

# SUCCESS INSIGHTS

## **#10 Stumbling Block – Not being 100% responsible for your actions, your results or your life.**

In a past issue of E-iNsights, I wrote about the principle of being 100% responsible. You may remember the formula I borrowed from the book "The Success Principles" by Jack Canfield:

$$E + R = O$$

Stated simply, the outcomes (or results) we experience in life are a result of our response to the events in our life – not the events themselves.

Because I so firmly believe that this formula is a critical secret to success, I knew it had to be in this series. And now I think there is some refining of this principle to be done, given the popularity of "The Secret" DVD and book.

[If you haven't heard of the Secret, you must not watch the nightly news, Oprah, Larry King, you don't frequent Barnes & Noble or Chapters, and you probably don't have your head in the personal development world - because the Secret is everywhere! So if you are unfamiliar with "The Secret" and the controversy surrounding it, please contact me.]

Anyway, a frequent question I get asked by people who've read or seen The Secret is: do we really attract everything into our experience – good or bad – as the Law of Attraction states?

I can't tell you how many people have vehemently disputed that the victims in the Towers did not attract the terrorists, the people in the South didn't attract Katrina and the students at V-Tech didn't attract the gunman.

I have to agree. I have always believed as the good Book states, "time and unforeseen occurrence befalls us all." I do believe that bad things happen to good people and that they didn't necessarily "attract" that circumstance into their life.

However, and here's the real point of this article, what you choose to do – how you choose to react to that event or circumstance is what will determine the outcome for you and the life you experience.

If we break down this formula (E+R=O) a little more, we see that your Response is made up of another formula.

$$T + F + A = R$$

Your Thoughts lead to your Feelings which lead to your Actions which make up your Response.

So after a negative event or circumstance has occurred, the biggest indicator of how this situation will turn out for you is where your thoughts go. Do you think negatively and dwell on the discouraging aspects of the situation? Is your mind focused on revenge, guilt or worry?

There is no one on the planet that would blame the students at V-Tech for being scared, angry, nervous, or haunted after what happened. All those reactions are

normal. But we also know that some of those students will go on to create amazing changes in their life and in this world because of the experience they went through.

Darrell and Craig Scott are the father and brother of Rachel Scott, one of the students killed in the Columbine shooting eight years ago. After the tragedy, when most grieving fathers might find it hard to get out of bed, Darrell set up *Rachel's Challenge Foundation* as a non-profit organization whose stated mission is to "motivate, educate and bring positive change to many young people."

Craig, who survived the shooting by hiding under a table, makes frequent joint speaking appearances with his father to urge teens to strive for a classroom "atmosphere of kindness and compassion" to stem school violence.

If we look at the example of these two individuals in the context of our formula, the path for them may look like this:

- E – Tragic shooting taking the life of their daughter/sister
- T – This terrible thing happened because there is not enough love or connectedness in the world.
- F – Compassion, desire to make a difference.
- A – Go speak to students, Congress, youth centers about our experience and our message of hope.

The results these two men have produced are unknown to most people. But they know they have prevented other school shootings and suicides because students have come up to them after their programs and confessed to having such thoughts.

So how can we apply this to our day-to-day lives? If we are lucky, we will never have to deal with such tragic events as stated above. But we do all face challenging situations. Let's take a very common scenario.

Let's say you are driving to work on the expressway and someone swerves in your lane and almost hits you. That's the Event. Out of our control and we did not attract it. (Unless like me – you may be doing six different things while driving!)

Next step is your Response that is made up of your Thoughts, Feelings and Actions. If you're like most of us, your thoughts go something like this:

- "Idiot, why doesn't he look where he's going?"
- "Jerk – learn to drive!"
- "Darn women drivers!" (c'mon you know you've all thought that!)

From here, our feelings are usually anger, fear, panic, rage, etc. And from those feelings our actions are usually less than helpful. We tailgate, honk our horn, or give them the "bird".

The Outcome we've created from our Response (again, it's our response that creates the outcome – not the event itself) could be very dangerous. Besides the negative impact to ourselves, we could anger the other driver. Road rage is simply a person who is unaware that their thoughts are making them extremely angry. They think it's the actions of the other person that is making them angry.

What if we were aware enough to change our thoughts? How would that ultimately affect the outcome? What if when the driver swerves in our lane, we thought "Wow, that person is really distracted! They must have had a terrible day."

How would you feel if that was your thought process? Well, you'd probably feel more compassionate and less angry. After all, we've all been there, haven't we?

Your feelings would then in turn create your actions. At this point, you'd probably back off, give the other driver some space.

No anger. No increased heart-rate. No retaliation. No bad day for you!

And isn't that the best side effect of taking 100% responsibility for you life?

## QUOTES

Stop looking for excuses not be able to succeed. It's no longer your parents, the competition, the economy, the technology, Microsoft, your family, the stars, the gods, American Idol, or the fates. It's YOU. And once you can admit that, you can start to change whatever needs changing.

~ Alan Weiss, author

If thou art pained by any external thing, it is not this that disturbs thee, but thy own judgment about it.

~ Marcus Aurelius

Thinking can be counterproductive - at least what people sometimes parade as thinking. REAL thinking is always a good thing, but many people pretend that replaying a tape in their head about something is actually thinking about it.

~ David Allen of DavidCo.com in David Allen's Productivity Principles

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