

Stress Bytes Newsletter

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"WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!"

THE NEWSLETTER OF ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.
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No Excuses Anymore!

Even though I help empower women to reach their goals, I still struggle with my own tendency to whine, complain and feel defeated when I don't get what I want. Recently I put signs around my house that say, "NO EXCUSES! I am 100% responsible for my life." When I first posted those signs, I felt a flutter of apprehension. Without excuses, I thought I'd feel bare and defenseless. Didn't my whining serve a purpose? Yes, I got momentary sympathy from my friends. What I didn't get was one step closer to my goals and desires. I got encouragement to accept less, to accept defeat...and I was leading the charge!

Therefore, I set a goal to eradicate complaining from my life. The results have already been heartening. Even when I fall short on my plans or a situation doesn't go as I would like, instead of making excuses, blaming someone else, or giving up, I look at the choices that I've made that led to the results I got. Then I make new choices for the next time. This perspective allows me to

feel empowered. After some time, it's no longer acceptable that I go back to whining and complaining and thinking of myself as a victim of circumstances.

This is not saying that I can control what happens in the future or that I'm responsible for other people's behavior or some of the bad things that have happened in the past. What it means is that I am responsible for how I handle those things, how I look at them and the choices I make about them.

How often do you complain and pass responsibility for your life choices off on someone else like your spouse/partner, your parents, your boss or coworkers? Or is it just a vague complaint about the nature of "reality," like "I don't have enough time to ____." If you are overwhelmed with too much to do in a day, who's in charge of your schedule? You are. Being too busy and staying overwhelmed is the result of your choice to say, "yes" when you need to be saying, "no." No one will die if you say, "no" to

one more request to be on a committee or take on extra work. The next time you say "yes" to some request, think about what you're simultaneously saying, "no" to. It's probably yourself and your own wants.

If you're having trouble in your relationship, do you blame your spouse/partner or parents? "My parents

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"I'm not sure why all of my laundry is in the paper shredder, but it's nice to see your mother smiling again."

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