

NO EXCUSES: LESS DRAMA, MORE FUN IN THE WORKPLACE

The quality of your life is largely dependent upon your level of tolerance for excuses. If those around you routinely make excuses, you've got to ask yourself: How am I contributing to this behavior?

One way that you could be opening the door to an onslaught of excuses is when you're not clear whether what you're hearing is a valid explanation or an excuse.

EXPLANATION

Simply put, an explanation is giving an account of what happened and taking full responsibility for one's actions. The emphasis is on "making it right."

"I've left several messages for John in order to obtain the critical information we need, but he didn't get back to me in time. I realize now I need to be more insistent. I'll get that information today even if I have to camp out at his office!"

EXCUSE

An excuse is providing reasons to support the claim: "It's not my fault" and exempting one's self from taking responsibility.

"I asked John for the information and I never heard back from him. He's just unreliable!"

Every excuse you tolerate matters because the message you are sending is "It's OK to give me an excuse instead of being accountable." Excuses will weigh you down and keep you stuck. Your awareness of excuses can help you to clean up this toleration and free up your energy.

As Dave Del Dotto put so well, "No one ever excused his way to success! Navigating through excuses is time-consuming and expensive.

Are you ready to declare an "Excuse-Free Zone"?

To help others, you'll first need to spot and eliminate your own excuses. Start by better understanding your Inner Interpreter (a term coined by Dr. Martin Seligman). Your interpreter focuses on TIME, PLACE, and PERSON.

TIME

Permanent excuse: "Things will never work out."

Temporary excuse: "THIS situation didn't work out."

PLACE

Pervasive excuse: "I can't sell."

Specific excuse: "I didn't land THAT contract."

PERSON

Personal excuse: "I'm not good at this."

Impersonal excuse: "THIS situation required more finesse."

Notice that in each case, the temporary, specific, and impersonal excuses are much more realistic and easier to manage and therefore create less drama in your life!

What is your INNER INTERPRETER Revealing about You?

1. To determine how your internal interpreter habitually works, think of a time when something didn't turn out as planned. Be specific.
2. Now ask yourself why this situation didn't turn out to your liking. Write down what you hear your mind saying.
3. Repeat the above exercise two more times with other events you recall to obtain more data.
4. Look at what you've written. Is there a pattern, a common theme? Check your inner interpreter for time, place and person. How self-defeating is your thinking?
5. Rewrite your statements, as necessary. Make them "temporary" instead of "permanent." Make them specific, not global. Make them more objective by taking yourself out of the equation for now. This allows you to arrive at better responses and to you being more proactive.
6. Now that you have a better understanding of how your Inner Interpreter describes your world to you, realize that its function is to serve you. Appreciate the job it did for you thus far.
7. Since you no longer wish the interpreter to work on its own by default, update your Inner Interpreter based on the useful statements you've created in step five.

Keep in mind that your internal interpreter is ever awake and alert. It can easily adapt to the changes you are making based on your new focus: to experience an excuse-free zone, providing you with more freedom, optimism, and success.

The best of success to you!

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