

A Burden Worth Accepting

A large, heavy-duty metal hook, likely from a crane or industrial machinery, is the central focus. The hook is painted yellow and black, with a blue label that reads "3 200 kg". Above the hook, a blue label with the word "STAHL" (German for steel) is visible. The hook is suspended by a chain, and the background is dark and textured, suggesting an industrial setting.

**“WE CHOOSE TO RESPOND AS A VICTIM,
OR WE CHOOSE TO IMPROVE.
IF WE THINK OTHERWISE, WE HAVE CHOSEN.”**

A BURDEN WORTH ACCEPTING

Two major fallacies have infiltrated popular thinking.

The first is the idea that our condition is somebody else's fault.

The second is the idea that life is a zero sum game in which we can only gain what someone else loses. Zero sum is the idea that resources comprise a "fixed pie" to be divided among us. If someone has a piece, then someone else must do without. A lot of us, perhaps a majority, have bought into those two fallacies and it appears that the ideas are spreading.

My experience has shown that business owners are less susceptible to the fallacies than the general population and are in a unique position to defend against them.

WE CHOOSE OUR RESPONSES

You may be thinking the obvious: "Some people were born poor, with horrible parents and bad health and no money and no chance for an education. Their condition is not their fault. Others were born to wonderful parents, lots of money, good health, great education and myriad other advantages, none of which are to their credit. It's not fair."

Those things are true, and it isn't fair. But, good or bad, starting conditions and events do not alone determine our futures.

Our futures depend on circumstances and events AND on our responses to them. That last part makes all the difference. We are not helpless. We choose to respond as a victim, or we choose to improve. If we think otherwise, we have chosen. We have decided to be a victim and there is no one else to blame for it.

VICTIM MINDSET

The damage done by a victim mentality results from resignation.

People with a victim mentality are resigned to helplessness (or perhaps protest). Their beginning and future circumstances are just things that happen, and they are helpless against them.

The victim mentality leads to a consuming spiral of frustration and resentment that displaces determination. Feelings of frustration and resentment might be understandable, but they are not among the qualities or skills necessary to improve.

I know hundreds of successful people, and I am confident in saying that every one of them has helped and will help people who work to improve themselves. Most are eager to do so, which is a trait common to successful people.

I am just as confident that none of them is willing to accept the burden of guilt and responsibility imposed on them by the victim mindset. They are not willing to be the "someone else" who is responsible for our conditions. Successful people know better. They understand that shouldering a burden of imposed guilt is a waste of time.

THE ZERO SUM GAME NONSENSE

The idea that life is a zero sum game is a special case of the idea that our condition is someone else's fault. That someone else already has "it" is a ready excuse to explain why we don't.

The idea of a fixed pie is nonsense, and the evidence is everywhere around us. We could spend days listing the evidence, but to put it in simple numbers, 121 million Americans produced about \$1 trillion of goods and services in 1929. If life were a zero sum game, things would look pretty bleak today with at a population of 325 million. Life is not bleak because while the population about tripled, the

pie grew by over seventeen times to \$17 trillion (and yes, those numbers are corrected for inflation.) Clearly, the pie is not fixed.

The damage done by the victim mentality is counted in unhappy, wasted lives and their contributions lost to resignation, frustration, resentment and helplessness. If it continues to spread unchecked, it will lead to an unthinkable end.

REJECT THE FALLACIES, ACCEPT THE BURDEN

We business owners, who understand better than most our ability to influence our futures, are in a special position to change things. First, we must always guard our own thinking against the victim mentality, and we must never accept an imposed burden of guilt.

It is not enough for us to complain and argue against the fallacies. We can and should accept a burden to help. We can actively search for opportunities to show others how to learn determination. We can stand ready to help when we see even a spark of willingness in others, especially our employees, to help themselves. We can show, teach, and mentor them to improve, rather than blame. We can teach them to reject the cruel future of the victim. That is a special burden worth accepting.

If you're not sure how to get started, call me for a no obligation discussion..

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Is there a chance that you think like victim? Are you carrying a burden of imposed guilt, the idea that you are somehow responsible for somebody else's condition in life? Do you know people who are working to improve their lives? Can you mentor, teach, coach, encourage or show someone how to improve?

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to mail me at

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Martin Holland

Martin Holland is the son of a successful entrepreneur. He grew up hearing about margins and markets, R&D and sales, risk and return on investment. He learned to love the language and rigors of business and grew to believe that business is both the most human of all endeavors and the highest calling. After selling a company in 2011, Martin became a coach in order to help other owners build profitable businesses that do not require their day-to-day involvement.

A native of Norman, Martin earned a B.A. degree from Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska and a Masters in Business Administration degree from the University of Oklahoma. Over the past 7 years he has written business plans that have raised over \$52.4 million in bank and investor financing. He has helped 157 (and counting) business owners reduce stress and increase performance through clarity of purpose, better marriages, more money, and more free time away from the business.