

Translating Victim Statements

The more we practice the habit of acting from a position of responsibility, the more effective we become as human beings, and the more successful we become as managers of our lives. - Joyce Chapman

The language of Responsibility

Translating Victim statements into the responsible language of Creators moves you from stagnant judgments to dynamic actions. In the following chart, the left-hand column presents the Victim thoughts of a student who is taking a challenging course. Thinking this way, the student's future in this course is easy to predict... and it isn't pretty.

But, if she changes her inner conversation, as shown in the right hand column, she'll also change her behaviors. She can learn more in the course and increase her likelihood of passing. More important, she can learn to reclaim control of her life from the judgmental, self-sabotaging thoughts of her inner critic.

As you read these translations, notice two qualities that characterize Creator language:

- Creators accept responsibility for their situation.
- Creators plan and take actions to improve their situation.

Victims Focus on Their Weaknesses I'm terrible in this subject.	Creators Focus on How to Improve I find this course challenging, so I'll start a study group and ask more questions in class.
Victims Make Excuses The instructor is so boring he puts me to sleep.	Creators Seek Solutions I'm having difficulty staying awake in this class, so I'm going to ask permission to record the lectures. Then I'll listen to them a little at a time and take detailed notes.
Victims Complain This course is stupid requirement.	Creators Turn Complaints into Requests I don't understand why this course is required, so I'm going to ask my instructor to help me see how it will benefit me in the future.
Victims Compare Themselves Unfavorably to Others I'll never do as well as John; he's a genius.	Creators Seek Help From Those More Skilled I need help in this course, so I'm going to ask John if he'll help me study for the exams.
Victims Blame The tests are ridiculous. The professor gave me an "F" on the first one.	Creators Accept Responsibility I got an "F" on the first test because I didn't read the assignment thoroughly. From now on I'll take detailed notes on everything I read.
Victims See Problems as Permanent Posting comments on our class's internet discussion course in impossible, I'll never understand how to do it.	Creators Treat Problems as Temporary I've been trying to post comments on our class's internet discussion board without carefully reading the instructor's directions. I'll read the directions again and follow them one step at a time.
Victims Repeat Ineffective Behavior Going to the tutoring center is no help. There aren't enough tutors.	Creators Do Something New I've been going to the tutoring center right after lunch when it's really busy. I'll start going in the morning to see if more tutors are available then.
Victims Try I'll try to do better.	Creators Do To do better I'll do the following: Attend class regularly, take good notes, ask questions in class, start a study group, and make appointments with the teacher. If that doesn't work I'll think of something else.
Victims Predict Defeat and Give Up I'll probably fail. There's nothing I can do. I can't... I have to... I should.... I quit...	Creators Think Positive and Look for a Better Choice I'll find a way. There's always something I can do. I can...I choose to... I will ... I'll keep going...

In this activity you will practice the language of personal responsibility. By learning to translate Victim statements into Creator statements, you will master the language of successful people. On this right side of the line, translate the Victim statements into the words of a Creator. The two keys to Creator language are taking ownership of a problem and taking positive actions to solve it.

Victim Language	Creator language
1. If they'd do something about the parking on campus, I wouldn't be late so often.	
2. I'm failing my online class because the site is impossible to navigate.	
3. I'm too shy to ask questions in class even when I'm confused.	
4. She's a lousy instructor. That's why I failed the first test.	
5. I hate group projects because people are lazy and I always end up doing most of the work.	
6. I wish I could just write better but I just can't.	
7. My friend got me so angry that I can't even study for the exam.	
8. I'll try to do my best this semester.	
9. The financial aid form is too complicated to fill out.	
10. I work nights so I didn't have time to do the assignment.	

Journal Entry 1: Write what you have learned about how you use language: Is it your habit to speak as a Victim or as a Creator? Do you find yourself more inclined to blame others, blame yourself, or seek solutions? Be sure to give examples

Blaming ... Is a pastime for losers. There's no leverage in blaming. Power is rooted in self-responsibility.
Nathaniel Brandon