

**Never Blame Anybody But Yourself**

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Dear friend,

A random thought I had this morning-- what if we never blamed anyone else, but ourselves? To me, this would be one of the most empowering sentiments. Why? It means that we have 100% control over our lives, and it is silly for us to blame anyone else!

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Assuming you weren't born into slavery or indentured servitude, you are free to live your life however you desire. If you are stuck at a job you hate, it is in your power to quit. But what holds you back? Perhaps fear of losing your salary, income, or benefits. Or perhaps you have a family to feed. Or debt to pay.

However we are fortunate enough that we live in a society that allows for debt-forgiveness through bankruptcy (I know personally, my mom went through it).

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I think the easy route in life is to blame others for our shortcomings. And to be frank, I don't think that we blame others because we are trying to push the blame away from ourselves. I think this is the problem:

*We think we have less control in our lives than we realize.*

It is in your power to say "no". To stand up for what you believe in isn't through positive actions (what you do), but rather-- generally from acts of renunciation-- what you decide *NOT* to do in life.

For example Rosa Parks stood up for what she believed in by *NOT* going to the back of the bus. Gandhi protested against the British Empire by *NOT* eating food (in hunger strikes). Martin Luther King Jr. promoted "civil disobedience" not by

encouraging people to go out and cause civil unrest-- but instead, by *NOT* going to work, and through disobedience by acts of *NON*-violence!

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### **A via-negativa life**

To live a life true to yourself generally means deciding what *NOT* to do in your life. To be ethical means *NOT* doing certain things. To show love towards others means *NOT* to lose your temper with them, and *NOT* to abuse them (physically or verbally) when you're angry.

As an unrelated note-- even your strength as a photographer depends on the photos you decide *NOT* to show.

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So friend, recognize you have the power in your own hands to live your life however you desire. Never compromise your ideals, practice saying "NO" more often, and stand your ground.

You might be heaped with mental (or perhaps even physical) abuse. But you're stronger than you think. What would the brazen Greeks have done? Follow them!

BE BOLD, ERIC