

“You and I can change how we feel in an instant, just by changing our focus.”
—Anthony Robbins

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE: Break Out Of Victim Prison

The Perpetrator

By accepting responsibility for our lives, we free ourselves to rise to our true unlimited potential. In business, the competition, the banks, company members, a spouse, a rotten economic market, or any number of other things often become the perpetrator. In the early 1990s, the economy went into recession and many contract cleaning companies, particularly the small ones, went bankrupt. Many of the contracts we held went out to bid and we were forced to cut some of our prices in half. To do this, we had to revert to more part-timers, better ideas on increasing productivity and efficiency, lower starting salaries, and razor thin profit margins.

It definitely was a time to complain that the economy and the world of business were killing us. I found out then what true competition and the free market was really all about. We learned how to become more competitive, yet maintain our values, ethics and integrity. We continued to take care of our company members as valiantly as we had before, while discovering new ways to clean better, faster, and cheaper.

Soon after this, the SEIU started to organize janitorial workers within Hartford County. We began to lose contracts and bidding opportunities because we were non-union. If anyone could have felt like a victim, we could have. We did not create the situation. I was a striking air traffic controller, a union member, why was this happening to me? But we looked for opportunity, not for justification or blame, as a target for our miseries. Because we

accepted responsibility for the position we found ourselves in, we came out on top. Through trial and error, we developed principles and practices that would help us to grow a thriving business. Eventually, I sold a healthy company to my vice president and left to write about these Principles and Practices in *Miracles at Work*.

As you can see from the previous example, accepting responsibility for our experience, either good or bad, and having faith in others and ourselves through a belief in the miraculous, will lead to the fulfillment of our grandest dreams.

Pain Claim

I received a call from a lady who wanted to attend our Thursday night study group. Her husband had been killed a year before when a car hit him while he was jogging in the early morning hours. This lady felt that the man who had struck her husband was literally getting away with murder. He had been charged in the accident but not brought to justice. She felt that the perpetrator was enjoying privileges from the police department as well as the courts. The tragic affair had ruined her life. She was not able to talk or think about anything else. She called because she had hoped that our group would help her with her pain.

I tried to explain some of the *Principles of Upside-Down Thinking* to her, but it soon became clear that she was not open to anything more than blame, determined to remain a victim of the catastrophe. I told her I would send her Gerry Jampolsky's book, *Love is Letting Go of Fear*. This simple little book introduced me to a new way of experiencing the world. She thanked me and said she would try to attend one of our meetings.

She never showed up but several months later, called back. She was still deep in her blame of the man who had killed her husband and the authorities who failed to bring him to justice. She could see no relief until the man was behind bars.

I asked her about Gerry's book and the other information I had sent her. She said, "It's sitting right here. One of these days, I'll pick it up and read it."

Then she went on to tell me how dreadful her life had been, how the most perfect man in her life was taken from her, that she would never be the same again, and how her life had been destroyed. I soon realized that she was not looking for someone who could help her overcome her grief. She simply wanted someone to sympathize with her so that she could continue her hopeless cycle. I tried to tell her that holding on to her anger and hate would never give her any peace, that the turmoil within her was not being created by her husband's killer, the police department or the justice system, and that forgiveness was meant to set *her* free, not her husband's killer.

I found myself unable to help her because she was unable to surrender her pain and hate long enough so that she could take the first step toward getting some help. Her family and friends were all trying to get her to start the process of letting go, but she chose to remain stuck. She felt she was the victim and the world was the perpetrator. She might have been totally justified in all of her accusations, but her constant preoccupation with being a victim kept her imprisoned in her own pain.

To this day, I have never met her face-to-face, but long after my last phone conversation with her, I was in a doctor's office for an exam when I heard a woman in the next treatment room telling the nurse about the untimely death of her husband. You guessed

it. It was the same woman, still unable to surrender her grief to the One who could release her.

Shedding Blame

Once we start blaming others for the sad shape we are in, our situation truly begins to be hopeless. We even render others helpless to assist us by blaming our dilemma on a cause outside of ourselves. Forces beyond our control are not causing us to fail at building our business or improving our life. Once we take the focus off ourselves as the source of our weakness, there is no solution. Go ahead and point the finger of blame at someone else and watch what happens to your thumb. It points right back at you.

Everything—yes, absolutely everything—which happens to us, is of our own doing. I want to repeat that. Even a horrible, terrible atrocity occurs because of our own decisions. Now, before you start to believe that you should blame yourself for everything, we must realize that nobody is to blame. Remember when we spoke of forgiveness? We started by forgiving ourselves. Then, we went even beyond that by realizing that there is nothing to forgive, that nothing truly happened. If we look at this world of form as a world of illusion, then reality is not here but beyond this world.

The Victim

If we continually take the position that we are victims of the world, then we can never truly transcend from that place where we are stuck. This malady is called “Victimitis.” I first heard this effective description from Gerald Jampolsky. Our egos create this as a defense mechanism, for the ego encourages us to seek outside of ourselves where the answer can

never be found. Our Higher Self does not ask us to seek what cannot be found. It knows we are not lost and that we are already whole and complete.

Our Beliefs Create Our Limits

Beliefs of greatness, or what is referred to as right-mindedness, propel us toward reaching our true potential. Belief in our smallness or wrong-mindedness robs us of our potential. At any given moment, we have a choice between our greatness (love) and our littleness (fear). There are no neutral thoughts. We are thinking thoughts of either magnificence or of worthlessness. Like a switch or a computer binary system, our mindset is either off or on, yes or no.

In a spiritual sense, the universe detects no difference between levels of greatness or smallness. Our egos project a perception of different intensities, but in reality we are either thinking thoughts of truth or illusion. Thoughts of truth are unlimited and include love, compassion, unity and pure spirit. These thoughts coincide with laws of abundance. The more we give love, compassion and pure spirit—the more is returned. Illusionary thoughts such as hate, jealousy, and revenge all follow the laws of scarcity. Hate replicates itself and, in doing so, destroys rather than builds relationships. Vengeance or revenge continues the cycle into more of the same. Attack is like a disease that feeds on itself, hiding the soul. Darkness promotes hopelessness. Jealousy and mistrust bring about the same.

The Can't

Our limiting beliefs are learned. We have all seen or experienced the results of growing up in an environment where *can't* becomes a family mantra. We *can't* afford to send

you to college; we *can't* get away for a vacation—we're not rich; we *can't* expect happiness in a world of pain and misery; we *can't* expect a miracle every time we need one.

In a limitless, nurturing environment, the *cant's* are replaced with *Yes, You Cans! Yes, you can* go to college—even if we cannot afford it, there are ways. *Yes, you can* do anything you want, whenever you want. If you truly believe, then money is not a factor. Miracles occur naturally when we expect them.

Blocks Vs. Boundaries

Our nurturing teaches us to put up self-boundaries. I am not speaking about the healthy boundaries that protect us from emotional, mental or physical damage, but boundaries of the mind that encapsulate us in a box of our own making. I have heard of people who have spent their entire life in the same few square blocks of a large city, such as Manhattan. I was watching a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) documentary the other night, about the closed community that surrounds and protects one of the huge nuclear arsenals in Russia. The reporter from “Nova” was interviewing the commander, who had never met or spoken to anyone from another country, yet he controls the nuclear power to destroy a world he has never seen.

We all have these physical boundaries—some larger than others do. Many have not ventured outside their state or region, or even the United States, because of the fear, mystery or *cant's* that lie “out there.”

As a child, were you ever shamed or embarrassed by a parent or teacher? Did that experience create a block for you into adulthood? Think of yourself as a little child. Now visualize a board such as the one on the game show *Concentration*. During that show,

contestants who successfully matched two blocks on the game board, got a chance to solve a word puzzle. If they could not, they picked another block trying to match it. If they got a match, another part of the puzzle was exposed and they had a chance to win the game.

When you are born, all your blocks are already turned to create a picture that reads, *You are without limits*. Then someone tells you that you cannot carry a tune and that you do not know how to sing a note; a block is flipped closed and darkness descends. Your possibilities begin to become limited. Then you stand before an audience as a child or young adult, to give a speech, your hands quiver and so does your voice. You are so frightened that you cannot remember what you practiced to say. You leave the podium humiliated. Another block shuts off your possibilities due to that experience. You are twice married. A picture of your pain, the divorce, the condemning words of your ex-spouse haunt you. Because of that sense of failure, you see no possibility of a permanent relationship. You know that you will never be a good partner. Yet another block has closed and our self-belief becomes even more limited.

But none of these instances are real. They are all learned. And they can be unlearned. The voice of the child who could not carry a note changes; with a little bit of practice he could become a fabulous singer. A painful experience speaking before an audience can be overcome by joining Toastmasters International and learning the techniques of a polished orator. In the process, perhaps you begin to enjoy standing in front of an audience for the first time. The person who was twice married and twice divorced did not realize that he kept falling into the same relationship pattern with a needy, emotionally unavailable partner. Once he realized what he was doing, he changed the script, and his relationships changed. Later in

our Action Steps, we will demonstrate ways to change our minds and remove the blocks to self-acceptance.

Our potential is not ruled by the business environment, but rather by our own beliefs. We are not victims of circumstance. *Now is the time to claim the power of our infinite potential, by accepting no limits, getting out of the blame game, and accepting responsibility for our lives.*

The Universal Source of our “being,” which is referred to by many names, is the power that builds a business from the soul up. Our creator is the subject of our Eighth Principle.

“As he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” — Proverbs 23:7

*“Thinking we are separate from God, our Source,
is our only problem;
while experience of oneness with the universe
and with our Creator is the answer.”*

— Rev. Howard I. Westin