Responsibility

Today, we’re going to look at some concepts that will greatly add to your personal power and to the personal power of your coaching clients. We’ll be discussing the concept of responsibility.

Let’s start by examining the notion of your clients taking full responsibility for their success. But first let’s define what we mean by the word responsibility. Responsibility is simply the ability to respond at any time and to any situation in a way that honors you as a person and supports you in your relationships with others. Contrast this with how we’ve been trained to view responsibility. Responsibility does not involve blame, fault, or burden. Not being responsible doesn’t connote shame, guilt or unworthiness. It does not involve a value judgment subject to someone's opinion about how you "should" do something or how someone ought to run his or her life. Responsibility instead involves taking full acceptance for every event, relationship, action and situation that occurs in your life.

You know, it’s not necessarily "true" that your clients bring about everything that shows up around them in life. It is merely an interpretation that everything they do, whatever they have in their lives, and how they show up for others is their creation. This posture is one they can take on to empower themselves to be the source of what happens to them in life. Being responsible means that there are no victims created by events in life. In some way, consciously or not, every person, circumstance, event or challenge we all encounter in life is the result of decisions we have made. This is not to say that events do not occur that are outside of the scope of our influence. Such situations certainly do take place. To say that we are responsible for everything that happens around us is simply a declaration that supports us to be in choice. It is a place we stand as we invoke our personal power to choose. Responsibility is always in the present, never about the past. It is simply a place to stand from which your clients can look at the world as they make a choice about some action they may take. It does not make anyone wrong or at fault. And it does not involve manipulation. When any situation occurs which touches their lives, taking responsibility means that your clients can take the interpretation that it simply occurred as opposed to the interpretation that it happened to them. Having responsibility implies that they are the designer and builder of who they are, what they have and what they do. And, since it's their creation, they get to change it if what they see around them is not to their liking. Taking responsibility means your clients are giving up their right to make others wrong. It is about saying what they need to say without harboring ill feelings or thoughts of resentment or getting back at the person in some way. People who take responsibility are empowered to respond to any situation with a self assured, personal power and knowledge that they can affect change.

Remind your clients that they are the source for what they attract in the world. Challenge them to claim responsibility for EVERYTHING in their lives and in their businesses and decide to take the necessary steps to impact what shows up around them.
So, with this concept of responsibility in mind, with respect to supporting your life optimization coaching clients to move their lives forward powerfully, assist them to identify where they have been less than responsible for their happiness, abundance level, success, relationships, communication and the realization of every aspect of their life vision. To support seeing where they may have been irresponsible, ask them where the results they desire have been lacking. For example, are they suffering in any aspect of their lives? Are they on track to realize the goals they have set for themselves in life and business? If not, what have they not been responsible for that would have impacted their results? Remember, this is not about placing blame! It’s simply a tool to support a thorough analysis of the situation. Ask the question…What could you put into place to be responsible for realizing the results you desire in every area of your life including your health and appearance, your wealth and finances, your occupation or business, your relationships, your ability to put fun into your life and pursue your passions, and in the area of your personal and spiritual development? Always ground your clients’ commitments by asking…By when will you take these actions?

Often times, you will notice that your clients are addicted to needing a justification for everything they do. Many will tend to look for a reason to accompany every event. This logic causes them to give away their power to whatever external events come their way. Remind your clients that no one can make them sad, angry, or scared. No one can make them do anything. To believe that they can is to give away the power that is rightfully theirs.

Whenever your clients justify what they do, they lose their ability to act independently of circumstances. To say that they did anything because of something else is not only untrue but it makes them dependent on external forces. Your clients give up their autonomy in an attempt to come up with an explanation. This mode of thinking is so deeply ingrained in our culture that you will notice that your clients have trained themselves to provide an explanation or excuse for all their behavior.

Whenever they explain their behavior away as the result of something that happened outside their will, they are guilty of confusing the facts with their interpretation of the particulars. This is always a lie to some degree. As an example, you might hear your client say, “I’m late for work because my car broke down.” We are thoroughly conditioned to buy into a statement like this taking it as the truth. But what if your client was told that he had won $10 million and the money was his as long as he arrived on time to claim it by Monday morning at 9 AM? With so much riding on his punctuality, perhaps he might arrive a day early just so he would not miss out! The point is that if your client was late, he was not likely late because of any reason outside his control. He was late simply because he did not take responsibility for arriving on time. When a person commits to something and doesn’t do it, it may not have been quite important enough for her to keep her commitment.

If you challenge your clients to closely examine every time they use an excuse as a justification, they’ll start to see there is always a story involved which is subject to interpretation.
The man beats his wife because his father beat him when he was a child. Is this true or is it a justification to absolve the man of responsibility for his actions?

Your clients give their power away when they assign responsibility to some outside force. You see, the man in the above example who beat his wife was himself beaten as a child because his father beat him as well. But his father did so because he could not deal with his alcoholic wife. And she drank because her mother never loved her as a child.

Whenever your clients confuse the facts with their interpretations, they give their power away in the process. They always have the ability to create an empowering interpretation that supports them in moving a situation forward. It will involve giving up their desire to be right about something in favor of opting to have life work for all involved.

Here are some exercises to support your clients to take full responsibility for everything in their lives…

1) Have your clients notice whenever they use excuses as a justification for doing or not doing something.
2) Challenge them to take full responsibility for every aspect of their lives. Suggest they record in their journals those instances when they notice that they are not. Request that they record the action steps they will take for all areas of life that are not up to their standards.