

31. I plan on living a rich life with stuff I cannot buy.
32. I will think beyond from where I am right now.
33. I do not blame my parents...I love who they are.They love me the best they know how.
34. As I improve my grades and feel accomplishment,I recognize that I deserve it and can handle it.
35. I will work hard!
- 36 I will constantly be aware of the voice in my head. It may not be telling me what I need to hear,to be a success.I will listen to others, and let me be the judge because I can do it.
37. I am adding to me all the time, keep the old for when it's useful and the new to boost me higher.

CHAPTER 9

RESPONSIBILITY

If I own it...I'll make it happen...

There is not enough going on in the educational system that serves our Kids desire for success. Real, personal success! Kids want to learn how to identify and establish goals, add successful beliefs about themselves, others and life.They are EAGER to learn how to develop a healthy, adaptable Self Identity.Kids are passionate about owning their own life. Given the opportunity, they will work very hard to make it work!

It is up to us, Parents, Teachers and Coaches, to set the stage for a successful life.We, our Kids and us, have to fully accept that Kid success is their responsibility. I have to repeat this. It is their responsibility to be successful at what they want out of life. I understand unforeseen stumbling blocks that remain out of Kid control. But, if you want somebody to be successful, you have to put him or her in a situation where they assume full responsibility for the outcome, with no excuses. Full responsibility means they can't give themselves an excuse for failure before the race is finished.

Kids meet school demands all day. Few can argue that demands at school far exceed most Adult occupations. It is a full day with homework, quizzes, tests, class preparation, locker organization, physical appearance, social connections, sleep deprivation, demands of Coaches and Parents. Throughout the day, if your child believes they have the power to achieve what they want, then they will act as if it is true. If they know after every challenge they automatically reflect on their role, rather than looking for an escape route, they will achieve a sense of freedom to make mistakes, take risks and

grow. If they know they have an out then they will never grow. If they know you are going to encourage them to reflect on the outcome and determine what could have been done differently to achieve what they desired, then performance and happiness soars. There is nothing like feeling the ownership of personal growth. Nothing! Encourage self-reflection and growth. It's awesome!

When Kids do not reach their goals we must step in. We must encourage them to reflect on their role in the outcome. What were the guiding beliefs fueling decisions, attitude, behavior and communication? What could they have done or thought different? Did they communicate their needs to others? It is their responsibility to know and strive toward goals they seek.

Reaching goals involves getting people to understand us. Teach them to pay attention to communication from others. If another person reacts differently than expected, then encourage your Kid to reflect on their own verbal and non-verbal communication. Get them to understand the best way to judge their own communication is to look at the response they received. It is their responsibility to pay attention to verbal and non-verbal responses to their communication. If they are not getting the response they want, then encourage them to adjust their own communication to get the response they want.

Teach them to identify what they have control over. What do our Kids have control over? They have control over how they respond to events in their life. They have control over what they think, their identity in any arena, beliefs about people, themselves and the opportunity of life. The outcomes they have, (test scores, homework completion, good connections with friends and healthy minded Adults, play time), are a result of a learned response to events. They can change their thoughts, beliefs and Self Identity. They demonstrated the ability to learn their current take on thinking, beliefs and Self-Identity so they can learn new, more productive, ways! Bottom line...if they do not like the results they have then teach

them how to change their response...it is their responsibility... guided by your love and encouragement!

It is not easy to teach responsibility. We are conditioned to blame anybody and anything, except ourselves. We must constantly encourage Kids to give up excuses and reasons why they cannot engage or reach higher levels of performance. Blaming Parents, Teacher and Coaches, politics...whatever! As soon as they experience their power to counter all excuses, then they will find a way to succeed in ways never dreamed. They have always had the power to do be successful. Do you know why they have not used this power? WHO CARES! Tell them. It does not matter. What does matter...Kids must learn they have the power and responsibility to be the accomplished person they want to be. It's your choice to teach...choose to act...I beg you!!!

As Adults, we need to give full responsibility to our children... full responsibility to reach for the accomplished life they want. Talk with them about what they want out of life and turn it over to them. They have the power to do it. Kids need to know they have 100% responsibility to make it happen. They own their success and failures. They are responsible for reflecting on their outcomes and making adjustments. If they are not getting what they want then make a change. Talk, Love and Encourage them!!!

Kids have to know you trust their ability to take responsibility for their life. They must believe their Parent, Teacher or Coach believes they have what it takes to make a decision, act, fail and try again until they reach their goal. Kids need to hear us say, "I believe you can make this happen. You will stumble. There will be near misses and success...but in the end, you will get, or come close, to where you want to be. I know you will take responsibility for all the outcomes along the way to success." Kids feel empowered when a significant Adult believes they can move to action, take responsibility for outcomes and continue with a fully engaged effort!

Recall a time when a significant person expressed confidence in you to take responsibility for your outcomes. It is a powerful experience! The inspiring feeling of confidence when others believe you can take 100% responsibility for an agreed upon outcome. The liberating experience of receiving permission to reach an outcome and assume responsibility for the entire scenario. You can recall the empowering feeling giving rise to an outpouring of ideas and actions as if your creative juices were finally released. Ideas and actions running the risk of failure but explode with endless possibilities of expected success.

It may have been the first time in your life you were not allowed the luxury of blaming, complaining and justifying when stumbling toward your goal. The outcome was totally yours. Nobody was going to step in and offer comforting excuses for failure. People in authority believed you owned what it takes to make it happen. You did not seek the comfort of excuses from self and others. In fact, it was unacceptable! You were given the green light of responsibility to act, stumble, choose a new path, stumble, choose a new path and eventually WIN! Now that's encouragement!

Teach your young child to take responsibility with a heavy dose of encouragement. I was tutoring a student, Sue, in her home while her younger brother was looking for darts to his rapid fire 20 shot air propelled toy. He stared at his mom complaining of lost darts and asked for help without making any effort to look. Mom did an amazing thing. She did not respond with the customary, "no," with nonverbal messages implying our young man was more of a nuisance than a source of love. Instead, she said, "I know you can find them." Her tone and face expressed love and confidence in him. Mom encouraged him to solve his own problem. Mom made a great connection and encouraged responsibility to solve his problem.

Sue's mom then took it a step further. She outlined a new plan of action to avoid losing darts in the future. Mom pointed out that next time he may want to consider where the darts are going to land if he misses his target. She encouraged him to check if they

will land in areas where darts can get lost. She then approached brilliance with her next comment. She said, "I know you will think about what I just said and create other ways to keep your darts where you want them." I almost fell off my chair! Mom gave him the responsibility to solve his problem. She expressed trust that he would consider her solution, create his own idea of problem solving and choose a solid plan of action. Encourage responsibility in an air of encouragement and trust. Everybody wins!

Warning! While encouraging Kids to take responsibility we will encounter common roadblocks. They are very common growth stopping strategies that share a common goal. Strategies to avoid responsibility serve to protect the self from being hurt. Self Identity must be protected! The irony is, any strategy to avoid responsibility for thought, attitude, decisions, behavior and outcome actually pull you further from success and happiness. Encourage Kids to avoid such roadblocks. They are success and happiness killers.

The first strategy to avoid personal responsibility for outcomes is called BLAME. The idea is to point out everything and everybody instead of you. Students blame Teachers, classrooms, peers, Coaches, rules, Deans and Principals. I have even heard Kids say, "The building just smells bad. I can't work in a place like that." One student said that, "since the desks were too small, there was no way my grade was going to improve." The most common blame bomb is, "From the beginning of our school year, the Teacher never liked me...it was a done deal." Coaches see kids blame peers when competition for playing time is fierce. They will blame poor health, the Coach is not making plays clear enough for them to understand, or the stupid Coach has them playing the wrong position. Its always somebody, or something, else...definitely not them.

As the Lacrosse season was starting Coach Steven asked Jess how things were going. It was her Senior year and Lacrosse was a big part of her family's life. Jess had already been accepted to a college on an athletic and Lacrosse scholarship. Jess was not the fastest or quickest player on the field but her game IQ exceeded most.

It was a Monday and her first league game was Friday. Jess remarked excitement as she looked forward to the season. Jess believed the girls were a great combination of hard workers and fun lovers. Steven asked what she expected her role to be, which left the door open for any response. Jess could have talked about anything related to improving practice, games, relationships, providing leadership in a neglected area of her team. Jess chose to talk about her position and how the Coach was making a mistake.

The Varsity coaching staff was brand new to the returning girls. Jess thought the Coach was making a terrible mistake by placing her at midfield and another player, Sam, at attack. According to Jess, “I don’t know why, but the Coach has me at midfield. Sam is at attack. Sam is faster and can run forever. I guess we’ll see what happens but I think it’s a big mistake. I’m scared!” It was Monday and she was scared about a game on Friday. Jess was not in a state where she was going to give her best effort. She felt out of place at midfield and instead of taking responsibility for her new role she was blaming the Coach for her inevitable failure. Not knowing how the new Coach would react to poor game performance she was afraid of not earning playing time during her senior year.

Instead of arguing the point of her Coaches decision, Steven told her a success story of her own creation. Both had shared the same soccer team when Jess was younger. Prior to her season opener, Steven pointed out how her practice and pre-season game performance looked questionable. Leadership on the team was lacking.

Steven reminded Jess of the, “torrential rain practice.” Some kids were obviously not improving and her effort was at best, sluggish. While Jess was doing push-ups, Steven asked if she was ready to bring herself and the team to a higher level of effort, performance and enthusiasm. It was a critical point. If Jess was ready, then she was to do more push-ups than anybody else. Without saying a word, she continued to perform push-ups, which pushed others to do the same. Jess was the last to finish 12 additional agonizing push-ups.

She stood up belly laughing then started to cry. She announced that from this point forward, this was going to be one of the program’s best seasons. Then she did the most amazing thing. She stated the obvious with, “we are the least talented and experienced group of girls our program has ever seen but we are going to win.” Jess could not have been more correct...they finished with the second best record of their program and went on to State Finals during their Senior year. Nobody would argue who owned the responsibility for outcome...players, kids like Jess!!!

The Saturday morning Sports page reported Jess’s team had won. Jess contributed with 3 goals, 2 assists, 4 ground balls and 3 steals. Not bad for a slow poke at midfield in a hotly competitive area for Lacrosse. Tell them they are responsible for outcomes. Encourage, trust and let them own full responsibility for their success.

One more comment about Blaming. The very opposite of extreme Blaming is extreme Adult glory hording. It could be a whole separate chapter. Adults claiming responsibility for every conceivable positive outcome produced by a Kid on the field. It can play out like this. Adult spectators witness an amazing athletic feat during a game, or, a team competes beyond expectation. Adults comment to the Parent of a, “star player,” and the Parent wants everybody to believe he is the Kids Personal Trainer Coach. The Parent responds with, “ya, he and I have been practicing that one since he was a little guy.” Then Parent Trainer jumps into great detail of how he produced this amazing player.

Coaches boast with how hard they worked with a player to achieve the spectacular outcome. Good Lord, get off the bus. Give credit, don’t take it. The Kid was good enough before they found you. They turned out smart enough to listen to you. They practiced enough to make it happen on the field...OR...the other Kids have simply not caught up developmentally. Whatever the cause, the ultimate responsibility for outcome stays with the Kid. Please, don’t take it away from them. It will ruin future success.

Another sure sign of avoiding responsibility is to COMPLAIN. It is an intolerable noise. It is very close to the blame game. Blaming stems from a specific situation and directed at a specific person, situation or thing. Complaining seems to be used all the time. It is directed at everything and everybody all the time. A Kid will complain to keep everybody and everything at bay so they cannot be held accountable for anything. If a Kid complains enough, they will develop a belief that the perfect situation does not exist for them to succeed, so why bother.

Complaining seems very common for young athletes who experienced success early in life. As peers catch up, Kid performance does not stand out as much and personal recognition declines. It is critical for Adults to step up and investigate if their player really wants to play at the same level of success. If so, then give them the responsibility, along with guidance, toward improving concentrated effort and performance. Complaining and Blaming Coaches, other kids, poor refs, injuries will lead to a rapid decline in interest. Very often they end up lonely and isolated because they lacked solid guidance from a trusted Adult who will sincerely listen and give responsibility for outcome to the player.

The catastrophe of Complaining is its magnetic quality. Many times, Complaining has a humorous tone. It attracts other Complainers or turns perfectly healthy minded people into rookie Complainers. It attracts the worse of others. Complainers need and seek other Complainers to justify their Complaining. Being with another Complainer validates Complaining. Tell Complaining Kids to stop! If they don't stop, their Complaining will grow like unwanted crab grass. It can ruin a team. Complaining can create a family pattern of communication that is very difficult to interrupt due to the intense belief system supporting such Complaints. Best approach, don't let Complaining give birth.

Complaining fools people. I have watched kids listen to Complainers and believe the message. They are fooled a Complainer may know something they don't. It is especially true when the

Complainer is an Adult. Complainers seem to think Complaining is a magical tool that makes everybody think they know what they are talking about. Since nobody is interrupting or arguing, then it must be true. Tell kids to run from Complainers. Run fast and hard, smile while running, but run swiftly!

Give kids an assignment to avoid any internal Complaining. Join them in the fun. Everybody can monitor themselves...it's their responsibility! Tell them, the mind is a powerful servant that must be controlled. When emotions run high, people communicate to themselves at a rate of 2,000 words or symbols per minute. When in class, their powerful mind can absorb information at 800 words per minutes, yet, delivered information averages 200 words per minute. The athlete has to control their thoughts in a competitive arena. When the brain can absorb at a faster pace than information is offered, it is easy for student attention to sway. Internal chat dominates. Tell Kids this is happening and, to some degree, it is healthy. Encourage communication to themselves in a healthy, supportive manner. Do not Complain. If we get our Kids to stop Complaining we will have served them well.

The most damaging strategy Kids use to shrink from responsibility is JUSTIFYING. Justifying is a permanent strategy that removes Kids from taking responsibility for growth, accomplishment, relationships and happiness. Justifying lies! Justification creates beliefs that support misery. It totally removes Kids from new paths of thought and behavior for a better life. Justification supports current beliefs and prevents any examination of personal wants and goals. It completely ignores feelings of conflict screaming for attention. Justification supports currently held beliefs, which do not support what a Kid truly wants in life. Justification builds a tall wall so new possibilities cannot be seen. Justification strips responsibility and is a constant lie to the self.

Justification creates a belief that transcends to all parts of a Kids life. I am constantly reminded of the damaging effect of Justification. Failing students will Justify their situation with a created or learned

belief that education does not matter. They will justify small failures by clinging to an existing student identity. After a small failure, they actually say, "I am slow so failing a test is what happens!" This belief is then supported, justified and cemented by a "supporting" peer group and family culture. Kids justify their failure by creating a belief that education is not important. In fact, many families will do their best to not support their Kid's educational experience in order to justify their own failure in school.

This belief migrates to other areas of a Kid's life. Kids can turn negative toward people who believe in education. They will mock those who graduate from high school. In order to justify their lack of success in school their ill-conceived beliefs of education now include people who have an education. It can expand to people who work in education. It expands to politicians, who for the most part, are formally educated people. Before you know it, a belief that justified poor performance in school crept into other areas of life regarding the value of people.

The motivation behind this belief is to protect the Kid. The very opposite happens. The belief separates him from anybody affiliated with education or who experienced any success in school. The most crippling part of justification is its path to many other areas of life and how it often leads to isolation from people. To me, it cannot get any worse.

Justification is when a Kid creates a belief to support their behavior. Failing students will declare, "education does not matter." Poor athletic performance is justified with faulty beliefs of, "this sport is no fun and never was." Poor relationships with peers and family are justified with, "everybody else is stupid and friends are not necessary to be happy." They will support any belief that justifies not taking responsibility for fixing the problem. A Kid will protect himself from pain by choosing to believe the system is wrong along with anybody associated with it. They become isolated from the system such as school, family or team.

Tell Kids that justifying poor behavior with unhealthy beliefs does not work. It can lead to isolation from others. It is a very powerful tool to avoid responsibility. It stops Kids from taking a close look at what they really want and making sure it happens.

When people are confronted with beliefs not compatible with their own they ignore it. Why? People will convince themselves they have not acted foolishly. To further justify their false beliefs they tell themselves that people attempting to point out the destructive nature of their beliefs are foolish, stupid and should be treated with scorn. Justification is a powerful strategy to avoid responsibility for outcomes. When you see it happening, tell Kids to stop lying to themselves. Find out what they really want out of the situation and move them in that direction. If you don't, a belief system will continue to grow that justifies low performance, extremely poor engagement, effort, happiness and isolation!

Take another look at the unhealthy effect of justification. Many obscure social situations lead to Kids inflicting pain on others because they were told to. When informed they have acted cruelly toward another person they immediately justify their behavior with a belief that the unknown innocent deserved it. Instead of taking responsibility to look at their behavior and examine its implications for self and others, they choose to justify their actions with a belief system to support and protect their person.

Lets make a full circle back to the beginning of responsibility roadblocks. Kids use Complaining, Blaming and Justification to protect themselves from pain. In the process they ruin any solid chance of having the life they really want by taking responsibility to get there. In the same breath, they rob themselves of higher effort and accomplishment in arenas they choose. While protecting themselves their self worth and identity take a nosedive. It is critical that Adults stay alert to Kids using Blame, Complain and Justify to avoid responsibility. It is a crippling pattern that we must break and give a different direction. Tell Kids it is wrong for them to give the

responsibility for their life to others. It does not serve them well. In truth, nobody can do a better job at making them responsible and successful than they can.

What to do! Tell them to stop protecting themselves with beliefs that are ruining their level of effort, accomplishment and connections. They deserve far better than that. Encourage them to take a look at their own thoughts, behavior and outcomes. Be a scientist, investigating outcomes. Tell them to make educated guesses of what will happen if they continue to believe education, educators and everything associated with it, are huge failures and are not for them. What are the natural consequences to such crippling thinking? Encourage them to honestly ask themselves if that is what they really want in life. Do they really think believing in such negative and isolating thoughts will lead to the life they secretly want?

Once they start investigating themselves they begin to benefit from establishing Goals and living by Beliefs that successful people use. Encourage them to define their own life, their perfect day, (GOALS). Take a look at all the different ways to achieve goals, (PLAN). Put their Plan into (ACTION) by starting, fail, re-evaluate, start again, fail, re-evaluate, start again, WIN! You may be the only person to get them started!

CHAPTER 10

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

A path to least resistance...

Wonderful thing happened on the way to summer school at the Children's Psychiatric Unit. Teachers had to pay attention. Teachers learned very quickly that current tools from public school were not enough. Kids had a PhD in combating, baiting and tooling with Adults. Teachers had to find different approaches to get their message across while avoiding Kid resistance. Each student had to be approached differently. Teachers were on high alert for all communication offered by students. To be successful, Adults had to find a path of least resistance.

The beautiful thing about working with a highly resistant Kid is when you finally get there. It's the hard earned point in sports, triumphant test grade, and magical unplanned heart to heart talk with your Kid, that makes everything seem alive. When a highly resistant Kid releases his grip on habitual patterns of resistance he is saying, "I trust you...which is huge! I do not let my guard down easily. When I do, it usually pans out pretty awful...for me...but I'm gonna give you a shot...please don't let me down."

At this phase of connection and rapport development, Adults realize they have access to a wider range of behaviors to continue a relationship geared toward higher engagement and performance. They are allowed to make mistakes without high Kid defenses at work. They listen and discuss. They allow you to list their habitual patterns of resistance and laugh at them. You can also laugh at you... which is the best!