

**WOLFGANG RIEBE**

**THE BEST TIPS OF**

**&**

**2013**

**2014**



Insightful 'self-help' tips and observations shared in Wolfgang's monthly 'Useletter' during 2013/14.



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## FOREWORD

Welcome to another 2 years of sharing the stories and personal messages that had the biggest impact on my readers during the time I sent out my monthly newsletter, which I called a 'Useletter' - because it's newsletter you actually use!

These days with social media, anyone can get any info they want within a few clicks, and many people are inundated with emails and spam, so I stopped it a few years ago.

The auto responder company I used gave me all the stats I needed, i.e. how many people opened the 'Useletter', and how many people clicked on links, etc. Thus I could see exactly which topics were the most effective. Hence I have taken the 6 highest stats over 2013 - 14 and put together this short e-book for you?

## COPING WITH ANNOYING PEOPLE

One of my biggest challenges was learning not to get annoyed by inconsiderate and annoying people around me: associates, work colleagues, family members, and my weak point - corrupt politicians.

We often joke about this, but how often in a day do you quietly curse someone in your thoughts? Whether it's that inconsiderate driver who cut you off in morning traffic, or your boss who hasn't acknowledged that you were up the whole night sorting out a crisis?

Here's the reality: we all have these feelings every day. Yes, even I have them! Sometimes, I want to pop a blood vessel when I see the greed and corruption among our politicians. However, the only person getting upset is me! They are just

carrying on as always, and no matter how much I jump up and down, when I scream at the driver and use foul language in the car, and attempt to display every crude sign I can with my hands, odds are I am only enraging myself as the other person doesn't even realise it's them I am cursing at.

Unfortunately, most of the time, we just annoy ourselves more than the other person. If anything, I find this is the most difficult issue to come to terms with in my life. I have lectured, written about, and put many videos on YouTube about dealing with hatred and letting go of the past. And I really try to practice what I preach. Nevertheless, there are ALWAYS and there always will be those people out there that WE ALL love to hate. Those people that ALWAYS annoy us, no matter how hard we try to remain calm. For weeks we can go about ignoring them, and then one day, out of the blue, grrrrr, and all that pent-up aggression explodes. The saddest thing of all is, we tend to take it out on those who are closest to us. Your spouse is cuddling next to you in front of the TV, completely relaxed and content in the moment, when you suddenly scream and jump up because of someone on the television, ruining the mood completely. Sound familiar? I've done it!

What about driving in the car and everyone is listening to a nice song on the radio, when suddenly someone three cars ahead does something stupid (which doesn't affect you) and you blurt out a string of abuse that would even embarrass a rap singer! Hopefully, I have put a little smile on your face as you maybe relate to what I am saying. At the time it's not funny, but afterwards, I have to embarrassingly laugh at myself, acknowledging that I have just described me.

How do I learn to deal with this? Realistically, I feel there will always be inconsiderate people out there. However, it is up to us to try and control our reactions to them. Instead of blowing one's top ten times out of ten, don't you agree it would be

better just to lose your cool one time out of ten? Of course, it would be great if we could all just let go completely. But I am a realist... thus, even if I only manage to halve my outbursts - that's already an improvement.

You can download my free E-Book, "Coping with Annoying People," [here](#) - although I must warn you, the 3rd tip (which I think is the most realistic and funny tip) may not be everyone's cup of tea - but I still think it's brilliant! Watch it at your own risk! [[Click here](#)].



## **5 TIPS ON COPING WITH ANNOYING PEOPLE**

### **1. Becoming upset makes you remember it longer.**

The more you acknowledge and think about the person or thing that has upset you, the more you etch that thought into your subconscious mind. You must remember that you are not dealing with a fleeting thought here, but a feeling that is filled with emotion, and intense emotion at that. This is powerful stuff and the more you harp on it, the better the odds of it becoming cemented into your long-term memory and upsetting you for

weeks and months to come. The solution is to give any irritation as little time and thought as possible.

## **2. Sometimes YOU are at fault too!**

Admitting that one has made a mistake is a hard thing to do. The last thing you want to acknowledge is that you are weak and actually make mistakes too. If this is you – grow up and realise that ALL OF US are human. We ALL make mistakes. It takes a bigger person to admit when they are wrong. I have found that by being brutally honest with myself and actually admitting my mistakes, I can laugh at myself and not take everything so seriously. Those around me respect me for being so comfortable with myself and forgive me because I can acknowledge when I am wrong while at the same time actually forgiving myself too.

## **3. Reacting can damage your reputation.**

Yes, you may believe that you are in the right and have been falsely wronged! Guess what... if you lose your temper and start a fight, those around you will judge and see you in the same light as the aggressor. It may even make you look petty and unreasonable. Ever thought about it like that? Try not to react - you are better off for it.

## **4. Stand up for yourself and be clear about your boundaries.**

Nowhere is there a rulebook that states that you must be friends with everyone around you. As humans, we long for acknowledgement and recognition and many people fail to realise that not everyone will give you this. My dad always told me that I should not strive to have everyone love me, but instead I should strive to have them respect me. This is a very important point in life. We always try to fit in everywhere, but never take a stand in what we believe. Then we wonder why

people don't respect us. It is an unchangeable fact that not everyone will like you – there is NOTHING you can do to change this. However, you can get them to respect you. The only way you can do this is to stand up for what you believe in. One way to do this with annoying people is to clearly tell them what your boundaries are and what you will allow them to say to you. Letting others know about your feelings and boundaries helps them treat you in the manner you want to be treated.

## **5. Take your own advice.**

Instead of judging and giving advice to others, how about taking your own advice and practicing what you preach? Consider someone that is annoying right now. What exactly is it that annoys you about them and what advice would you give them to stop doing it? Now take your advice for this person, and apply it to yourself. Reality check – most of the time what you feel others should be doing, you need to apply in your life.

## **GENERAL INSIGHTS**

### ***The first rule of focus is... wherever you are, be there!***

In today's hectic world, few people actually focus on one thing at a time. Schedules and deadlines are part of the norm. Many people wonder why they don't get anything done – they have too much on their plate! As long as I can remember, I have always scheduled my day in segments. If I have a number of projects on the go, I divide my day into hour slots, starting with the most important tasks first. In fact, I will make sure I don't take phone calls before 10 am (There is a thing such as an 'off' switch on your phone, as well as a messaging system). This enables me to focus 100% for those first two hours in the morning and really get things done. In fact, I find that by



following this route those 1st two hours, I get more done than if I spent the entire day fiddling with tasks at random.

Assume you have eight different goals and you tackle each one solidly for an hour. At the end of the day you have managed to do a little for each one. It might not feel like much, but at the end of the month when you look back, you have accomplished more than ever before. By haphazardly doing tasks during the day, one tends to get side tracked. Even if you start with the task that you consider most important, and want to finish it first, and then tackle the next task, there will always be another task that appears to be more important that then interferes with the first one. By religiously allocating time to everything and dividing your day into specified segments, you are creating a workable system.

This doesn't mean you need to have eight tasks per day. Some of those hour slots can be social, creative or just 'me time' as well. The emphasis here is on focusing 100% in that moment as the quotation says... ***wherever you are, be there!*** As another quote so aptly puts it, ***a successful person, is the average person focused.***

This goes hand in hand with ***ordinary people think merely of spending time, great people think of using it.*** You cannot use time effectively if you don't have a plan! So stop talking and thinking about it and create a plan of action that is practical and doable!

In the last month I have met up with some old friends and the topic of a 'Rainmaker' came up. Do you know what a 'Rainmaker' is? Simply put, it's someone that creates things from nothing. It's a person that takes an idea or thought and manifests it into something that is real and can be shared and experienced with everyone 'out there.' Whether it is about creating a book, a course, a study method, etc., I constantly

receive emails from people wanting to know where I find the time and energy to constantly write and create new material. Well, I have just shared my secret with you – I plan and schedule my day. Rainmakers take control of their lives and make things happen. Rainmakers understand the simplicity, yet also the power of **goals that are not written down are just wishes!**

I have many people saying to me that they are scared of failure and fear what others will think if they don't succeed. I appreciate the honesty, but I also become very frustrated at how many people have allowed themselves to be manipulated and conditioned by the messed up society out there, resulting in them severely impeding their own unlimited potential. You can achieve anything you want – you just need to try! My first response to friends and colleagues that approach me with this view in life is, **Failure is never as scary as regret!**

And boy is that true! However, in all fairness, it's not always that easy. Hence my tip to you – don't tell anyone when you tackle a new dream or desire. Keep it private. Make a deal and set a timeline with yourself – not with everyone around you. In that way, no one can comment about it and put you down. Then once you've achieved it, everyone will be surprised. You'll get comments like, "We didn't know you were doing that!" It's a really great feeling when you can surprise everyone around you with something you created in your own space and time. **View the possible as probable. You'll be surprised at what you can accomplish.**

Even if what I say is foreign to you and you feel that you are in a rut and cannot change, remember that **rewards in life only go to those who are willing to give up the past.** Way too many people on this earth are living in the past and brooding in it. You will NEVER move ahead if you keep blaming the past. You will never be happy if you constantly live in the past and most

definitely never be able to move forward. By harping on the past, what are you really accomplishing in life? Zero, zip, nothing! You are just becoming more and more bitter and pulling yourself down into a rut. ***If your dreams are turning to dust, you need to vacuum!***

***The future belongs to those who live intensely in the present*** and you can only do this by living in the present. Understand that ***NOW is the watchword of the wise!***

Time is the most precious asset that we have. Are you just going to sit there and let time go by, wasting it on regrets and hatred issues from the past? Or are you going to stand up and take responsibility for your own life and realise that ***the best way to predict your future is to create it!***

***Life is built of the things we do. The only constructive material is POSITIVE ACTION.*** If you only look behind you, how can you possibly move forward? You need to turn your head around occasionally and look forward. It's amazing what you can see if you look! There are opportunities all around us every day, and even in the sad and the tragic events, there are always opportunities to be found. But these only go to those people that open their eyes and look. At times we may see our own lives as filled with challenges and feel that you cannot see the woods for the trees. However, you need to realise that ***the bigger the challenge, the greater the opportunity!***

Those days that I may doubt myself, or be unduly negatively influenced by some happening, or become suddenly annoyed by someone's selfish intent, I always look up at the wall opposite me in my study at this quotation, ***we all leave footprints in the sand, the question is, will we be a big heel, or a great soul?*** Hand in hand with this awesome insight you also need to accept and understand that ***like farmers we need to learn that we cannot sow and reap on the same day.*** Whether

it takes a day, a month or a year, as long as you take positive action and look ahead, you are living a life of forward movement. I much rather move forwards than backwards? Wouldn't you?

Here are some additional Unknown Author quotations that are worth exploring in order to bring about a positive change in your life...

***I am not here to change the world. I am changing the world because I am here.*** Are you making a difference to this world in what you do? Are your actions making the world a better place? Are you adding value?

***Whenever you find yourself doubting how far you can go, just remember how far you have come. Remember everything you have faced, all the battles you have won, and all the fears you have overcome.***

If you doubt you can change and achieve new goals – look at what you have done in your life before. Granted, some people may not see their lives as that exciting and that full of achievement. BUT IT IS. No matter who you are, you have accomplished so much to be where you are today - from completing school to bringing up children to overcoming personal issues. Don't just look at achievements by comparing yourself to economic success stories 'out there'. Look at your personal achievements! We all have them! And realise that you are great and you can achieve anything you set your mind to!

***Work for a cause, not for applause. Live your life to express, not to impress, don't strive to make your presence noticed, just make your absence felt.***

Plan your new year's goals around your passion – not on what others expect from you. It is much easier to achieve goals if

they are an internal desire and passion, than if they are the dreams of others, i.e. your parents, kids, etc. Your goals shouldn't be materialistic, and just about you – but for the benefit of those around you as well. For example, I need to find more Work Life balance this year. Why? In order to spend more time with my family and children! This type of goal has a bigger cause; it doesn't just benefit you, but your family too. We have enough self-important people on this earth – we really don't need any more. And when these self-important people/attention seekers (i.e. Politicians etc.) leave – do we miss them? No! In whatever you do, will others notice that you have stopped doing it and miss your presence, or will they be glad you're gone?

***The best sermons are lived, not preached.***

Walk your talk – practice what you preach. Nothing upsets and disappoints me more than hypocritical people. Once again we have a world full of liars and hypocrites that preach one thing and do the opposite. Will they ever truly be content and happy? If anything, they aren't just fooling others, but themselves too. Interestingly enough, when you walk your talk – you don't have to preach to others to convert them. Those around you will follow you automatically as they can see and experience your sincerity!

***What you do every day matters more than what you do every once in a while.***

This follows on nicely with the previous quotation... be consistent. Consistency is an integral part of walking your talk. Think about it, will you ever respect someone that only does what they say once in a while? No – you respect people that remain constantly consistent in what they do. Only by being consistent will you achieve all your New Year's resolutions.

***It's better to be an optimist who is sometimes wrong than a pessimist who is always right.***

Here's a reality check... things aren't always going to work out the way you planned them. Sometimes you will reach your new year's goals sooner, other times you will have to change them, and sometimes you won't reach them straight away and will have to try harder to reach your final dream. You need to be OPTIMISTIC. Another great unknown author quote says that a Pessimist is: A person who says that 'O' is the last letter of ZERO, instead of the first letter in OPPORTUNITY. Of course you then have the OPPORTUNIST (That's what I like to be! Dear Optimist, Pessimist, and Realist, while you guys were busy arguing about the glass of water, I drank it! Sincerely, The Opportunist! Don't waste time arguing and procrastinating either!

***Some people develop a wishbone where their backbone should be.***

Stop dreaming! Go out and do it. Remember, every journey starts by taking the first step and all goals are journeys. Don't look at the final destination as the whole goal. That's only the final 1% - it's the preparation, travel, changes, twists, etc. during the journey that makes up the remaining 95%. When you do all of this - the final goal is easily reached.

Take buying a new house as an example. The actual act of signing the papers to buy the house takes ten minutes. But the preparation in deciding what type of house, what price range, which area, and researching affordable mortgage rates, plus actually driving and looking at homes all take time. However this is all part of the goal of buying a house. Most people forget this. By doing all the preparation - 95% of the goal is already achieved.

## ***Be smart enough to hold on. Be brave enough to let go!***

When it comes to New Year's resolutions, this is an important point to consider. Life changes and your circumstances might change. If you find that a resolution you made 6 months ago isn't working for you anymore – let it go and substitute it for a new resolution. Understand that it is okay to do this, as long as the reason and substitution is valid!

## ***Don't compare your Chapter 1 to someone else's Chapter 20.***

Very, very important! You may think that your resolutions aren't as important as someone else's – but how do you really know that. In fact, we all leave our mark in different ways. Maybe, just maybe one person's life that you touch this year could be the next Einstein or Ghandi of this world who just needed that interaction with you to find their direction. NEVER underestimate the power that you have and NEVER compare yourself to others.

## ***Don't let someone who gave up on their own dreams talk you out of yours.***

If anything, take heed of this advice. Just because others around you are negative and don't have the guts to follow their dreams – NEVER let them pull you into their negativity. If anything, make one of your resolutions that you will avoid such people at all costs in 2014!

## ***Don't worry about the people in your past, there's a reason they didn't make it to your future.***

One of the hardest things in life is 'letting go'. Try making this a resolution for 2014 as well and letting go of all those people that haven't added value to your life. I made a huge change in my life 2 years ago and stopped trying to maintain friendships. I

found I was doing all the work and no one phoned me back. I was always the one inviting people around. Guess what, today I have a much smaller group of friends, but they also put effort into our friendship. Suddenly I am having so much more fun with my real friends. And those people from my past who faded away... can't say I am missing them. If anything they have now freed up the time I wasted trying to remain in contact with them, for the people that really matter in my life.

### ***Every path has a few puddles.***

As 2014 progresses you may stumble and fall and you may get distracted. Just remember to stand up again and get back onto the path. Life will always throw us a few obstacles, but when your goals are from the heart and you see the bigger picture in everything you do, your passion is what drives you to your ultimate success. Remember, if you are following passionate resolutions, then the journey is fun as well. Hence slight deviations don't really throw you off track! Makes sense huh?

## **LIFE & AGEING**

Click [here](#) to watch my 'unrehearsed video on insights about life!





For everyone over 50, I think this article is going to touch home. If you are in your twenties, I would suggest you save this book and read it again when you reach your 50s. I can promise you this - the day you read it, you will know why I asked you to save it for all those years! Nevertheless, even if you are younger, read this edition slowly and try to take in the depth of the message shared, for if you truly understand where I am coming from with this message, you will realise the importance of time and how you need to make the most of every moment. And if you are 50 or older, I know this is going to hit home!

Is it just me or have you also noticed that time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware as the years pass by? It seems like just yesterday that I was young, carefree, just engaged, and embarking on my new life with my mate. Even though it was 30 years ago, it doesn't feel like eons ago. If I am honest, it feels like maybe 10 years ago maximum. I often wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all. In fact, I have tons of photos as reminders and glimpses of how it was back then, and of all my hopes and dreams.

But here I am now, some would even call this the period of introspection - it has caught me by surprise! How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go and where did my youth go? I clearly remember seeing older people and thinking this was years ahead of me - in fact, it was so far off, I could not fathom it or imagine fully what it would be like.

I remember working with an elderly comedian on the cruise ships who told a joke about his youth and how his dad found certain actresses attractive, which he at the time as a youngster thought were ugly. As he reached the same age as his dad at the time, he found them attractive too. We used to laugh at this joke, but never fully comprehended the depth of it - today I think of my old friend often - as his words ring true as I am finding older women really attractive too!

I met an old acquaintance at the circus yesterday. I hardly recognised him. I still joked and said, "My, you've changed." He looked at me and replied, "Your hair is all grey!" I turned around and thought he was talking about someone else! This is now my reality – all my friends are starting to think about retirement and getting grey! We move slower than the younger people in our age group. When we talk about the world and what is happening to society and the youth... we sound like our parents!

Some of my friends are in better shape and some worse than me. The young and vibrant people of my memories don't exist anymore! Their age is beginning to show and we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we'd be. I bought a birthday card for my oldest daughter recently who had just turned 16. As I began looking for the card, I first stumbled on the Happy 50th cards. I looked at them and had the same thoughts I had when I was 16, "Wow, imagine being that old." Then I realised, "Hey, that's you!" This year alone I have been invited to eight 50th parties!

I remember socialising at events and having fun with those present – today we savour the wine and whiskey, rather than gulp it down. Maybe because it takes us longer to recover if we don't! I could open any bottle of cold drink, and any jam jar, no matter how tight the lid was screwed on – now I have to ask my 16-year-old daughter to do it for me! This has resulted in us buying those 'easy-jar-openers' as we still love our bodies and independence, instead of asking our kids to do it!

And so I enter into this new season of my life, unprepared for all the aches and pains. Yes, even I have a few regrets and things I wish I had done/did differently. But there are also many, many things I'm happy I did do. All in all, I am content with my lot in life, however, should we have the opportunity to

start all over again, we would have started sooner and would have done more. None of us, not even the youngsters, has the promise that we will see all the seasons of our life! Hence the importance of living in the moment and living for today! We need to share our feelings and that which we want our loved ones to remember.

Today I see many older people who are unhappy at their lot in life. This saddens me as I often think about my friends that have passed on already and realise that not everyone has the opportunity of getting older. So my first bit of advice if you are older – be grateful that you have reached this age!

I often think back to that old saying, ***"Yesterday is history; tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift, that is why it is called the present."*** Live in the moment and make the most of today, for every today well-lived gives you a great memory of yesterday and something to look forward to tomorrow. Kind of makes sense, huh?

Also, remember that today is the oldest that you have ever been in your life, but it is also the youngest that you will ever be!

This 'Useletter' is not meant to make you sad, but to inspire you that no matter what your age is, it isn't over yet! I am just reaching the second phase of my life and intend to achieve twice as much as in the first half – you can do the same too!

Appreciate what life has taught you up to this point and enjoy the comfort that comes with being older. Let the following 'plus' factors bring a smile to your face:

✓ Going out is good - coming home is always better!

- ✓ You may forget names, but it's okay because other people forgot they even knew you!
- ✓ Our confidence grows – we've been around the block.
- ✓ You tend to use more 4-letter words, 'what?' and 'when?'
- ✓ You sleep better on a lounge chair with the TV blaring than in bed. It's called 'pre-sleep'.
- ✓ You miss the days when everything worked with just an 'ON' and 'OFF' switch.
- ✓ We get better at relationships – we have more experience and we are comfortable with who we are and what we want out of life.
- ✓ We start caring more about others – isn't that the coolest thing ever?
- ✓ Now that you can afford expensive jewellery, you know that it's not important to wear anymore.
- ✓ We become more sensual – the body may go but our souls have expanded and taught us to live in the now and appreciate life and love on a much deeper level.
- ✓ What used to be freckles are now liver spots.
- ✓ Everybody whispers.
- ✓ You have 3 sizes of clothes in your closet – because you need a much bigger choice!
- ✓ It's not what you gather, but what you scatter that tells what kind of life you have lived.
- ✓ We slow down, but we learn to appreciate more.
- ✓ But old is better in many things; old songs, old movies, and best of all, old friends!

Stay well and healthy, old friend!

## CHANGE BEGINS NOW

***Do not wait for ideal circumstances nor for the best opportunities; they will never come. Go look for them!***

I am tired of waiting for the world to change! I am tired of everyone waiting for the right circumstances! Screw that! I am going to make it happen, I am going to stand up and be heard. I am going to be that change! It all starts with me/you! Are you going to continually let yourself be manipulated and conditioned to be negative, or are you going to take responsibility for your life and take the first step yourself?

It's not that difficult! Really! Many of us have heard opportunity knocking at our door, but by the time we have dressed, combed our hair, unhooked the chain, pushed back the bolt, turned two locks, and shut off the burglar alarm - it was gone. Stop waiting! Stop making excuses! Make that positive change now!

Wow... that was a mouthful and in reality, all much easier said than done! Or is it? Firstly, check out my Free Quick Tip video on Patience by clicking [here](#), as I believe patience is a big part of thinking straight and keeping a positive mindset.



Is there really an economic recession - or is this just another lie that governments and the media are shoving down our throats to keep everyone in check? No! I am not a conspiracy theorist! I am a realist! The most awesome part of my job is that I travel and often end up speaking in countries and places that aren't affected by the negative media that most of us are burdened with on a daily basis. In fact, I also end up in places where people have nothing, yet they smile and they have a passion for life and go out of their way to close a deal. They don't have complex corporate policy directives on how to sell, or how to make bottom-line profits - they just go by their gut and they have passion!

I applaud such people. Look at our lives; look at your colleagues, family and friends - how many have passion? As a speaker, my focus is always on storytelling, as I believe through stories and experiences we can all learn and grow. Hence I would like this first lesson to come from a true story that my wife and I experienced back in the 80s. To this day, no matter what anyone throws at us, no matter how tough they say the economy is, we both always remind ourselves of this one story; and it's amazing how the passion flourishes.

This is a story on selling. You may not think you are a salesperson, but in reality, each and every one of us is. In everything we do in our daily lives, we are selling. Whether it is to seek favour with our partner, or whether we want our kids to do the dishes, we are forever going through a sales and negotiation process in order to achieve an outcome that makes us happy. Part of being unhappy is losing that skill to do this properly, and hence not achieving all the outcomes we desire.

The best sales skills I ever learned were in Turkey, in Kusadasi. My wife and I were working on a Cunard cruise ship called the Vistafjord. It had docked in Kusadasi and we were doing the

typical tourist thing of window-shopping. As we entered the main street, a young chap asked us where we were from. I wasn't going to say Germany, USA or England, as these were the majority of tourists that made up the passengers on the ship. So I said that we were from Cape Town. I must add that at the time, very few South Africans travelled, so it was a curveball I had thrown to put him off bothering us.

Guess what? He replied, "Wow, what a great place, I was there last year and have photos, plus I have a bottle of Zonnebloem Gewurztraminer from the Cape Winelands." I didn't expect that answer! Having lived in the UK for many years and yearning for some Cape wine, I took him up on the challenge and replied, "Prove it!"

He took us into a leather store, and pulled out a photo album of himself in Cape Town. We started chatting, relaxed and a connection started forming. His name was Apollo. Then he brought out the bottle of Zonnebloem Gewurztraminer and there we were, in Turkey, drinking South African wine and reminiscing about Cape Town with a perfect stranger. At the time there was no Internet. In fact, fax machines had just become the rage. Working on a ship, communication with home was infrequent and expensive. At one point Apollo even insisted we send a fax home from his office, for free!

As I took the last sip of wine, Apollo looked at me and said, "I have a great leather jacket to show you." How's that for timing? To cut a long story short, both my wife and I ordered tailor-made leather suits each. Apollo became a good friend and to this day, Benny's Leather shop will always hold a special memory for me in Kusadasi.

What's the moral of the story? Apollo could have sat inside the store and waited for his customers to come inside. How much business would he have done? Instead, he stood out in the

street and spoke to potential customers walking past the store. Furthermore, he informed himself about different people and cultures and could say, "Hello, how are you?" in about 20 languages! As part of his training, he visited different cultures and countries with the aim of understanding how they think. He genuinely was a people's person.

When we were (for want of a better word) enticed into his shop and started connecting with him, what had he achieved? Trust! He made us feel comfortable. He questioned us about our needs. He knew enough about us to realise we worked on a ship and didn't have much contact with home - hence the free fax. He found out we had been away from home for many years - hence the free wine! He also knew that leather was expensive in our country and hence he focused on offering us a good deal.

Today many people complain of tough times. Why? Here's my answer... people stopped taking responsibility for their own lives! Everything revolves around them! It's only once you start opening your eyes and ears and finding out what other people need and want, that you realise how much opportunity exists out there. Back to my original quote: Do not wait for ideal circumstances nor for the best opportunities; they will never come. Go look for them!

That's why I have huge respect for the Turkish. Everywhere I went in Turkey, people stood outside their shops and tried to pull me in. I never once saw someone sitting inside with a sad face saying, "Feel sorry for me, come support me!"

They took responsibility, went out and looked for the best opportunities. They did NOT sit on their butts and complain about life and everything around them! They found out about other people and cultures. They made an effort to connect and build trust.



There are 3 types of people in the world today:

- 1.) those that make things happen,
- 2.) those that watch things happen,
- 3.) those that have no idea anything happened at all!

Which are you? Get up and start making a difference!

## THE MEANING OF LIFE

Apparently, it is quite normal for a person to start questioning the purpose of life after such a life-changing event. I have to be honest; in the first year, every time I had a pain anywhere, I freaked out and worried that something was wrong with my heart. After the first year, the cardiologist said I was fully recovered and just need to make sure I exercise, stay fit, and healthy. I am thankful for this, yet I do notice a change in myself – not physically, but mentally. I find I am far more aware and attuned to the hatred, envy, and jealousy in the world. I question people's behaviour daily and try to understand why there is so little caring among people today.

In my eyes, one of the biggest problems is envy! In other words, people who begrudge and resent the success of others around them. Do any of the following comments sound familiar?

*"Boy is she successful, I wonder who she is sleeping with?"*

*"Man look how thin he is, wish I could be that thin. But then again, I don't have his genes."*

*"Look how fit she is and how toned her body is, bet she really watches what she eats and spends all her free time exercising."*

*"Wow, he became the CEO – bet he has no free time at all and is a slave to corporate policy."*

Do you notice the undertone of resentment in these comments? This reminds me of a great saying by an unknown author... ***Those who can – do. Those who can't – criticize!***

Check out the Quick Video Tip on Envy by clicking [here](#),



as well as the Self Image Quick Video Tip [here](#).



Strange? If I meet someone, or have a friend that has achieved success and worked really hard to get there, I am happy for them. Envy NEVER comes into the picture. If anything, this person's success drives me to try harder and also achieve success. Successful people are an inspiration to me. Furthermore, if it's something I would have liked to achieve, and I haven't, then I ask myself why? I make a point of searching for the mistakes I made and correct them so that I too can get to that level of success.

Yet I often bump into friends where colleagues and family members criticise, belittle, begrudge and at times even hate others for what they have achieved! What is going on in the world? This reminds me of a great saying by an unknown author...

***Prejudice is a great timesaver. It enables you to form opinions without bothering to get the facts.***

Years ago a close friend gave me an explanation by saying that if someone criticises you, then you are doing something right. That makes sense, but it still doesn't justify the reason why some people become so hateful towards others merely because they begrudge their success. Why do people behave this way? What is it that brings on this envy? In my quest to be more positive and seek answers to life I have had a lot of fun asking friends and searching discussion groups on the topic. Here are some answers:

- It's in their genes!
- They have little self-worth.
- They are just plain selfish and don't like seeing anyone achieve more than them.
- It's a mixture of jealousy and laziness. After all, it is so much easier to put someone down than to lift them up.
- It's people with 'entitlement' attitudes.

These are plausible answers, however... don't they also contain a hint of sarcasm and envy?

Forget for one moment, those people born with a silver spoon in their mouth. In reality, they are few and far apart. Let us look at the normal person who has made a success of their life. Firstly, you need to accept and realise that it doesn't do any good to sit up and take notice if you keep on sitting! Those that sit on their butts have the most to say; whereas those that actually stand up and take steps forward are the ones that achieve. If you are not willing to pay the price and do what it takes, then you have no right to begrudge those that do!

***Life is built of the things we do. The only constructive material is positive action.***

Yes, I know some of you are reading this and thinking to yourself that 'luck' also plays a role here and not everyone is lucky. If you do, you need an attitude change. Luck has nothing to do with it. Substitute the word 'luck' for 'attitude'. A sad fact is that it's much easier to have a negative attitude than a positive one, especially with the way society is brainwashed and manipulated by the mass media in the modern world.

Here are 5 tips to cope with envy and turn your life around.

**1.** One of the first steps to changing your thinking is to **stop reading the gossip magazines** that promote envy, i.e. Heat, People, You, Cosmo, etc. Just how many more articles are they going to produce on great sex and attracting the right person into your life? Stop being conditioned by magazines that love comparing you to 'others' out there. If you must buy a magazine, then look for one that is inspirational, realistic and builds you! You'll be amazed at how quickly your attitude changes.

## **2. Stop looking from the outside in!**

Be the inside and work out! Huh? The only place to create change is within yourself. It's no use complaining and wishing that the 'outside' be different. Start by being different yourself!

## **3. Tell your friends not to agree with you.**

How often have you made a bitchy comment about someone or something, and your friends back you up? What does this do? It just reinforces the negative behaviour. Get help to get over the envy - don't get help to promote it! Instruct your friends that when they do experience you being envious, that you consciously want them to disagree with you. Initially, this may feel weird. Write this instruction to your friend down on a piece of paper and give it to them. Word it as follows...

*Dear... I have consciously asked you to counteract all my negative comments and help me be more positive. If I insult you or am nasty to you because of this, show me this letter and remind me that I asked you to help me because of my love, respect and friendship with you and that I really do trust your feelings on the matter. Signed (Your Name). The letter says it all and it works!*

## **4. Take responsibility.**

An entitlement attitude will only feed the envy. Know this! Learn to take and accept responsibility for all your actions in life. Once you start realising that you and you alone are responsible for what you do.

## **5. You are unique!**

Fair enough – there will always be someone that has more than you. But does this make that person superior to you? No!

You do not know their whole situation. Just as they live a unique life... so do you! You need to understand that life was not meant to be a competition between you and the rest of the world. If that is the belief of your social circle - change your friends! You need to realise that no matter whom you compare yourself too, you are both unique; therefore you can both find happiness in your own unique and different ways!

## THE 'F' WORD

A word that many of us use daily without realising the impact of what we are saying. Misuse of the word can even result in resentment, hatred, and wars. Weirdly, for such a well-known word, it amazes me that most people don't understand its true meaning. The word is 'forgiveness.'

Check out my Quick Tip Video with 5 Tips on Forgiveness [here](#).



I want to cover 'forgiveness' on a deeper level. As a speaker, I have seen and understood the power of personal examples and stories, as well as issues people can relate to. Therefore, in order to clarify exactly what forgiveness is, I would like to talk about Nelson Mandela. Having lived in South Africa for many

years, he had always been a topic of discussion, especially his capacity for forgiveness.

Have a look at the world and at the hatred that exists right now! How many wars are being fought at this very moment? Hatred goes back so long... I sometimes wonder if people actually know why they hate each other. The world cannot continue the way it is going on at the moment.

Nevertheless, what lessons could we have learnt from Madiba?

As life is, you always get two points of view on any matter. Actually, my dad always told me that there were 3 points of view; yours, mine and the truth! Mind you, there is even truth in that! If anything, my international travel has taught me, it is to respect and accept every person no matter from which country or culture they originate.

If anything, I feel that the worldwide web and international TV channels such as Discovery and National Geographic are helping people discover the world and promote tolerance. But that's not enough! Hatred still exists because people do not understand the meaning of forgiveness! Hey, my parents left Germany as young children after W/W2 and I have people still calling me a Nazi – just shows you the sadness of reality out there.

So if we look at Mandela and his life – all the odds were stacked against him! However, here we had a man who spent most of his life in jail, fighting against an unjust oppression. Now to highlight how complex forgiveness and humanity is, we need to consider two views of this man. Firstly, he stood up against what he believed was wrong, and fought to change it. Yes, one man can change the world – here is the proof! Then there are those that criticised him and the ANC for the violence

they used to achieve their goals. Not forgetting that right now there are still ANC members today that hold grudges? Hey, doesn't that sound similar to other parts of the world too?

Remember that saying, 'If you want to kick a dog, you will always find a reason?' Forgiveness will NEVER happen if you hold grudges and don't let go. Nelson Mandela was living proof of the fact that each of us can forgive and let go. What is the problem with so many people that they cannot do this?

Saying I am sorry is not forgiveness! It is merely a verbal utterance. Forgiveness means starting fresh and not holding grudges or throwing the past in someone's face. How often have couples fought and the past keeps on being brought up? You did this – you did that! Forgiveness will NEVER come about if you do this. The world and the political upheavals are living proof of this!

I hear you say that it is difficult to do? Really? Now back to Nelson Mandela. Guess what, he also grew up with nothing, in a disadvantaged community, but he NEVER had an entitlement attitude and blamed everyone else for his situation. Do you know what he did? He stood up and took RESPONSIBILITY for his own life.

He picked himself up and stood up for his beliefs. Yes of course circumstances dictated the conditions he lived in at the time. But the difference was that he didn't lie down and expect everyone to feel sorry for him. He stood up and made himself heard. He cared enough for all his brothers and sisters that it was NEVER about him, but about what was right for humanity.

That was it – that was the secret we all need to understand about forgiveness. It was never about him! It was about everyone making the world a better place to live in! Those of us that met him will all tell you – he radiated a love and warmth



that few people have. He genuinely cared about his people. We all need to care about those around us – then they will care for us too. It's that basic law of what comes around goes around. He cared enough to change the world. Today not only South Africans, but the entire world celebrates this man's greatness!

As you get older, you begin to question the purpose of your life. I guess Mandela knew his purpose – he changed an entire country – if not the world. Why can't you do the same? What is holding you back?

Dare I say... lack of forgiveness in the true sense of the word? I know I am being 'hard', but sometimes this is what is needed. We need a kick in the rear end and we need to be reminded that it isn't always about you and you alone! It's about your children, your friends, your country – it's about the future of this world.

What world are you leaving behind for our children if you cannot forgive and promote the spirit of Ubuntu? Let me put it another way, if Mandela didn't do what he did and forgive those that wronged him, I think the world would have been far worse off than what it is.

So I trust that you have a little more understanding of forgiveness and the true power of the word. There are those people on earth that really embrace the true meaning of forgiveness. Why not be one of them and let's all start fresh and make this world the fantastic place it's meant to be... for all of us!

## BE HONEST & UPFRONT

What I notice more than before, are the many people I meet, 'selling' themselves as someone they are not! Creating a false front and trying to 'fit in' and be part of the clique! In fact, an old friend of mine shocked me, in a nice way, by commenting that he so enjoyed my company, as he always knew where he stood with me. He mentioned that it was such a 'fresh' change for him to spend time with me as he always got an honest direct response as to my feelings on various subject matters.

As honoured as I was by this, I was nevertheless shocked that someone should compliment me on something that I assume to be normal behaviour. Once again life has taught me that what I take for normal is not always the case with others. I look at all the economic upheavals, the greed, the fighting and the issues around me and suddenly I realise why this is all happening. Most people are not being honest about who they are and what they feel; hence everyone's reactions to what is being said and done are reactions to lies. No wonder there is such a mess in the world today.

Sadly, I can't blame those responsible for their behaviour, as I am sure it is based on fear. Fear of what will the others think if I really tell them how I feel, or if I really tell them how bad my business is doing? Whatever happened to caring about each other enough that we actually have trust in those we meet to really say what is in our hearts? And if it is bad that the other person actually cares enough to offer guidance and understanding in order to help us overcome these obstacles!

Let me highlight this with my own quotation on the subject...  
***The seed of all rumours is originated by greedy haters, then spread by fools, and finally believed by idiots. However, only truth is shared by sages!***

So, which one are you?

Sitting on planes this last month gave me lots of time to philosophise and think about this sad state of affairs and eventually I came up with a few solutions to stop people from being so greedy, hate and jealousy focused.

Most people are afraid that others won't like them! Why? Do you really think that everyone you meet will like you? Do you like everyone you meet? Let me put it another way... how about foods, are there certain foods you don't eat? If yes, what did these foods do to you? Nothing! You just don't like them. End of story! So why lie about it?

But, I guess you could learn to like them if combined with certain other foods? It's the same with people. We have been conditioned, and this inbred conditioned belief makes us judgmental. If we took the time and honestly connected with these individuals, I guess we may end up liking each other, but we simply don't take the time to do this. Yet we feel insecure when people are judgmental about us... huh?

There's a great saying by an unknown author... ***Don't change so people will like you. Be yourself & the right people will love the***

**real you.** Maybe it's my age, but I have learnt in life that if I don't like something, I say so. If you have an issue with me over my honesty, the issue lies with you – not me. So why should I worry about it. If you tell me that you don't like my approach or attitude and you think I am a Schmuck, guess what; I will shake your hand and thank you for being honest, and leave. At least I know where I stand with you and therefore won't carry on wasting your or my time.

We are all different and we all like different things. That old saying of 'opposites attract' is kind of defunct – if anything today, like-minded people are attracted to each other. If opposites did attract, then opposing political parties should be best of friends... I don't think so!

Stop worrying what others think about you – odds are you won't change that view then and there. Learn to live with it and be comfortable with who you are within yourself. Also, stop saying what you think others want to hear. Say what is in your heart. If people won't like you because of this, they are not worthy to be your friend or colleague. The reality is that everyone wants happiness and nobody wants pain. However, you can't have a rainbow, without a little rain. Think about it.

***Trying to be happy by accumulating possessions is like trying to satisfy hunger by taping sandwiches all over your body.*** I love this saying by an unknown author – and this pretty much summarises my points above. Are you going to define your happiness by being part of the false society out there and carry on lying just to fit in? Who are you fooling? Yes, maybe

you are fooling the 'others' out there, but for how long and at what price? Let me put it another way... if you put a small value on yourself, rest assured the world will not raise your price. You need to know your own worth! Guess what, I know what my worth is! Do you know yours? If not, don't you think it's about time you did something about it? Remember, you were given this life because you are strong enough to live it – so start living! And the first step to start... Is to be honest!

## **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

As a Keynote Speaker, for many years I would preach to others how they need to focus on work-life balance and make time for their children. This, I told others, yet I was on planes four times a week and travelled around the globe. I justified this behaviour by thinking that when I was at home, I was there 24/7 for my daughters. Strange – they didn't want to experience me 24/7 at the time. They had friends, schools, sports and their mum. I had grown apart and was too naive to see this. I was that typical father who thought that the latest techno gadget would make up for being away from home and not tucking them into bed at night.

Luckily, it took a few wake-up calls to make me see the light and realise that this was no way to raise a family. Things changed and I spent more time with my girls, yet there was still something lacking. In a sense, I still didn't feel that we were connecting properly. It took a while for me to understand that bringing up a family and connecting with your kids is not a one-dimensional strategy, but a multi-dimensional approach

that encompasses so many 'little' things. Hence this month I want to share a number of tips with you that can help you reconnect in a casual way.

How often have your children (and your spouse) asked you something and you merely give an automated response without looking up? At the time you may think you addressed the issue at hand, but they feel shunned. Yes, I understand, you may be on the phone, reading an important email, responding to a tweet on your phone that requires immediate attention, etc., etc. NO! Nothing requires more attention than your family! If you think back, how often have questions been asked where you actually participated 100% in the discourse? I am definitely not pointing fingers. If anything, I was a classic example of this! I mean, hello... not every question or issue requires me to think – some responses can be automated! Absolutely not!

From now on, STOP what you are doing when your child asks you something or comes into the room to show you something they made. Look them in the eye, show an interest and give 100% attention to the matter at hand. Let them express their feelings and emotions without you responding, correcting or judging. Just listen. Some people even maintain one should only give advice when your child asks for it.

Bottom line – the focus must be on listening. It's when we interrupt, correct or counter what they are saying that we do not give our children and partners the opportunity to express themselves freely and openly. Suddenly they don't communicate with us anymore and we wonder where it all

went wrong. The sad part is, your child will never develop this withdrawn behaviour when it happens once or twice, but from literally hundreds of times of facing the same behaviour over and over again when trying to communicate with you. It's actually frightening and brings a lump to my throat when I think of the number of people out there that complain about the lack of communication with their loved ones, yet they have, not once, but hundreds of times, shunned those close to them with this kind of behaviour!

However, all is not lost; we humans all have a desire to be loved and we all have the capability of forgiving. From now on, change your behaviour and make a CONSCIOUS EFFORT to look up when your children and loved ones communicate with you. Here's the cool part – ONLY YOU will be consciously changing your behaviour – they may not even notice at first that you are suddenly paying attention every time they approach you. In fact, by merely giving that attention they will inadvertently start approaching you more regularly on their own – simply because you show an interest.

It's important that you need to be there. If you have had a communication problem in the past, correct it by paying attention when they do approach you, but also be there and be approachable. Even if they are up in their room and you are in the kitchen – just knowing that you are in the house is already comforting and important. Man, it's difficult. I remember my parents lecturing me when I was a teenager and thinking that they came from another planet. Today I understand that they only wanted the best for me. But back then it really was a

different time. Today with the advancement of technology and increase in knowledge that we all have due to instant access to information – we should know better. You can Google anything and find solutions to most problems within seconds. Although I do not watch television and have a strong dislike of talk shows, if anything, people have learnt to open up and share intimate and personal issues.

This has taught and helped many people on the globe as they can relate to these experiences. I am sure that Dr Phil has helped many thousands of people without even realising the lives he has touched. And these are most probably people on the other side of the TV set sitting on their own and not having anyone to talk to. Why? Because it started with me! It all starts with us taking responsibility and pulling back from this whacked-out, stress-filled materialistic world we live in. It starts with us taking that step back and allowing our children and loved ones to enter into our space and connecting with them.

It's so easy to blame the society we live in, our parents, the school, etc., for our lack of communication within our family circle. If anything, we live in a society that promotes this. Then we wonder why we are unhappy! Everything in your life STARTS WITH YOU! You have to take full responsibility. Yes, you may have an annoying teenager in the house that is driving you crazy! But think about it – have you given that teenage child time when they asked for it? Did you listen non-judgementally? Or did you criticise and correct them?



Think about it this way, imagine any issue or problem in your life where you wanted to seek help for it from someone you look up to and respect. Now imagine that person not even looking up when you talk to them. Imagine this person immediately judging you and calling you a moron? Would you go back again for advice? I used to play MY music in the car when taking my daughters to school. Thinking back – at least they now have an appreciation of the 80s music! But there was a time I had to let them load their music on the hard drive. I had to let go. Today we drive to school and I see the songs they play. Sometimes I almost drive into a lamppost when I see the skimpy outfits the artists have on.

Most of the music doesn't appeal to me. But at least my daughters are secure enough and comfortable enough to share what they like with me. At first, I criticised and shunned the music. Then my youngest said to me, "Stop looking at how they are dressed, and listen to the lyrics!" I listened (yes, there are some dumb songs out there) and suddenly I realised that most of the music by the 'decent' artists is actually very deep and tackles the issues of today. The youth is communicating to us through their music. If we just listened, we would understand them better and learn to communicate more effectively with them.

Finally, plan and make time – regularly, even if it is a family meeting around the kitchen table, or a weekly visit to a restaurant, or even a weekly family walk on the beach or in the park. There needs to be a time where you as parents do something with your children where they feel comfortable.

Maybe you have lost that connection and maybe you have tried this. Don't expect your child to start speaking to you after the first outing. It may take some time and only happen after 3 months... but just give it the time and chance to happen.

As a parent who has made a conscious effort to spend time with my children – it has still gone fast. I cannot believe that I have two teenagers running around my home - both taller than my wife. What happened to that cuddly little child that looked up to dad and believed everything I said? What happened to that little girl that would fall asleep on my chest and hold me so tight? That same little girl who came running into my office, completely out of breath to tell me with such major excitement that she had just thrown the ball for our dog and he had brought it back to her for the first time.

Well, those little girls today are women who now like boys! They want to go out over weekends. Mum and dad are no longer those heroes from back then! Or are we? Maybe they don't come running into the room all excited anymore, but if we maintain our communication with them, give them that feeling of security and knowledge that they can talk to us at any time about anything – then maybe we still are those heroes to them, but just at another level.

People laugh at me when they hear I have teenage daughters. I don't get it – I don't have ANY problems with them. In fact, it is a new chapter of their lives that I really enjoy. We do so many more things together and communicate at such a different level. Yes, of course they have their moments and the

hormones do play havoc at times. The big difference is our girls know they have parents that understand, are willing to listen and are there for them no matter what!

Start paying attention to your loved ones – it makes such a difference and enriches your life so much!

## **ENTITLEMENT THINKING**

Learn how to cope with entitlement thinking and scarcity thinking attitudes.

This is one of those subjects that whatever you say, someone is going to get offended... especially those people guilty of entitlement and scarcity thinking.

So I need to discuss the root of the problem first!

Is it just me, or are these entitlement/scarcity thinking people gaining in numbers?

My comments are not based on research; they are my personal opinions and I would like to believe they are based on my experiences travelling around the globe.

Bottom line, if you don't have time to read the rest of this email – I believe we are dealing with individuals here who don't want to take responsibility for their own lives.

They were not born like this; but conditioned by their culture,

society and parents throughout their lives. They are a product of the society we live in today! Some of us are more prone to conditioning than others, and our life paths take us on different journeys. Without wanting to sound arrogant, I believe that some people have just managed to cope better with all of this and understood that life is about making choices and that only you can be held accountable for the choices you make. Then you have those who don't want to take responsibility and find it easier to blame others and find fault in others, rather than admit their own shortcomings.

I trust you understand that my focus is on helping you cope, being positive and sharing practical life skills. I won't tackle political or religious issues, as there will always be someone who gets offended. However, in these instances, and to track down the source of the problem and why these individuals are not taking responsibility for their own lives – I have to tackle these topics.

Think about it for one moment... do you trust the politicians in your country? In fact, do you trust any politician anywhere? I don't want to point fingers at any one country, but economically the world is completely messed up because of corruption and greed by politicians. And whenever a problem pops up NO ONE, especially not the politicians, takes blame for their inefficiencies. If anything, they blame their predecessors. So who do people have to look up to, or learn the meaning of taking responsibility in their own life? Nobody! Let's not even mention sports stars and celebrities – they are all weird and when they do get busted for taking drugs or

anything similar – there is always an excuse of abuse (physical or psychological) as a child. What a sad state of affairs!

Even worse are all these self-righteous groups or minorities. If there are a thousand people in a group and one lone individual doesn't agree with the majority – he/she makes a stink and complains and all 999 now have to accommodate this one schmuck. Sorry, but what is wrong with this story? And yes, the politicians are now all screaming 'political correctness.' They of all people – how hypocritical!

Have we as a society not become too accommodating of others? I find that many people would rather oblige the 'complainer' and in the process give up their own rights. Kind of messed up, huh? Religious fanatics expect you to adhere to their laws in their country and follow their teachings, but when they come to your country and you expect the same in return – they call it discrimination! Go figure! Then if you do query the logic, you are labelled as discriminating against them.

Is it just me, or are you too confused by all of this? In fact, I am not confused, just irritated by the depraved stupidity levels that society has allowed itself to stoop down to.

And hey, guess what, I can't blame the entitlement and scarcity thinking people for being the way they are – because we allow them to and they get away with it. Why should they change? They are only benefiting from their behaviour and attitude... sadly because we allow it!

There is an acronym KISS. It stands for Keep It Simple, Stupid! Corporations and governments like to hide their inefficiencies and flaws in complexity. In reality, simplicity is the most difficult thing on earth to achieve – or not. Maybe we have just been conditioned to believe this!

If I look at humanity, surely there are a few basic rules that apply to ALL of us, no matter what nation, culture or race you are from. And if we all followed these basic rules, then we would be able to live in peace with each other.

So in order to find coping mechanisms when dealing with people who have entitlement and scarcity thinking attitudes – apply these 6 rules in everything you do, and especially when confronted with these people, leaving them with a choice – to either fit in, or leave.

1.) Take responsibility for your own life.

2.) Never pre-judge anyone you meet.

3.) Treat everyone equally.

4.) When you meet people who do not respect you, or appear to be selfish/feeling entitled and not open to reason – walk away! Never stoop down to their level. When you stop tolerating their behaviour they will have to change. Remember, walking away is not being judgemental. You are taking responsibility and making a choice that suits your life – not theirs. But again, always bear points 1 – 3 in mind and make

sure that you are NOT the one with the entitlement/selfish attitude.

5.) It all boils down to the 4-way test that acts as the guiding principle for Rotary members:

**Is it the truth?**

**Is it fair to all concerned?**

**Will it build goodwill and better friendships?**

**Will it be beneficial to all concerned?**

6.) In the hope that this crazy 'political correctness' phase doesn't get out of hand, you need to realise that they are the ones who have their own issues they need to sort out. Rather than getting annoyed with them, you have two choices:

a.) Feel sorry for them and walk away.

b.) Or stand up for what you believe in and don't let this person force their insecurities onto you. But if you do choose this approach, do it courteously without being rude.

I trust this gives you a better understanding and helps you cope with these people.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Have you noticed that fewer and fewer people actually stand up for their decisions in life and admit their mistakes? Anything that goes wrong is always blamed on others. I have noticed this more and more in big corporations today. Have you ever tried to get something approved when dealing with a big company? Most decisions have to be signed off by 10 or 20 people, as no one wants to be held liable. Huh?

Admittedly, I was a bit more 'in your face' than normal. However, I found that this approach works! Today, when you try to please everybody, people don't sit up and take notice. You need to get into their face and say something that grabs their attention. In fact, I learnt a very important lesson the other day from an unknown author who once said, **"If you can't be criticised for it, it's probably not remarkable."** Are you devoting yourself to something devoid of criticism?

Wow! Why this quotation? Because this month's topic is all about responsibility! I don't know about you, but I am so sick and tired of people blaming everything else except themselves for their life circumstances. It appears that we are living in a world where more and more people are becoming part of the 'sheeple' - a stupid, brain-dead mentality - and prefer to blame anything else rather than themselves for their circumstances. It's a society where the term 'mass manipulation' is making more and more sense.

It's a society where people no longer have heroes to look up



to. Suddenly, power coupled with corruption is the norm. When was the last time you saw a leader take responsibility for their actions? Especially someone in a high position!

Ha, I would like to believe it's a huge problem of today, then I discovered that some famous people from the past had also noticed that this was a common human trait. To follow on from my video on greatness, it was one of the few great leaders of the past, Winston Churchill, who said, ***"The price of greatness is responsibility!"***

So it's not just me who says that you will never be great if you constantly find blame in others and always make excuses. I would even take this comment further and create my own version of this quotation by saying, ***"The price of contentment is responsibility."*** In other words, finding true happiness, freedom, and inner fulfilment depends on you taking responsibility for your own life!

Then there was the controversially wonderful Sigmund Freud who put it so brilliantly, ***"Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility."***

Who or what is making us frightened of responsibility? Why are there so many spineless back-stabbers out there today? Are they born that way? Is the media and TV influencing people to become greedier and nurture a lack of self-respect and responsibility? These are serious issues in today's world and really worry me. Or am I actually the wacked weird one, and is

everybody else normal? I never thought I would find the answer to this question.

Then by accident, I stumbled across the former chairman of the FCC, Newton N. Minow (that's the Federal Communications Commission in the USA), who seemed to have found the answer a few years back when he said, ***"We've gotten to the point where everybody's got a right and nobody's got a responsibility."***

Wow, wow, wow! I have never read a truer statement than that. Just think about the changes in the law with reference to human rights and how these have changed over the last few years. Survival of the fittest and standing up for what is right has been replaced by survival of the weirdest and standing up for what individuals with entitlement attitudes believe in! Isn't that just so sad and messed up?

The past great motivational speaker, Leo Buscaglia, also saw the light when he said, ***"If we wish to free ourselves from enslavement, we must choose freedom and the responsibility this entails."***

It's a fact! You cannot change facts! You cannot have freedom without responsibility! The minute you refrain from accepting that you and you alone are responsible for everything in your life, you will NEVER be content. Today when I bump into people with issues, I don't let them upset me anymore... in fact, I feel really sorry for them, as I know that as long as they remain in that 'lack of responsibility state of mind', they will

never find true happiness.

It's all good and well for me to highlight the madness of society and people, but the aim of my 'Useletter' is to help people and change lives. So how can you become more accepting of responsibility so that you cannot only change your life but those of others around you too?

### **1.) Change the way you think and speak!**

Start by saying to yourself, "I MUST do something" rather than "Something should be done." The former demands action while the latter is just an expression. Just watch how many leaders and politicians love doing this. No matter what tragedy happens, politicians always have something to say to get into the media. But it's always worded as... "Something needs to be done. We shouldn't condone this behaviour. I will discuss this with my advisory committee over the next 10 years and maybe we will reach a decision!" Have you ever heard them say, "I take full responsibility and from this moment on, this is going to happen!"

Next joke! It's no use complaining about them because that is not taking responsibility yourself either! Change the way they think and speak by changing your would's and could's to will and can. By changing your speech, you will influence others around you to change theirs too – and hopefully, it will filter through to those in leadership positions. Remember, part of taking responsibility for your life is to be part of that change, no matter how small that change may be.

By the way, I received this wonderful definition of Ineptocracy last week: Ineptocracy – have you ever heard of that word? It explains a lot in the world today. It means: A system of government where the least capable to lead are elected by the least capable of producing and where the members of society least likely to sustain themselves or succeed are rewarded with goods and services paid for by the confiscated wealth of a diminishing number of producers.

The mere fact that this word exists means that YOU, me, and everyone else needs to take the responsibility to change current thinking on this earth today from a blaming attitude to a responsibility attitude.

## **2.) Hugely important! When you mess up – own up!**

Be big and brave enough to admit your mistakes. We are ALL human and we all make mistakes. Similarly, when someone else makes a mistake and owns up – learn to respect them for that responsibility and in turn, forgive them while applauding them for having the courage to be honest and true.

## **3.) It's about you and you alone. As long as you keep blaming others, you give up your own power to change.**

Stop making excuses! Did you know that the majority of failures come from people who always make excuses? That's something to think about! Remember that you can ONLY get what you want in life when you STOP making excuses as to why you don't have it.

#### **4.) Hand in hand with responsibility comes commitment and the trait of never giving up.**

Even when there are other people who have contributed to and are jointly responsible for your successes in life, ONLY YOU are responsible for your failures! Let me explain... yes, others may have had a role to play in your mishaps and failures, but it is your choice to remain a failure. Responsible people learn from their failures, pick themselves up, and try and try again until they succeed. That's responsibility!

#### **5.) An unknown author once said, "Remember that guy that gave up? Neither does anyone else!"**

If you think it's too difficult to accept responsibility for your own life, then consider this quotation and ask yourself, do you want to be remembered and respected after you die, or do you want to be forgotten?

#### **6.) Finally, make it your responsibility to bring love and peace back onto this earth.**

Realise that the future lies in your hands alone. If you don't understand the concept of peace, then learn from this quotation by another unknown author who has found the most descriptive way with words I have ever seen... "It is only when you see a mosquito landing on your testicles that you realise that there is always a way to solve problems without using violence."

And if all else fails, then you could always go for the last resort and follow the advice of the immortal Walt Disney who said, "You may not realise it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you."

## **IT ONLY TAKES ONE**

Here's a great insight poem by an unknown author to end the book.

One song can spark a moment,  
One flower can wake the dream.  
One tree can start a forest,  
One bird can herald spring.

One smile begins a friendship,  
One handclasp lifts a soul.  
One star can guide a ship at sea,  
One word can frame the goal.

One vote can change a nation,  
One sunbeam lights a room.  
One candle wipes out darkness,  
One laugh will conquer gloom.

One step must start each journey,  
One word must start each prayer.  
One hope will raise our spirits,  
One touch can show you care.

One voice can speak with wisdom,  
One heart can know what's true.  
One life can make the difference,  
You see, It's Up to You!

Isn't that just so simple, yet so true? All it takes is **ONE** thing. Whether it's one thought, one action, one step, or one idea – IT ALL STARTS with **ONE**.

Any change in your life, any progression to another level – it's all about **ONE**. Therefore, the next time you ponder in fear about how difficult it is to implement a change in your life, think of this – it only takes **ONE** thing to change current circumstances. Not a hundred, but **ONE**. Everything starts with that first (**ONE**) step.

I love simple explanations and feel that we completely over-complicate life today. If we look at life as **ONES**, we can really simplify everything.

On the other side of the scale, it also takes only **ONE** thing to annoy us and create negativity in our lives too:

It takes **ONE** car to push in front of you in traffic to irritate you for the rest of the day.

It takes **ONE** tax audit to ruin your whole month.

It takes **ONE** relative to annoy your entire family.

It takes **ONE** failed attempt to stop many people from ever trying again.

It takes **ONE** failed relationship to stop people from ever loving again.

It takes **ONE** racist idiot to make certain people judge an entire group as racist.

It takes **ONE** hateful person to set into motion processes for war.

So anything bad always starts with **ONE** event!

So what's the message here? **ONE!**

That's the bottom line, the core message, the end-all and be-all. It's all about **ONE!**

If ALL negative things in life start with **ONE**, then hey, it takes ANOTHER **ONE** to negate the negativity! Think about it this way, most bad things are a build-up of many things over a period of days, weeks, months, etc. But again, it all started somewhere with the first **ONE** behaviour. Therefore, if you can learn to identify that initial **ONE** thing as it happens, all you need to do is negate and change that **ONE** single thing in order to turn the situation around.

The challenge is, of course, to identify that initial **ONE** thing when it happens. But is it really a challenge? I don't think so, as daily in each of our lives we encounter situations and experiences that begin in that moment. It's as easy as doing something about it from today – and at this **ONE** moment! Take the example of a rude driver in traffic. That one rude person annoys you. However, by instantly adding another **ONE** positive



thing into that situation, you **ONLY** have to negate that **ONE** bad event. For example, put on your **ONE** favourite song loudly and change your mood then and there. Someone is rude to you at work and it starts with that **ONE** rude remark. If you don't tackle that situation head-on then and there, this **ONE** rude remark builds into many over the next few days and months, and eventually, you not only hate that person, but odds are you hate everyone associated with that person. Now, judgementalism and group judgementalism begin to show their ugly face. All because of **ONE** action that you didn't negate when it happened!

The solution, no matter what negative event happens in your day, whether it is a snotty comment, selfish behaviour, bad attitude, it is up to you to take the onus and do **ONE** thing to negate that **ONE** event. In that way, you remain in control of your life completely.

Advising someone to stand up to a plethora of behaviours and situations becomes a complex and scary thought. But saying to someone to only focus on **ONE** thing and change **ONE** thing at a time is much easier and way more achievable.

So my message for this month is make that change – but make it **ONE** step at a time!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Wolfgang Riebe is a globally acclaimed magical keynote speaker who has inspired millions with his mesmerising performances and motivational speeches. A towering figure in both the magic and speaking industries, he is a best-selling author of over 60 books on magic, business, and inspiration. With over 30 years of experience, Wolfgang has captivated audiences in more than 165 countries, from Hollywood to Singapore, and has starred in over 200 television shows, including his own prime-time series.

Wolfgang's journey began in South Africa, and he has since lived in the UK, Germany, and Switzerland. In 2012, he earned his Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation from the National Speakers Association in America, a prestigious honour held by fewer than 750 speakers worldwide at the time. He made history as the first two-term national president of the Speakers Association for Africa and has shared his insights as a TEDx speaker. His groundbreaking research culminated in his acclaimed book, "Complexity Simplified," which has been cited by over 300 doctoral students.

Wolfgang's adventures are as diverse as his achievements. From walking with penguins in Antarctica to exploring the Arctic icecap and surviving force 12 hurricanes, he has lived a life that most can only dream of. His books reflect his passion for sharing his wisdom and helping others find meaning in their lives. Wolfgang embodies the KISS principle, believes in the magic of life, celebrates milestones, and charts paths to future success. He is a rare speaker who practices what he preaches and truly walks his talk, making him a world leader in his field.

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