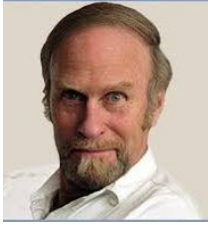


# You Always Command Choice in Your Life



By Frosty Wooldridge

Many people drag the past back into the present. Others make excuses for poor choices. Still others wave personal responsibility onto circumstances. Others abandon themselves in favor of the modus operandi of their “shadow” side.

When arrested for drugs in her pockets, one movie starlet said, “These aren’t my pants. I don’t know anything about what’s in the pockets.” Another fashion model, upon being arrested for speeding said, “This isn’t my car so I’m not sure about the speedometer.”

You may remember as a child if your mother caught you with your hand in the cookie jar, “The devil made me do it, mom.” In fact, you wanted to satisfy your sweet tooth.

In today’s world, people seek approval and love more than anything in their daily lives. If they fail to turn in their term paper on time, “I just didn’t have enough hours in the day to get it done” instead of facing the fact that he-she spent the time absorbed by fleeting pleasures.

Others want to please friends rather than making themselves the most important person in their lives. They create a “shadow self” through their actions at work and at social gatherings. Realize this: everyone makes mistakes on their life journey.



(Enjoying outdoor lunch.) Photography by Frosty Wooldridge

You can “own” your mistake or you can make excuses. You may make little mistakes that minimally affect you. You might commit huge mistakes that cause you great consequences.

One the greatest lessons my father gave to me: “Son, if you tell a lie, you must cover it with more lies until one day, you cannot remember how to cover it. You face exposure, which eventually will undermine friendships and respect from others. I want you to know this son; you’re going to make mistakes. Own them. You never have to “cover” the truth. It runs straight and true for your entire life.”

If you “run” a story about your life as an excuse for your current problems, failures or mistakes—take stock of that story. Own it, better yet, what drives your story and fabrication? Decide to change it. You always command a “choice” point in your life.

In other words, you cannot “blame” your boss for your unhappiness in your job. You cannot blame the job. You cannot blame your spouse for your frustration. You cannot blame the kids. You cannot blame your past.

Instead of obsessing over mistakes, take a long look in the mirror. Who stares back at you? What does that face tell you? In the end, the only relationship that counts must be an authentic one with yourself.

How do you accomplish an authentic relationship?

- Become scrupulously honest with yourself, with friends, people under you at work and people above you at work. Honor them as you honor yourself.
- Realize that you make mistakes through the process of living. Learn from them, grow from them, move on to your highest and best.
- Instead of allowing that “shadow” of yourself dictate your choices, stand in your own integrity at all times. Make choices that benefit your life, your work and your relationships.
- Instead of excuses or blaming others, stand in your own integrity. After all, everything in your life ends up with you.

One other thing: maintain your body, mind and spirit in a unified whole. Physical exercise six days a week for one hour each day. Eat nutritious foods that maintain your cells with the vibrancy of living. Read a book each day before retiring, and engage classes and learning. Speak as well as listen to the Great Spirit however you define the “divine” in you.

Finally, on your life journey Portia Nelson said:

Chapter 1: I walked down a street. I spotted a deep hole. I fell into it. I said, “It’s not my fault. I’m lost.”

Chapter 2: I walked down the same street. I spotted the same hole. I pretended I didn’t see it. I fell into it. I said, “I can’t believe I am in the same place. It isn’t my fault.”

Chapter 3: I walked down the same street. There was a deep hole. I saw it. I still fell in. It’s a habit. My eyes opened. I know where I am. It is my fault. I climbed out.”

Chapter 4: I walked down the same street. There was a deep hole. I saw it. I walked around it.

## Chapter 5: I walked down a different street.

Walk toward your highest and best by your choices. How soon can you walk onto a different street? It's an easier road to travel. Along the way, wear your own pants and know what's in your pockets.

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