

Taking the Blame

There are lots of things that go wrong during the course of a day, a week, a year, or even a lifetime. When they do go wrong, it's been my experience that there's usually more than enough blame to go around. And more often than not, I have some share of that blame. Even if I didn't cause it, I probably didn't help solve it either.

When that happens, I've got 4 choices:

1. I can deny responsibility altogether.
2. I can try to justify my action or inaction.
3. I can blame somebody else. Or,
4. I can take the blame and accept the consequences.

Dale points out that number 4 usually disarms our critics - but let me add that you have to be willing to take the heat if it gives them ammunition instead. What you must do is quickly and emphatically admit your mistake. Call yourself every name in the book and lay out a litany of the effects of your wrong-doing, including everyone you think might have been hurt by it. Apologize. Realize that saying you're sorry is seldom enough. You need to do what can be done to make any victims of your wrong-doing whole again.

That shows you at least understand the consequences of what you have done. You also take the fight out of your opponents by stealing their thunder. What more can they say than you've already said? What more can they ask for than you've already offered? And Dale says that admitting it with enthusiasm can also be a lot more fun than trying to defend yourself. Take the Ford and Firestone fiasco for example...

Once you've admitted you're wrong, you'd better *repent* of your wrong-doing: try not to repeat it again. Dale doesn't say that, but I'm going to add it anyway. There's nothing sadder than someone who continues to hurt others and themselves by making the same mistakes over and over, who knows it, admits it, and makes them anyway!

What's nice is that you can draw a line in the sand and start over again, anytime.

So here's the wrap-up:

When you're wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically without excusing it, justifying it, or minimizing it. That's what responsible adults do.