

Who's To Blame?

By Ernesto Segismundo Jr. M.S., LMFT

When you're experiencing emotional pain, it is easier to blame others than to take personal responsibility for it.

Let me explain--husband is in therapy for anger. His wife is leaving him because "she said she had enough." Husband states that he is very angry with her because she "just gave up and didn't even try to work things out with me." He says "I think she is cheating, that's why she wants a divorce." He states that "she asks too much of me." When I asked, "what is she asking too much of?" He said "time. I just don't have it, I work a lot. She is just a needy person."

Upon further assessment, it turns out that husband REGULARLY withholds affection from his wife; criticizes her on her parenting style; ignores/denies her requests for physical intimacy; and constantly talks badly and complains about her family; he also turns minor disagreements into full blown arguments.

There is a problem in blaming others for your emotional pain. It is not productive. It distracts you from changing your own behaviors. Instead, you want people to change their behaviors so that you don't have to change yours. You try to justify your anger by pointing out their faults. The reality is this—YOU CANNOT OTHERS! You and only you are responsible for your behaviors and your emotions. You are solely responsible for your quality of life. Whether, you are happy or not, pain or not you're your relationship feels good or not is entirely determined by the choices you make.

If you rely on others to dictate your happiness, BE PREPARED FOR A LET DOWN. When you don't get what you want from people, you run the risk of demanding it from them. People don't usually respond well to demands (at least most of the people I know). In fact, the more you are demanding of people, the more they are resistant towards you.

Relationships usually fail due to a GRADUAL and consistent break down in intimacy and communication. At times, people are not aware that certain behaviors such as put-downs, criticism, emotional stone-walling, blaming, and resentment can lead to failed relationships. The husband I mentioned above ignored his part of his wife's decision (divorce). It was hard for him to accept that he might have contributed to his wife's decision. His only explanations for the failed marriage were "she is too needy," and "she was asking too much of me." Rather than giving his wife the respect and affection she longed for, he was cold and mean to her. What made matters worse--he did not take responsibility for his anger. Instead he blames her for his anger.

- Be responsible for protecting the emotional well-being of your relationships.
- Eliminate your tendency to blame others for your emotional pain.
- Communicate assertively your needs to others and be clear on what you want.
- Find productive ways to manage your anxiety when you don't get what you want from others.
- Finally, accept that you cannot change others but yourself.

Turning Point Counseling

Visit us at TurningPointCounseling.org ♦ Or call us at (800) 998-6329

