

# Gratitude

An exercise based upon Jay Fiset's book,  
Reframe Your Blame: How to be Personally Accountable

presented by

**Personal Best  
Seminars**

**Support material and exercise for  
Episode Three of the Accountable Conversations radio program.**

*G*ratitude is a very powerful tool for living with personal accountability. The reason behind its power is that most people must practice significant acceptance of their victimization experiences AND must take the time and energy to explore the various gifts and lessons that may lie within those experiences.

Gratitude is very powerful because if you can find yourself grateful for your victimization experiences, you've already done a great deal of the work necessary to learn from the experience and deduced some clues about how it might point to your own personal life mission.

How does one learn to be grateful for those experiences in which they felt victimized?

The first step is identifying some of the gifts and lessons that lie beneath those victimizations.

It can be very hard, at first, to understand what lesson or gift lies underneath a particular victimization experience. Why is that? Please read the following excerpt from Jay Fiset's book, [Reframe Your Blame: How to Be Personally Accountable](#).

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#### FOCUSING ON THE LESSONS

Why do people have so much difficulty recognizing the lessons their Victim experiences can teach them? I believe this is because the lessons are positioned directly in our blind spot, right under the victimization that has been the source of pain, frustration, and powerlessness. The Victim story is so big, bright, and obvious that it eclipses the lesson that is right behind it.

Think of it this way. The victimization and the lesson are the opposite sides of the same coin. Imagine that you are walking along a dirt path in the sun and a shiny object catches your eye. You go over to it, and, gleaming in the sun, is a bright, shiny quarter. When you pick it up, you notice that the back side is still covered with moist dirt that takes a bit of work to brush off. Finally, you can see that the other side is just as shiny. However, you would never have found the coin if it had been flipped over, shiny side down.

The same is true for your Victim story and its lesson. It is easy to see the Victim story because it is polished and shiny from being replayed in your head so many times. However, the hidden lesson on the other side needs a bit of work to reveal itself before you can tell yourself the truth about your life, your Victim experiences, and the lessons that you have not been willing or able to face.

What do I mean? Well, think of it this way. There has to be a reason why you haven't been able to learn and integrate the lessons from your recurring Victim experiences. That reason is the truth about yourself that you have not been willing or able to tell. Here are a couple of examples:

- A young woman who consistently chooses men who are not as powerful as she is was not able to break the cycle until she told the truth: that she would never give her heart completely to a man who was less powerful. By continuing her pattern, she could keep her heart safe (and her relationships unfulfilled).
- A young man who has tremendous capacity keeps himself small, does not completely commit to his dreams, and resents and holds negative energy towards those who do what he would like to. The truth he must tell himself is that he lacks the courage to commit himself and risk failure.
- With my own financial fiasco, I had a belief that I was financially incompetent. Therefore, despite my apparent caution, I was financially unaccountable. I wanted someone or something to make me rich easily and magically, and I was unconsciously vulnerable to anyone who offered to do this.

These truths can be difficult to tell ourselves. In fact, each of us has created all kinds of dramas and cover stories to keep the truth from ourselves and others.

Please push yourself to get to your truth regarding what has kept you from learning the lessons related to your victimization thus far in your life.

The human brain, and particularly the subconscious part of the mind, is a fascinating tool. One of its primary psychological functions is to protect us by finding evidence to prove our beliefs correct. It will scan the environment and often only register those things that are consistent with our beliefs.

For example, have you ever been out driving and you happen to have someone honk at you because you were changing lanes very close to the front of their car or because you were sitting at a light that had turned green but didn't notice. Have you ever had (or been in the car with someone who had) a vicious, defensive reaction to that?

You would not have the same vicious, defensive reaction had someone merely handed back a wallet you had dropped. In fact, you'd probably be very thankful. So why the difference in reaction?

That honk may have actually been intended as simply a kind and friendly gesture. The fact that a car horn is much bigger and noisier than, "excuse me, you dropped your wallet" aside, it could genuinely be that gentle of an indication. Of course, maybe not.

But a hostile reaction is bred even when you don't even know the details of the interaction. This is your subconscious fitting the interaction into a box that sounds something like, "the other person is angry with me (for no good reason) so you'd best protect your ego by flipping them the bird."

Training the subconscious to see things in a new way—to gather new evidence—is one of the main tools in generating new beliefs. This can be done with virtually any belief, and it works with Victim experiences too. Today’s exercise will be about training your subconscious to see your brain to observe a particular victimization in a new light.

### Exercise

Recall a particular victimization for which you harbor some anger, resentment, or other negative association that fits with a Victim experience. For simplicity, think of an event for which you blame yourself or someone else. Write a short description of that event below, and why you blame yourself or someone else.

Think of some positive nugget you have taken away from that experience. What is one gift or lesson that came as a result of that experience that you can apply to your life? How can application of that gift or lesson improve your overall experience of life?

Now, write a gratitude statement. This statement will, in its simplest form, look something like, “I am thankful for \_\_\_\_\_ because it taught me \_\_\_\_\_.”

You’ve heard of them before, and may already use them in your day-to-day life. This is an affirmation. Affirmations have a somewhat negative public image, in part because of

a famous Saturday Night Live skit in which the character repeats to himself, “I’m good enough, I’m smart enough, and—doggoneit—people like me.”

While it’s a brilliant and humorous skit, it misses the point of what affirmations do and how they work. They are not simply “happy little thoughts” whose repetition makes them real. If carefully crafted and diligently used, they can, in fact, retrain the subconscious mind. They provide feedback to the subconscious on the kind of evidence that you want it to find in your environment.

Try this challenge. Repeat the gratitude statement that you wrote above three times a day; preferably out loud, but you can do it quietly if you like. After stating the line, visualize your gratitude for the gift or lesson. Imagine applying it to your life and how it can, or has, changed how you live and how you make choices. Do this for one week.

At the end of that week, you may notice a slight shift in the degree of anger, resentment, or blame that you carry as a result of that victimization. This is the retraining of the subconscious in action.

Be grateful for everything, including your victimizations. There is a gift or lesson in every experience in life.

#### RECOMMENDED RESOURCE:

[What to Say When You Talk to Yourself](#), a book by Dr. Shad Helmstetter.

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To learn more about the book, [Reframe Your Blame: How to Be Personally Accountable](#) or to purchase a copy, please visit [www.reframeyourblame.com/buy-book.php](http://www.reframeyourblame.com/buy-book.php).

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[Reframe Your Blame: How to Be Personally Accountable](#), by Jay Fiset

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