

# Winning Way 1

## Own Your Choices

*People say to me, you were a roaring success.  
How did you do it? I go back to what my parents  
taught me. Apply yourself. Get all the education you can,  
but then, by God, do something. Don't just stand there;  
make something happen.*

—Lee Iacocca, president and CEO, Chrysler<sup>1</sup>

The first principle of this book is so important that I'm going to let you in on a little secret right up front: If this principle describes your approach to life, then you don't need my book. If you are someone who already takes responsibility for the choices you make and the consequences that may follow, then you are clearly *not* a member of the Whine Club. You won't find much in the following pages you don't already know and practice. For everyone else, stick around to learn how you can catch up. Here's what you'll learn to get you back on track:

- Why we enjoy blaming others so much.
- The difference between mistakes and choices.
- The 10 stops and starts of owning your choices.
- How you can move from being a Whiner in Denial to a Winner in Demand.

## Breaking the Whining Habit

Maybe you think that breaking the whining habit should be easy enough to do—certainly no more difficult than jettisoning other counterproductive, life-limiting behaviors from your life. You simply make up your mind to change and—voilà!—the next time a whining opportunity presents itself, you’ll change course like a train switching its tracks, and head in a new and more productive direction.

Once you’ve accepted the rapid-switch fantasy, then it’s very easy to imagine the *new you* out there taking responsibility and owning the consequences of all your decisions. “From this day forward,” you say to yourself after you’ve internalized this new, liberating, life-changing epiphany, “I will no longer blame others, and I *will* take full responsibility for all my actions. When I mess up I will *absolutely* accept both the blame and consequences of my actions!”

You feel lightheaded and giddy as you imagine your world up to now and then envision your new world *from this moment on!* In fact, you may feel so good about your decision that you call your best friend to share the news.

“What’s up, BFF?” you say with excitement in your voice. “I’ve got awesome news!”

“Oh, really? Tell me!” your friend says.

“You know that annoying tendency I have always had to never take responsibility for absolutely anything—you know, the habit that you say just drives you *nuts?*”

“Yes.”

“Well, it’s gone! Kaput! Not happening anymore. I’m done with that. From now on ‘personal responsibility’ will be my middle name! From now on, I’m going to be known as a doer, not a whiner. What do you think?”

[Silence.]

“Hey, buddy? You there?”

“Yes,” your friend says. “Sorry, I was just noting this day on my calendar so that I can remind you of this conversation the next time you tell me that your boss is a half-wit who ignores all your ideas.”

## The Natural State of Blame

Blaming comes so naturally to us it’s almost a knee-jerk reaction. Someone stops speaking to you for a minor misunderstanding—it’s their problem, not yours. You get fired from your job—it’s your manager’s fault because he didn’t appreciate your contributions. Your business or sales team loses customers or key clients—it’s the economy’s fault. You and your spouse or significant other don’t get along—it’s his or her fault.

Although it’s true that friends are sometimes unreasonable, bosses are often unfair, the world economy can be cruel and heartless, or those closest to you may be in need of some one-on-one time with Dr. Phil, at the end of the day the only pertinent question worth asking is this: “What am I going to do about it?” Like my mom always said, “Life’s not fair. Get used to it and get over it.”

Here’s a recent example of the blame game in action. I recently called the lost and found department of a car rental company to inform them that I had left my Day-Timer and laptop power cord in the car I had recently rented. After waiting on hold for close to 10 minutes, the sales agent who finally picked up the phone apologized and promised a return call within 20 minutes. Of course, I got no follow-up call, so I proactively called again, and got the same “we’ll call you back in 20 minutes” answer. On my third call back to the car rental agency, I was promised an “end of the day” return call.

Finally, two days and several more phone calls (one with a manager) later, I talked with the same sale representative who had not called me back initially. She offered to help, but first blamed the company and her boss for not staffing the front desk properly during busy, peak times of the day. She never said she was sorry for my inconvenience or frustration. That was her story, and she was sticking to it.

### **My Own Blame Game Story**

I shake my head in dismay when I think about my early years in the corporate setting. Believe it or not, I learned to play the blame game very well. I began to look to others as the root cause of negative outcomes or failures. It was a predictable routine: I'd spend time thinking the situation through, clearly considering my role in the outcome. Once I was sure that I'd left no stone unturned as to my own culpability, the finger-pointing and denial began. I didn't own my stuff, and I made excuses. It was *my* story, and I stuck to it!

We all know at some level that this blame game behavior is a road to nowhere. But like a lot of others who have made a radical shift in their approach to life or experienced a profound attitude change, it took a singularly awful and painful experience to convince me that I needed to take my life in a different direction.

Eighteen years ago I was a novice, but highly motivated management development training consultant for the Vanguard Group. Although I liked my job, what I really wanted to be was an internationally known motivational speaker and a successful professional development consultant and trainer. So when a seasoned motivational trainer (with a big reputation) showed up to conduct a one-day diversity-awareness session at my company, I took this as a sign from above that this was the right time to make my move.

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I introduced myself, and within three months I was traveling around the country presenting my own brand of diversity training as a subcontract employee of the training firm known as Tim Golden and Associates; it didn't take long for Tim to become my mentor and trusted friend. One day a client who had taken a particular interest in my diversity training style and approach, confided that they were going to end Tim's training contract. I was asked to continue providing training as an independent contractor until a new training firm was found.

When I approached Tim about taking the offer from the client company after his contract was terminated, he got angry, even though I was an independent subcontractor and not technically his employee. In spite of his ire, I stayed on with the client and continued training. I reasoned that if he was doing a credible job they would not have ended the contract—at least, that's what they told me.

That decision ended a valued relationship and, instead of facing the possibility that my own ethical compass was askew, I shifted the blame away from me through rationalization and blame shifting. The truth is that I made a horrible *choice*, and it's a choice I regret to this day. I just couldn't admit that my friend was absolutely right.

For me, this incident was the beginning of a blame game metamorphosis. The incident made crystal clear for me the *huge* difference between choices and mistakes. I realized with shocking clarity that I had made an awful choice in the situation—not a mistake. I could have chosen a much better path, but I didn't. I now take responsibility for that choice.

## Choices and Mistakes: What's the Difference?

Andy Andrews nailed the difference between choices and mistakes with unrivaled clarity in his classic book, *The Noticer*.<sup>2</sup> I was simply captivated by the following description. Andrews writes:

If one makes a mistake, then an apology is usually sufficient to get things back on an even keel. However—and this is a big *however*—most people do not ever know why their apology did not seem to have any effect. It is simply that they did not make a mistake; they made a choice...and never understood the difference between the two.

...If you are lost, wandering through a forest in the dark, unable to see, unaware that a cliff is nearby, and you stumble off the cliff and break your neck that is a mistake.... But let's say it's broad daylight. You are meandering about in a forest you've been told never to enter. There are No Trespassing signs everywhere, but you think you can slip in and slip out and not get caught. Now, again let's say you fall off a cliff and break your neck...that, my friend, was not a mistake. It was a conscious choice.

When one simply makes a mistake, an apology—an “I'm sorry”—will usually handle the situation. But when a choice has been identified, the only way to repair a relationship is by exhibiting true remorse and seeking forgiveness. Now in some cases, where money or property might have been involved, you should offer restitution, but showing real remorse and actually asking the question “Will you please forgive me?” is the only pathway to a new beginning in your business or personal life.

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## The Big Reg Story

Here's another example of this important concept about the difference between choices and mistakes, and the power of taking responsibility for both.

I met Reggie Hines in 1979 during my freshman year at Widener University. Big Reg and I were members of the football team, and he was probably one of the best and most gifted athletes I ever knew. He was 6'4" and carried around 235 pounds of muscle that he could translate into bursts of amazing speed and gridiron agility. Whereas many freshmen were happy to just make the varsity team, Reg played and started every game at tight end his freshman season, winning several offensive awards for his efforts.

Unfortunately, Big Reg transferred from Widener after only one year and enrolled at West Chester University (Pennsylvania). He earned All-Conference honors and went on to set a number of school records over the next couple of years, earning tryouts with the Dallas Cowboys and other NFL teams. It was a time of great possibility for Big Reg. He was living his dream and the hopes and dreams of his entire family—always a big weight to carry.

Then the Cowboys and other teams took a pass on the opportunity to sign Big Reg to a long-term contract. This was a big disappointment to the normally positive, can-do athlete, and he wasn't equipped to handle it in the end.

He gave up his dreams and moved on with his life—or so he thought. He got married, and started a family and a successful family auto-detailing business. But his failure to make a life as a professional football player constantly nagged and taunted him. Like many others who've had big disappointments in life, Reg turned to drugs for relief, which led inevitably to the loss of everything he once valued, including his family.

After several near-death scrapes, Big Reg did eventually decide to take responsibility for his life and decisions, and charted a new path for his life. Here's what he told me about his transformational experience as we sat at the famed Palestra watching the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University go at it for 40 spirited minutes on the basketball court:

*I blamed the Dallas Cowboys for not giving me a fair shot. I blamed the New York Giants for bringing me to camp and building up my hope after they had just won the Super Bowl with the two great tight ends they already had. I blamed my ex-wife for not being more understanding and supportive. I blamed my agent for not getting me more tryouts. I blamed everybody. But over the years I've had time to reflect on everything and I now realize it was my fault. I'm just blessed to still be living and to have the wonderful children, friends, and career that I have.*

Big Reg's story is a great example of how owning your choices and outcomes is so liberating. He made a conscious choice to change his mindset and choose a different way of interacting with the world. He said he made changes across the board, from strengthening his religious faith, to his dress and choice of associates, to his physical health and his connection to, and involvement in, his community. As my own mentor and friend, Mike Jones routinely points out to me during our coaching calls:

*Life is not what you've been taught; it's what you believe. It's not what you've experienced; it's the choices you've made as a result. It's not about what happened to you, it's about how you've remembered it. It's not what challenges have come your way; it's what you've seen as challenging. It's not what has appeared on*

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*your path; it is what you have accepted. When we accept personal responsibility for our lives, everything is possible.*

## **10 Stops and Starts to Owning Your Choices**

So, how do you get started on owning your choices? It's not really that hard. It's not rocket science or brain surgery or even as hard as driving through a thunderstorm with bad windshield wipers. You just have to decide to get started. But be forewarned: If you want to own your choices and take personal responsibility for your actions, you'll need to make a significant mindset shift away from your old habits, especially if you want your new attitude to stick and become a way of life. But it can be done.

The following are the steps I share with leaders, managers, individuals, and students around the world as I encourage them to embrace their personal power and to own their choices. It's a message that crosses cultures and customs. It's the first step in a process that sets in motion the cycle of taking responsibility that empowers and leads to the achievement of your goals in life. These 10 points are easy to read and visualize accomplishing, and all it takes to accomplish them are your personal dedication, strength of character, and patience. So, what do you have to lose except your old practices that are guaranteed to fail you?

## 10 Stops and Starts to Owning Your Choices



1. Stop being defensive when you're held accountable for your poor choices.
2. Stop being irritable and angry when you don't get your way.
3. Stop looking for what's wrong with the other person.
4. Stop being a victim.
5. Stop thinking negatively (and masking it by saying you're just keeping it real).



6. Start saying "I got this!" when the going gets tough.
7. Start asking for specific, clear feedback for improvement.
8. Start listening without judging.
9. Start focusing on the possibility and not the problem.
10. Start following through on your promises. Period.

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## The Details

1. **Stop being defensive when you're held accountable for your poor choices.** The next time your boss or manager confronts you with a mistake or poor choice you've made, don't start with a denial and put up an impenetrable defensive wall. If you keep doing this, you'll soon start to believe your excuses. Take time to focus on why you resort to this tactic. Embrace feedback. Consider it a gift. Learn from your choices and move on. Put down the boxing gloves. If someone is helping you with a character-building moment, just say, "Thank you," and make the necessary adjustments.
2. **Stop becoming irritable and angry when you don't get your way.** I know people with a 0-to-60 temper that's faster than an Indianapolis 500 race car. You can see it in their eyes as all their energy and body language coalesce around the disappointment of not getting their way. I'm going to keep it real here: Grow up! Stop being selfish and self-centered. The world doesn't revolve around you! There are always two sides to every situation. Lean into your discomfort. Seek alternatives. Grow and learn from the no's. It's easy to get mad. It's what most people do. Winners are always looking for ways to grow, not just go through adversity.
3. **Stop looking for what's wrong with the other person.** Come on. You can do it. Tilt the mirror your way. Even the late entertainer Michael Jackson has some advice for you here in the famous 1987 song "Man in the Mirror": "I'm looking at the man in the mirror; I'm asking him to

change his ways.”<sup>3</sup> Until you accept the possibility that you may be wrong, you will be stuck permanently blaming others. Mike Jones, my mentor, hit the sweet spot when he explained to me that we all have maps created through our upbringing and experiences. Unfortunately, we get in trouble when we think our map should be standardized across all humanity. Simply look in before you look out to blame others; check for your own responsibility.

4. **Stop being a victim.** As a recovered victim, I know firsthand how easy it is to fall into this trap. Being a victim is easier than being responsible. You feel as though everyone is against you. It’s never your fault. At a subconscious level, you begin to believe that you wear a bull’s-eye target on your back and the world is constantly target practicing. Change the script. Change your approach. Change your mind-set. Move from victim to victor!
5. **Stop thinking negatively (and masking it by saying you’re just keeping it real).** Negativity abounds in our society. It’s more prevalent than green grass on a golf course. I’m amazed by the number of people in my life, both professionally and personally, who routinely think and respond in negative terms. Simply put, you are what you think, say, and do. What *you* focus on becomes *your* focus. It’s not a hard concept to understand, but it’s exceptionally hard to put into practice. Rod Hairston, in his inspirational book, *Are You Up for The Challenge?* says this about positive and negative thinking:

You will bring into your life whatever you consistently hold in your thoughts. The thoughts that you send out will show up in your life. When I ask people, “What do you really want?” most people start their answer with, “Well, I know what I don’t want....” Or, they’ll say, “I don’t want to be exhausted,” or “I don’t want to be angry all the time.” Unfortunately, that’s how we’ve been trained our whole lives. We were taught to think about what we don’t want, so this thinking becomes automatic. If you spend your time thinking about what you don’t want, that’s what you’ll attract: more of what you don’t want.<sup>4</sup>

What’s hard about that concept? Once again, whether or not you follow through is your decision.

6. **Start saying “I got this!” when the going gets tough.** The best athletes thrive when the pressure is the greatest. Up to bat when the bases are loaded? No problem. Taking an overtime penalty shot when the division championship hangs in the balance? No worries. Professional athletes thrive on the exhilaration found on the other side of tough challenges—a 90-yard drive toward the end zone in the last 59 seconds of the game or a Hail Mary shot across the length of the basketball court that swooshes through the net as the buzzer sounds. Do these incredible scenarios always happen? Of course not, but the possibility of any other possibility playing out never crosses the mind of a seasoned athlete. From beginning

to end, these athletes take responsibility for the final outcome. They have an “accountability mind-set.” Remember: Winners work to create the outcomes they want. Whiners just complain about the final score and pass the blame to someone else.

7. **Start asking for specific, clear feedback for improvement.** Feedback and coaching have played a significant role in my life. I live for and welcome it. It’s absolutely true that seeing yourself as others see you is nearly impossible. Humans are not built for this sort of self-examination. You can’t see the skyline if you’re stuck in the traffic. Of course I’m not suggesting taking all feedback as the gospel truth. Not everyone has your best interests at heart. No surprise there. The trick is to use your Titans, mentors, and “true” friends to give you both praise (what you do well) and polish (what you should consider doing differently).

One of my Titans, Annie Hart, founder and owner of Breakthrough Coaching, Training and Storytelling, asked me during one of our coaching sessions if I ever get flustered or lose control of the room when I’m training or speaking. I answered, “No.” She then asked me if I get flustered and lose control at home during heated discussions. I admitted I did. Then she asked me if I might use the same techniques and tools at home as I do when training or speaking. I felt like I just won the lottery. She helped me to see something I’d never considered before. I know it seems obvious, but, as noted, self-awareness is not one of our core competencies. Finally (and this is key),

during your feedback moments, *listen* and don't interrupt, and make sure you understand the feedback. Here, the "I-know-what-you-think-I-said-but-that's-not-what-I-said" principle applies.

8. **Start listening without judging.** Do you listen to understand, or do you listen to criticize or find fault? Do you find yourself anxiously waiting for the other person to pause for a half-second so you can launch in with your own comments or pursue your own agenda? It's a good thing we're not given pop quizzes at the end of these one-sided conversations. One of the reasons people don't remember the feedback or instructions they're given is because their focus is to find fault with what the other person is saying. Or perhaps the person getting feedback is actively determining whether or not he should listen based on what he believes to be true. How often have you said, during a conversation, "That's not what I said"? We jump to judge! Stop being defensive. Stop right-fighting. You should ask the person you're having a conversation with whether or not she feels you're actively listening. Put down your judge's gavel and give new information a chance.
9. **Start focusing on the possibility and not the problem.** I alluded to this somewhat in Stop 5. Mike Jones, my mentor and empowerment expert, coined the acronym FOTO (focus on the outcome). We tend to focus on the distractions, the circumstances, the barriers, and the hurdles, and we give those factors way too much power and time. What you believe to be true generally turns out to be your reality. It really is standard "pop"

psychology, but nothing could be more dead-on accurate. If you believe you can start your own company and take your idea or talents to new levels, then you've taken the most important step. Belief must come before the *how* in order to make it happen. Whine Club members spend most of their time focusing on what might go wrong. You should focus on what you know *will* go right. As motivational guru and author Rod Hairston says:

Focus on possibilities and on the compelling future you're working toward, instead of dwelling on doubts and on an imperfect past. Focus on growing and expanding instead of fearfully staying in your comfort zone. Focus on abundance instead of scarcity. Focus on what is right with your life instead of what's wrong. When you do that, you'll give energy to the things you want in your life, which will help manifest them.<sup>5</sup>

10. **Start following through on your promises. Period.** This final point requires some bullet points for emphasis:

- STOP trying. START doing.
- Keep everyone in the loop.  
Communicate.
- Just say “no” if you don't really believe your own promise.
- Know that any financial promise not fulfilled is *always* a bad idea.
- Base your follow-up promise on what *you* have control over.

You likely could add to these bullet points, but the point is clear: You do have some control

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over the promises you make and, given how most humans operate, people do not delete their “disappointment files.” So, just take responsibility and get something done.

## Own Your Choices: A Winning Sustainability Plan

Now that you’ve got the basics down, it’s time to put some action plans in place. The following exercise is designed to help you take that next step.

If the first step toward change is your realization that something has to change, the following exercise should help you take that first step. It’s designed to let you make broad observations and commitments to change. We’ll get to more specific techniques later in the book, but for now, getting something down on paper is the goal. If you’d rather do this digitally, go to [www.noexcuses.com](http://www.noexcuses.com) and jot down your answers there.

The following is a set of circumstances and choices that apply to most of us. You will find two prompts per situation or topic. One is an **Up to Now** prompt, and the other is a **From Now On** prompt. You should find doing this exercise not that stressful and it should condition you for the harder work that follows.

### —Stops and Starts Exercise—

Think about how you have conducted your own life up until now. If possible, you should do this contemplation when you are not rushed or distracted by anything else. So try not to do this exercise while watching reruns of *Saturday Night Live*, while listening to NPR, or during your commute

on the train or bus. You really need to do some serious self-assessment for this activity to do you any good.

When you're ready, answer the following questions based on the 10 Stops and Starts of taking responsibility. Be honest. No one is watching or listening. If you can do this, then you've already made progress with taking responsibility for yourself. Be forewarned: You may be surprised (or even frightened) by what you learn about yourself. On the positive side, think of the exercise as a time machine; you now have a chance to rewrite history.



**Stop being defensive when someone holds you accountable for your poor choices.**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when your poor choices resulted in someone holding you accountable. How did you react? Did you react in a defensive way? Here's your chance to rewrite history. First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would have been a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this, I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Stop being irritable and angry when you don't get your way.**

Think of a situation or circumstance when you immediately went red-zone after you didn't get your way. Why did you blow up? Was it a situation you experienced before? Did you do all that you could to avoid the outcome? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would have been a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Stop looking for what's wrong with the other person.**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you totally focused on what the other person did rather than on your role in the circumstance or situation. How did you react? Did you react in a defensive way? Did you consider what you did to create the situation? Do you typically focus on the other person? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Stop being a victim.**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you went into victim mode. What contributed to your feeling of helplessness? Is it a feeling you routinely experience? Did you do all that you could to

avoid the outcome? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Stop thinking negatively (and masking it by saying you're just keeping it real).**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you attempted to mask your negativity by saying that you were just keeping it real. Why did you react this way? Did the other person or group pick up on your negative energy? Is thinking negatively something that you typically do before finding something positive? How is this working for you? First, describe your current way of dealing with these negativity situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Start saying "I got this!" when the going gets tough.**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you shied away from assuming responsibility. Why didn't you step up? Was it a situation you experienced before? Were you afraid? Were you worrying about how the other person would react? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Start asking for specific, clear feedback for improvement.**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you avoided asking for feedback that might have created a different outcome. Why? How do you typically respond to “polish” feedback? What are your thoughts about being a lifelong learner? When are you more receptive to feedback? First, describe your current way of dealing with these feedback situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Start listening without judging.**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you judged during a conversation rather than listening to what the other person was saying. Why were you judgmental? Are you usually this way? What was it about the other person that contributed to your judgmental behavior? Do you ever consider that you may be wrong? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Start focusing on the possibility and not the problem.**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you focused totally on the obstacle rather than the opportunity. Is this a trend for you? Do you find it easier to focus on what can go wrong rather than what can

go right? Do you consider yourself a problem-solver? Do you find that what you focus on grows? First, describe your current way of dealing with life's challenges (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with these situations or circumstances (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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**Start following through with what you said you were going to do.**

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you disappointed someone because you didn't follow through with what you said you were going to do. What went wrong? Did you overcommit? Is this a trend? How did you rectify the situation? If there was another person involved did he or she accept your apology? Can people trust you? Do people believe in you? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

**Up to Now:** When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

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**From Now On:** When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

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## What's Next?

Now you know how to own your choices. In Winning Way 2, you'll examine the important step of focusing on positive outcomes and expecting success.

## STOP and START Personal Action Plan



STOP using these typical excuses for not owning your choices:

- Well, I didn't mean to do it.
- If someone was offended because of what I said, then I am sorry.
- If she had only done her part things would have worked out.
- If he wasn't so serious he would be able to see that I was only playing.



START using these timely exclamations for owning your choices:

- Beginning today I will own my stuff.
- I will take full responsibility for my intent and for my impact.
- I will examine my past and make the necessary changes. I'm in charge of me.
- It was my fault and I'm going to fix it!

### START, STOP, CONTINUE DOING Habits

Now that you've given some thought to owning your choices as a way to rid your life of excuse making, add other **START Doing**, **STOP Doing**, and **CONTINUE Doing** habits that will help you attain this goal.



**I will START Doing:**

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✓ \_\_\_\_\_

✓ \_\_\_\_\_

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**I will STOP Doing:**

✓ \_\_\_\_\_

✓ \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue

I will CONTINUE Doing:

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
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### Twitter/Facebook Affirmations

Post or tweet your one key takeaway thought, quote, phrase, or lesson learned in this chapter. Enlist your social network community of friends and colleagues to support your efforts to make positive changes in your life.

Make a note of your Twitter or Facebook post here:

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