The Key to Success? Personal Responsibility

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**Principle One**1 Take 100% Responsibility for Your Life

2 *You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can*

3 *change yourself.* -Jim Rohn

4 One of the most pervasive myths in the American culture today is that we are *entitled* to a great life — that somehow, 5 somewhere, someone (certainly not us) is responsible for filling our lives with continual happiness, exciting career 6 options, nurturing family time, and blissful personal relationships simply because we exist.

7 But the real truth is that there is only one person responsible for the quality of the life you live.

9 That person is *you*.

10 If you want to be successful, you have to take 100% responsibility for everything that you experience in your life. This 11 includes the level of your achievements, the results you produce, the quality of your relationships, the state of your 12 health and physical fitness, your income, your debts, your feelings — everything!

13 This is not easy.

14 In fact, most of us have been conditioned to blame something outside of ourselves for the parts of our life we don't 15 like. We blame our parents, our bosses, our friends, the media, our coworkers, our clients, our spouse, the weather, 16 the economy, our astrological chart, our lack of money — anyone or anything we can pin the blame on. We never 17 want to look at where the real problem is — ourselves.

18 There is a wonderful story told about a man who is out walking one night and comes upon another man down on his 19 knees looking for something under a streetlamp. The passerby inquires as to what the other man is looking for. He 20 answers that he is looking for his lost key. The passerby offers to help and gets down on his knees and helps him 21 search for the key. After an hour of fruitless searching, he says, "We've looked everywhere for it and we haven't 22 found it. Are you sure that you lost it here?"

23 The other man replies, "No, I lost it in my house, but there is more light out here under the streetlamp."

24 It is time to stop looking outside yourself for the answers to why you haven't created the life and results you want, 25 for it is you who creates the quality of the life you lead and the results you produce.

26 You — no one else!

27 To achieve major success in life — to achieve those things that are most important to you — you must assume 100% 28 responsibility for your life. Nothing less will do.

**One Hundred Percent Responsibility For Everything**29 Back in 1969, I had the good fortune to work for W. Clement Stone. He was a self-made multimillionaire worth $600 30 million at the time — and that was long before all the dot-com millionaires came along in the '90s. Stone was also 31 America's premier success guru. He was the publisher of *Success Magazine*, author of *The Success System That Never 32 Fails*, and coauthor with Napoleon Hill 33 of *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude*.

33 When I was completing my first week's orientation, Mr. Stone asked me if I took 100% responsibility for my life.

34 "I think so," I responded.

35 "This is a yes or no question, young man. You either do or you don't."

36 "Well, I guess I'm not sure."

37 "Have you ever blamed anyone for any circumstance in your life? Have you ever complained about anything?"

38 "Uh ... yeah ... I guess I have."

39 "Don't guess. Think."

40 "Yes, I have."

41 "Okay, then. That means you don't take one hundred percent responsibility for your life. Taking one hundred percent 42 responsibility means you acknowledge that you create everything that happens to you. It means you understand that 43 you are the cause of all of your experience. If you want to be really successful, and I know you do, then you will have 44 to give up blaming and complaining and take total responsibility for your life — that means all your results, both your 45 successes and your failures. That is the prerequisite for creating a life of success. It is only by acknowledging that you 46 have created everything up until now that you can take charge of creating the future you want.

47 "You see, Jack, if you realize that you have created your current conditions, then you can uncreate them and re- 48 create them at will. Do you understand that?"

49 "Yes, sir, I do."

50 "Are you willing to take one hundred percent responsibility for your life?"

51 "Yes, sir, I am!"

52 And I did.

YOU HAVE TO GIVE UP ALL YOUR EXCUSES

*53 Ninety-nine percent of all failures come from people who have a habit of making excuses.* -George Washington Carver

54 If *you* want to create the life of your dreams, then you are going to have to take 100% responsibility for your life as 55 well. That means giving up all your excuses, all your victim stories, all the reasons why you can't and why you haven't 56 up until now, and all your blaming of outside circumstances. You have to give them all up forever.

57 You have to take the position that you have always had the power to make it different, to get it right, to produce the 58 desired result. For whatever reason — ignorance, lack of awareness, fear, needing to be right, the need to feel safe — 59 you chose not to exercise that power. Who knows why? It doesn't matter. The past is the past. All that matters now is 60 that from this point forward you choose — that's right, it's a choice — you choose to act as if (that's all that's 61 required — to act as if ) you are 100% responsible for everything that does or doesn't happen to you.