I’m reading a great book at the moment. It’s called ‘Stepping Up – How Taking Responsibility Changes Everything’ by John Izzo. He talks about something that I’ve shared before, but he takes a much more extreme and rigid stance. He doesn’t just believe in the importance of taking responsibility for your outcomes, he’s all about taking 100% responsibility for everything that you’re involved in. He talks about the concept of 100/0. In other words - 100% responsibility and NO excuses!

As I was reading it I was thinking … yikes, that’s pretty full-on and it scares even me. He obviously doesn’t understand the real world or that there are things that happen outside of our control that will constrain and impact the things we are working towards. Then I read this next bit;

‘The no excuses part of 100/0 means that we begin by not surrendering to the excuses that could keep us from stepping up. ‘No’ excuses means recognising that while some excuses may be true, they are almost never useful. The question is always; what are you going to do IN SPITE of those constraints?’

There are many people who live life with a 0/100 attitude. In other words – NO responsibility and 100% excuses. As John says, ‘while some excuses may be true, they are almost never useful.’ What he means is that whilst an excuse may give the person making it some justification and short term comfort for lack of success – it will almost always lead to more lack of success. That’s definitely not useful.

I was driving home on the freeway the other day and I witnessed the most distressing exhibition of road rage I’ve ever seen. I don’t know what sparked it, but a reckless and angry guy in a beat-up car was abusing a truck driver. He drove his car and positioned it right in front of the truck, he slowed down, forcing the truck to slow down, and then for the next 5 minutes hung out the window and abused and insulted the truck driver. It was embarrassing and unnecessary.

I don’t know whose fault it was because I didn’t see the incident that sparked the rage, but I do know that two people were involved and therefore two people were equally responsible. The guy in the car was 0/100! He took no responsibility and laid 100% blame … because of his actions who knows what may have happened on a busy freeway. What I do know is that, if there was an accident, he would’ve taken no responsibility, passed all the blame and made all the excuses.
Taking 100% responsibility will set you FREE!
I tell this story because we’ve all been in that situation on the road at some time haven’t we? Someone accidently veered in front of us and caused us to swerve or brake suddenly. At that very moment the way we reacted determined if we were, at that time, 100/0 or 0/100. If we were like the crazy guy with the truck and reduced to an abusive, victim-minded excuse maker, then we were 0/100. The result of this is that we will have to live a life of regret, dis-ease and frustration - always hoping for and relying on the right circumstances … then blaming and making excuses when they aren’t.

On the other hand, if we immediately take responsibility for our role in the incident we position ourselves as 100/0 and set ourselves free. When we acknowledge that we were too close to the other car, that we didn’t look carefully and that the other driver just made an accidental error in judgement (an error we all make BTW) then we are able to release the emotional charge and make calm sensible decisions. Doesn’t that sound better?

I dare you to practice living 100/0. I’m going to give it a go … even though I know it won’t be easy. Are you up for the challenge? If you said yes then, as of right now, take 100% responsibility no matter the situation of the circumstances. At work, take responsibility for your part in the morale and energy of the workplace … be the one who does and says something positive and encouraging. In the street, if there’s a mess to be cleaned up … take responsibility to clean it. A clean environment is up to each individual.

Let’s take 100% responsibility for everything that goes into our mouth and enjoy the rewards from making good choices rather than making excuses for bad ones. If you’ve made poor financial choices - like I have more than once - take responsibility … no-one held a gun to your head to make you invest in a plummeting share market, a failed business or a petrol-guzzling car. Your excuses and complaints about a GFC, lazy employees and the rising price of petrol are not relevant, positive or useful.

Taking 100% responsibility and making NO excuses will set you free, change your own world and … your inspiring example will also change the world at large.

A man was walking along the beach at sunset after a beautiful day. As he walked he noticed the beach strewn with thousands of starfish washed up on the shore … they were slowly dying. As he walked he bent over and picked up one starfish and threw it back into the water. Then he picked up another and returned it to the sea. He continued to do the same as he walked along the beach. Coming from the other direction another man said to him, ‘There are thousands of starfish, you can’t make a difference.’ The first man picked up another starfish, threw it back into the water and said, ‘I made a difference to that one.’ He kept walking, making a difference and living his life 100/0.

February 22, 2014

Andrew Jobling
ANDREWJOBLING.COM.AU