



The Subterfuge Exclusion

Many people feel that if avoiding responsibility were a disease then there is an epidemic going on in the world right now. In fact, many individuals have become experts when it comes to cleverly shifting responsibility by perfecting the art of rationalizing, blaming, finger pointing, and circumventing. In some cases, even young children learn the skill of responsibility avoidance from an early age. In its most severe forms, the thinking that can fuel responsibility avoidance can be downright delusional.

Developing a healthy sense of responsibility is critical to the change process. It can be difficult to walk that thin line between reasons and excuses. Although both reasons and excuses are similar, there is one glaring difference. Reasons by nature are derived from an explainable cause and are based on some kind of legitimate explanation for an outcome. Consider some examples:

1. The reason that the car stopped running was because I forgot to stop and get gas
2. The reason that I was late to work was because I overslept this morning
3. The reason that I violated probation is because I kept getting high and got caught

Reasons can be traced to a clearly linked cause and effect type of relationship. Reasons, are in fact: reasonable. The goal of providing reasons is to explain an occurrence in a logical manner often supported by some form of tangible evidence. Reasons are derived from the realm of embracing acceptance of responsibility. Look again at all three above examples and notice the presence of an acceptance of responsibility as well as a rational, believable explanation for cause and effect

Excuses on the other hand, are also explanations, but excuses are mostly diversionary in nature. Unlike reasons which are fact-based and responsible, excuses are derived from a form of subterfuge

Subterfuge – n -an artifice or expedient used to evade a rule, escape a consequence, hide something, etc.

Excuses can be based in truth however the connection between one's behavior and its cause can be extremely vague or distant and at times nonexistent. Valid reasons are simple to explain whereas excuses may be extremely difficult or even impossible to prove. Consider some examples of excuses:

1. "God made me drop the ball so that is why we lost the game"
2. "If I was born rich, I would never have gotten into all of this trouble"
3. "I am a disorganized slob because my parents divorced when I was just 6"

In all three above examples, there may (or may not) be a degree of truth when it comes to explaining each circumstance however it may be impossible to prove a direct cause and effect



connection. Therefore when it comes down to it, excuses can be like a huge smoke screen clouding the ability to look at personal responsibility. In fact excuse making can be one of the biggest obstacles to making progress in life, especially when the primary focus of your energy is wasted on trying to prove that an excuse is valid. Surely life isn't fair and the world is full of injustice; that is the truth. Therefore we all have reasons and excuses why we may have problems and misfortunes and other struggles in life. With that said, however, doesn't it make more sense to focus on what you can do to make things better for yourself instead of practicing the useless art of making excuses, which in the end gets you nowhere?

Excuses are like counterfeit money, no matter how “valuable” they may seem to be at face value, in the end they are all equally worthless



For thought and discussion:

What excuses might be holding you back from moving forward today?

In place of making excuses, what is one aspect of your life that you can increase responsibility for improving by yourself instead of just waiting for things to get better?

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