



Responsibility and commitment are words that can be scary to some, but without these two attributes, peace and even occasional happiness are elusive. Every person wants some form of peace and happiness in their lives at least a good portion of the time. We all need acceptance, love and attention. We want to find it with our parents and brothers and sisters, in a man/woman relationship, with our children or our friends but to many it appears to be difficult to attain.

A very important reason for this, is that we don't grow up and face responsibility for our own actions. There is an inner child within us that is still fighting for survival and we are letting it run our lives through our emotional responses. That inner child needs to be incorporated into the mature adult. This doesn't mean that a person must lose that spontaneous, creative child spirit. On the contrary, to enjoy that free child-spirit when we choose to is a mark of full maturity. What needs to change, is the patterns the child utilized for survival. Denial, running away and hiding or blaming others are some of the things we do as children to escape responsibility for our actions because we don't want to face the consequences. Some of these tactics were necessary for the mental, emotional and sometimes even physical survival of a child who had to grow up with emotionally immature parents.

What causes a problem as the child grows up, is the lack of commitment this engenders. When things get rough, the denial pattern kicks in which frees the individual from the hard aspects of responsibility and then the problems do not get worked through. Then it is easy to leave, either mentally, physically or emotionally.

Children, throughout their growing years, are sometimes not taught a clear thinking process that evaluates situations they are in. If they haven't learned to accept responsibility for their actions, they can have an inner directive that compels them to believe that someone else is responsible for their own errors. It's like a blind. They grow up not being able to see and evaluate their own mistakes.

This creates confusion and a lack of ability to deal with reality. When a person can't interpret situations and events with some form of distance and perspective, disassociating

emotions enough to see themselves as part of it all, they can't decide to make constructive changes. Responsibility has to first be acknowledged before a person can see a need for change in themselves.

We are used to feeling blamed for wrong doing which is an unpleasant feeling. It can be painful to see your own weakness and it can be even more painful when you know others see it. When this happens, a very easy and appealing reaction can be to attach the blame to someone else so you can feel better about yourself. Sometimes this pattern can be so ingrained into the personality that it happens subconsciously. A person with no knowledge or experience in introspection can be bound into this pattern for an entire lifetime.

A person with this problem can be there with you physically and mentally but far removed emotionally. This person can have such a subconscious fear of being found out in his/her weakness that they will defend their position of being right to the death. Many times They won't realize that what they are actually defending is their fear of being punished or rejected. They may just feel that they are right and something yucky within them will not allow them to even consider the other person's position.

When this develops into anger at the other person for not listening to them, it only means that they are projecting all the fear of their own weakness into the situation at hand and if they back off at all, they will lose control. Then, if they lose control, they have to acknowledge they may be wrong and that's accepting responsibility rather than blaming the other person. Thus, they must face their weakness which is what they want to avoid at all costs.

So what is the weakness to avoid at all costs? Part of it is the knowledge that they are entirely wrong in the first place. The whole pattern is the error, yet it is defended with everything they have. When one is so busy defending their error by accusing the other person of their error that they've lost sight of reality and rationality, the real problems never surface at all. Any trivial thing can cause an intense defense and offence scenario. The defender of the error is the immature child within. They must survive. They developed this pattern as a way to survive and carried it on into adulthood. When a person doesn't know this, they are continually in a confused state of defense and offense with other people, especially the ones closest to them. The closer they become with someone, the more likely they are to be discovered in their weaknesses so it can be a full time job keeping others at bay. This need to protect themselves and/or others from the knowledge of their own weakness will continually re-direct their energy to a defense mode, side-stepping the truth.

Often, the feeling of letting their guard down and trusting someone can make them feel almost claustrophobic. Their inner child doesn't know what trust is or it wouldn't have built up the defense in the first place. To them it is a very dangerous situation and they feel very

threatened and vulnerable. The best way to overcome this feeling is to get the other person on the defensive. Then they can keep some semblance of control. So, they throw out some accusations, and if the other person has corresponding problems, they will immediately retaliate in the same manner. Thus, safety is again established for the moment. As long as the fighting and defenses remain in place, neither one has to face their weaknesses or responsibilities.

Many marriages settle into a safe mode like this. Both come to know what is expected of them to keep the perfect balance. It's worth the unpleasant atmosphere with bickering and disagreements because neither has to face the difficulty of weighing their own weaknesses. Sadly enough, they miss out on the experience of developing and growing into a wonderful, loving relationship. Instead they have the very likely possibility of acquiring illness and disease from the stress caused by a continual, reciprocal flow of negative energy.

When the growth of the inner child is stunted and the fears are not gotten past, a person is only half alive. They can't see and feel the joy of the real world. Caught in the patterns of negative vision, they are usually immersed in thoughts that revolve around survival or *if only* thoughts or *I'll be happy when...* thoughts. *If only* I hadn't married this person, *If only* I had a different job, *If only* I had gone to college or was pretty or was rich or had different parents, or, *I'll be happy when* he/she changes and starts really listening to me or treating me right etc.. Because acknowledging that they are responsible for their own choices puts them in touch with their weaknesses, they keep the responsibility of their happiness or success or failure in someone else's hands. Believing that someone else is responsible for your unhappiness or failures also means that you feel they are responsible for the opposite. You can only be happy, successful or content if someone else does something that makes you feel that way.

Maturity is knowing and accepting the fact that you make the choices that create your life conditions and situations. You are responsible for those choices and only you can make new choices that change your life if you don't like it. The inner child does not control you. Instead of being led by your emotional reactions, you delve into the reasons why they are happening to you. Why are you angry when this person says this, or why do you get frustrated and stressed when a certain thing happens. Why does someone's bad mood spoil your day. Why are you worried because you think someone doesn't like you. Why should you react emotionally to these things when you don't have to.

All are choices. You can decide what you are capable of, you can decide how far you can comfortably go with something. Make a decision considering what you feel is important and what you are going to feel good about. You are responsible for whether you are doing something that makes you feel good or bad. No one else. If you react negatively to someone else or make a decision based on what someone else wants you to do, without thinking it through to what you feel good about, then you are giving control of your choices over to

someone else. You don't have to like everyone and everyone doesn't have to like you. So why worry about what they think. All you are responsible for with most people is to treat them with respect as individuals and not invade their right to their choices and beliefs. If someone is closer to you emotionally (as in family members, close friends, etc. then you are responsible for more actions in relation to them.

You are responsible for your own state of emotional well being. If you think it through and decide to stay in a certain situation because of important goals you have chosen, then decide what you can handle in it and stand by those choices. A commitment is staying with something whether you feel like it or not because you have set your will strongly to do so. When you make a serious commitment, you don't let what someone else does or says alter your course. Any problem can be worked through if you decide that it is not worth breaking your commitment for. If you felt strongly enough about something to commit to it, then problems should not be considered more important than the commitment. Problems should be considered challenges to be overcome.

To maintain the goals and values of your commitment, it is important to see them clearly. If you don't have an orderly picture of them, it is easy for someone or something to come along and make you feel like the commitment wasn't right. Know yourself and what you want. Be strong in your belief in yourself and what you know is right for you. No one else knows what you feel to be important for yourself. You are responsible for that. You are responsible to do those things that make you feel good about yourself. Gain trust in yourself. If you break a commitment you have made, you lose respect for yourself. Stand behind your own choices and don't let yourself down. Be true to yourself. You are the one person that can make or break your world.

A commitment means that you have set aside all other options and have decided to stay with one thing and work it through no matter what difficulties come along. When we apply this to the ability to make right choices, moment by moment, we have a sure road to success. Our mind is for comprehending and evaluating information so we can make the right choices that further our commitments to heart felt goals. When the voice of negativity whispers in our ears, we will reject it and choose to follow a positive statement instead. We can create our own positive statements or repeat scriptures or quotes that have meaning to us from others. Then, when we are prompted to break our commitment, we can remember that it is up to us to keep it. We can choose to work through the problems and challenges and accept them as growth and steps toward the fulfillment of our goals.

Remember as you make your choices and commitments, they not only concern you but others around you as well. Some relate to you only but when they affect others also, you need to remember that you must always respect and honor their choices even if you don't agree. We have personal boundaries in our lives and we don't like others to infringe on our choices and decisions within those boundaries and we should always remember that they

don't like it either. A commitment made that involves another person won't go far if that person doesn't agree with it. (A house divided against itself won't stand) So use the rule of unselfish love (Do unto others as you would have them do unto you) in all of your choices, decisions and commitments. If you can't come to some form of agreement where all concerned are at peace with it, simply hold off on a decision and certainly the commitment for awhile, pray about it. If it's meant to happen, it will if you don't pursue it out of stubbornness or your own will.

Maturity is when we see the commitments and goals in our lives as priorities and we do what ever needs to be done to see them through. Maturity is also being able to search ourselves and know ourselves at a deeper level, so that our goals are from the call in our hearts. Any other goals are not going to stand the tests and trials that will surely come along. Other plans and ideas can come from family or friends or even educators (what they think we should do) or from the immature part of us that wants to not grow up and do the hard things. These are the things that will not make it through the challenges. When you know something is right for you and you choose to make a commitment to it, it will take everything you have, all of your resources to see it through.

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