

victim or victor?

how to harness your professional power

Have you ever found yourself making statements like these?

"I'm miserable at work because I'm under-appreciated."

"I'd work harder if they paid me more."

"I'd get more work done if my co-workers weren't always interrupting me."

"If the economy were better, I wouldn't be in this financial mess."

Surely you have. You're human. But the truth is, when you make statements such as these, you are blaming other people and circumstances for your reality. You are holding everyone and everything else responsible for your outcomes, feelings, actions, reactions, and choices. When you do that, you're acting like...wait for it...a victim. Ouch.

If that wasn't ugly enough, when you choose to play the victim, you're giving your power away to the person or thing you hold responsible for your state of affairs. They don't even ask for it. You just give it away! It should go without saying that if you're freely giving away your power like that, you'll find you have less and less on hand to help you reach your professional goals. With less power, your performance will suffer, too. But you knew this, right?

So, here's some food for thought. You are not a victim. Nope, not you. You're not a victim unless, of course, you choose to be. That's right. In every moment of every day, you can choose to play either the victim or the victor. In other words, you get to choose to give your power away or hold on to it. Bam!

But you want to hold on to it? Good choice. To choose the victor role and hold on to your power, you must be willing to take some responsibility for things. After all, some responsibility must be yours. It's your reality we're talking about here. Once you realize that you own a chunk of the responsibility in any situation, you can then own your power and begin to realize the control you have over the situation. So, when you're ready to be a victor, here are the three areas you'll want to focus on.

Feelings: Victims hold other people and things responsible for the way they feel. They relish the opportunity to blame their misery, sadness, anger, etc. on others. This keeps them small and powerless. For example, Steve, a long-time manager, does this whenever he blames his boss, the owner of the company, for his frustrations at work. He says if his boss weren't so demanding, he would be happier at work. For Steve to step into the victor role, he would have to take full responsibility for and ownership of the way he feels. Sure, his boss may be demanding, and he can't control that. But he can control how he chooses to feel about his boss and his job. Steve could begin to take his power back by asking himself, "How do I deserve to feel?"

Actions/Reactions: Victims make no connection between their actions/reactions and their reality. On the flip side, victors understand how their actions/reactions play a part in their reality. Sofia, a project manager, chooses to play the victim when she gets frustrated that her employees never come to her when there's a problem. She says that she is always "in the dark." This frustration obviously keeps her from performing her best. To step into the victor role, Sofia could try to identify the connection between her actions/reactions and her employees' reluctance to come to her when there's trouble. Sofia could ask herself, "What might I have said or done to make my staff feel uncomfortable coming to me?"

Power of Choice: Victims believe and act as if they have no choice. Let's go back to Steve. Again, he plays the victim when he says he is "stuck with this job" that makes him so miserable. Steve is obviously forgetting that he is a whole and resourceful being with the awesome superpower to choose. The difference here is that victors recognize and exercise their power of choice. They don't feel stuck. They know that they always have at least two choices. So for Steve to step out of the victim role, he could ask himself, "What choices do I have?" It's not until Steve recognizes and exercises his power of choice that he can take his power back and have more control over his reality.

Take Back Your Power: All of this begs the question, who or what do you tend to blame for your reality, feelings, actions, or reactions? What choices are you not recognizing? Not making? By holding everyone and everything else responsible for your life being the way it is, you are holding yourself back from reaching your full potential. You're staying small. *And you are not small.* Stop acting like it. Take back your power and watch what happens. Watch yourself bloom, grow, and thrive. Watch yourself be your best self. You deserve that.

You are a victor and a very powerful one at that. Choose it. Own it. Be it.

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