your 16-year old wants to quit school because he feels he is not learning anything of any value, I suggest you say to him: “The decision is yours, son, but consider the consequences. Do you realize that you will limit your choice of jobs and your income without a diploma? You will likely never do what you would really enjoy for a living without the proper education. Are you comfortable with that?” If he answers in the affirmative and he has made this decision on his own (without peer pressure), it is better to let him live out his own life experience. If you do not, he will do whatever it takes to challenge you and make you react. Remember, he can always go back to school.

If you are a parent or plan on becoming one, I’m sure the prospect of handing personal responsibility over to your children is unsettling. You are convinced you are responsible for them. Be assured, your only responsibility as a parent is to love and guide your children. Remember your own childhood - what stands out in your mind as being of primary importance? Not this or that toy, but the love and support of your parents. The

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most critical element in the child/parent relationship, or in any other relationship for that matter, is love. I will define love's true meaning in Chapter 4.

COMMITMENT is automatically implied when deciding to have a child. In entering a relationship of any kind, commitment is a "given". I will explain this fully.

You are not responsible for the happiness of the people around you, whether they are friends, family or co-workers. WHAT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR IS THE WAY YOU REACT TOWARD THE ATTITUDE PEOPLE HAVE TOWARD YOU. It is said that "You do not judge the worth of a man by what others say about him, but by what he says about others." When others are gentle, violent, critical or loving toward you, it is because you made it happen. Others are your mirror. The way they react toward you is based on the way you react toward yourself unconsciously. You must learn from this.

For example: If a certain person is very disagreeable and critical around you and you judge him as a disagreeable and critical person, it is because the you are disagreeable and critical with yourself and this person, being your mirror, is only there to help you become conscious of this. If you accept the fact that you are this way, I mean really accept, you will not be bothered by or attract disagreeable or critical people anymore.

A change in your own attitude will give you the impression that others around you are changing. The fact is, there is good in everyone - it is up to you to see it. Your thinking is all you have control of - you cannot control others, but your perception of them will change.

You are beginning to understand the notion of personal RESPONSIBILITY! That is why it is so important to become conscious of who you are inwardly - so that you can change your perception and, ultimately your reality.

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COMMITMENT is defined as a pledge of one's self to a position or a course of action. Commitments can be verbal or written, as in a contract, which binds you to another, whether it be an employee, a spouse, a partner, etc.

Parents make a commitment to their children when they decide to bring them into the world. That commitment entails providing the basic needs of life i.e.: food, shelter, education, love, respect and guidance. It does not mean that they must provide everything material that the children desire. The extras are not part of the basic commitment.

In a work situation, an employee is committed to fulfilling his job responsibilities and his employer is committed to paying him and to providing a safe and efficient work environment.

When one makes a commitment at home, at work or otherwise, even by agreeing to meet someone at a certain time for an appointment or whatever, it is important on a soul level to keep the commitment. "YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW" is one of the greatest laws of life - your integrity and your word are vital to your overall being. You cannot disengage yourself from responsibility, but you can disengage yourself from a previous commitment. Before doing so, be sure to evaluate the consequences, as it can be the precursor to problems in relationships. Before making such decisions, always ask yourself "What will this cost me in regard to my relationships, health, happiness, love...?" Remember - you always reap what you sow.

Here's an example: Perhaps you had promised to meet someone for a social engagement, but something came up in the meantime that you would prefer to do. You have a dilemma, you risk the other person feeling hurt by canceling your plans and pleasing yourself, or you (once again) find yourself spending the evening doing something you'd rather not be doing, pleasing others instead of yourself and possibly resenting them and yourself for it. The best solution is to call the person to whom you've made the commitment and be honest with them. Tell them something has come up that you really don't want to miss and work out a

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compromise. If you are sincere and straightforward, he will respect you for it.

The same applies in your relationship with yourself. If, for example, you've promised yourself you will exercise every morning. You have made a commitment to yourself. You adhere strictly to your exercise routine for the first few days, but gradually you begin to neglect your commitment. You can't find the time...you forget...finally the inevitable happens; you have completely stopped exercising. Instead of feeling guilty or becoming critical of yourself, treat yourself as you would a dear friend. Remind yourself that there is no need to be so hard on yourself - accept that you may not have been quite ready to make that commitment for whatever reason and try again to do so when you feel more prepared. Remind yourself that you have a responsibility to yourself and to those you love to be the best you can be - that you owe it to yourself and to them to be healthy. When you fully understand your reasons for making the commitment to exercise in the first place, you will be ready to do so. Detach yourself from the situation long enough to become objective about it instead of instilling guilt and anger in yourself. Before you know it, you will be happily exercising on a regular basis because you are ready to and have made it a very positive experience.

In relationships where you find yourself living with other people, it is essential that each member of the household understand that they have a commitment to the other members to carry their own weight. In a communal situation, everyone must contribute to the care and upkeep of the home. I would suggest that regular family meetings be established to determine the distribution of household chores and to evaluate on a regular basis how these chores are being carried out. Open discussion regarding the running of the home will ensure harmony and order. This applies whether the occupants are family, a couple, room-mates or bunk-mates.

Children will learn a great deal from these negotiations, about what it takes to actually run a home, how to interact with others in a team situa-

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tion, and how to deal with consequences. This method applies whether you are living with a family, sharing with other singles, or living as a couple. WE CAN HAVE EXPECTATIONS ONLY WHEN CLEAR COMMITMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE. Tell yourself “I will do”, not “I will try”. A clear commitment indicates certainty of action. Otherwise, there will be misunderstanding and disharmony.

### CHAPTER 3 EXERCISES

- » Choose a current situation in which you feel someone else is responsible for what is happening to you. Determine your own responsibility regarding the situation, and write it down. What commitments have you made regarding your responsibilities? Now get in touch with that person and go over, in detail, what is expected of each of you until it is clear to you and to the other.
- » Is there a current situation in which you feel responsible for someone else? Accept that that person is ultimately responsible for their own life, their choices and their decisions. Now, contact this person and discuss the issue of personal commitment until clear commitments have been determined.
- » Take a sheet of paper and list all the promises and commitments you can think of that you have made to yourself and to others. Which ones have you kept? Are there some from which you can comfortably disengage yourself? From this exercise, you will realize that there are many instances in which you have made commitments that you cannot possibly keep or that you would really prefer not to keep.
- » Write down what you need or want to commit to at this point in your life, both for yourself and for others. Be fair to them and to yourself and be conscious of whether you are overextending yourself. Be conscious, also, of your intent in each situation, remembering that you are not responsible for the happiness of others. Again, contact each

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of the people involved and make the responsibilities of each of these commitments clear to them and to yourself.

- » Repeat the following affirmation every moment you can, until you understand it fully. Then go on to the next chapter.

I AM THE ONLY PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR MY LIFE AND I ALLOW EVERYONE AROUND ME TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIRS.