

# Rise & Shine



*The Conscious Way of Life*

*You Must Believe In Yourself First  
All Else Follows*

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*Tools to Meet the Challenges of Life Today*

# Chapter 14

## Stop the Ripple Effect

Some people just like to complain. It's what they do. Some people complain more than others.

Does that mean that they have more to complain about, that they're just more vocal in general, or is it simply how they view the world and their place in it?

**It seems to be a human tendency to complain,  
some of us at the slightest provocation.**

We all complain on occasion. We can take on the weather, the news, the scenery, the traffic, whatever occupies us at the time. We can complain when things don't go our way, and even when they do. Anything that deviates from our personal preference of how we think things should be, we can take a moment to complain about it. Are things really that bad?

**A complaint is simply a negative interpretation of a neutral event.**

What we complain about, we are focusing on. What we give our attention to grows. So basically the more we complain and focus our attention on unwanted circumstances, the more we are going to have them in our lives.

**When you find yourself complaining, STOP.  
Try to see the situation from a neutral perspective.**

If we can learn to complain less, we will automatically have less to complain about. Besides complaining, the other tendency we all seem to have is to worry – about everything and nothing. Why?

**Even though all evidence shows that worrying achieves nothing,  
our belief seems to be that if we worry about it,  
we can stop it from happening.**

Which only illustrates how wrong we can be. Focusing on the problem can cause a downward spiral. It means there is no attention given to finding the solution. We cannot fix the problem at the level of the problem. When we cease to concern ourselves with the how and the where, the answer to our dilemma has room to appear.

Taking responsibility for ourselves... what exactly does that mean? Have you ever said, "Now look what you made me do!"

**It's easier to blame someone else for your actions,  
than accept that only you are responsible for your choices.**

To effect a change, all you have to do is *change your own thinking* which luckily you control. You do not have to try to change someone else to get positive results.

If you maintain that someone else did it to you, that diminishes the power you have to handle the problem. Since we always choose that which we will benefit from the most, we need to determine what benefit we are receiving from a negative situation. Attention, sympathy, or even a closer relationship are possible benefits. Many people's lives are a repetition of patterns moving from crisis to crisis. As soon as one situation is dealt with, another arises to take its place.

Sometimes we feel so burdened by feelings of hopelessness and despair that we can't see our way to daylight. We have told our stories of woe so many times, we have become them. Even though the events happened long ago, we live them over again and generate more suffering each time we tell them. But we are not our stories.

You can even participate in a commiserating club, a pity party, where you can swap your pity stories with others. Only the characters change as you move from person to person. Each recitation, being terrible, affirms how bad things are. The way out is to take responsibility for your choices,

acknowledge you just may have something to do with your life being the way it is. When you are in charge of your life, your choices will flow in the direction you want to go.

**When we allow others to upset us, make us angry or resentful,  
we give up control of our lives to them.**

Now someone else will determine how we will feel. When we sit in judgment of another, deciding whether the action was right or wrong, not only does it affect us negatively, but it also denies others their right to choose.

Sheila and Craig were moving to another state. He found a job but it started before the house they were buying was ready. So Craig moved with just a few of his belongings and stayed at a friend's house. A few weeks later Sheila was driving down for the closing on their new home. Craig asked her to rent a trailer and bring several boxes and his motorcycle down with her as he had not been able to bring them when he'd left. She reluctantly agreed. Later Sheila realized a simple trip had become very complicated. She had to rent a truck since their van had been in a recent accident. She was now driving with two children, for 12 hours through several states with heavy traffic, in an unfamiliar rented vehicle, pulling a rented trailer that was holding a motorcycle and boxes. Plus she had to find a way to load the trailer. Sheila felt it was too much for her to handle. She wanted to make her husband happy but not at the price she had to pay. The stress level was too high for such a long trip. She called him back and said she would drive down but not with a trailer. It was the best she could do. Craig became angry. He felt she had made a wrong decision. There was no reason that she couldn't do him this favor. Craig had a choice to make. He could continue to judge Sheila, insist that she change her decision, and hang on to his anger. This would upset both of them, and deny Sheila the right to choose what she felt was the correct thing to do. Or he could understand that Sheila was under enough stress already because of the move, and let it all go.

**If someone fails to measure up to your standards,  
that failure exists only in your mind.**

In reality there is no failure. Yet since you feel the choice was incorrect, you are forced to experience the failure. Now you're stuck with a negative emotion which you will have to either dismiss or let it upset you causing yet another negative ripple. The alternative is to refrain from judgment or even comparison. Let the action just be neutral, a past event over which you have no control.

## **Staying on the positive path is not easy.**

If you want the easy way out, you can let every annoyance get to you and fill yourself full of negative energy. You can choose to generate that negative energy continuously if you like, until it fills your life. Many people do. Negative energy has a certain charge to it that can feel very powerful. It can give you the false impression that you feel very good, invincible, tough. The illusion disguises the fact that underneath it your self esteem and self respect are gone.

It's easy to criticize, judge, put down anyone and anything. The difficult choice is to look for the positive and stay with it. It's not easy to put on a happy face when you feel anything but. It's hard to let it be when you are outraged. But if you don't let your anger go, the negative energy won't end there. It will continue thought by thought, like stepping stones leading down a path to an inevitable destination. It will spread ripple by ripple and drag you down with it. It's not easy to stay positive, but it is the better, wiser choice. You constantly generate energy. You must choose whether it's negative or positive - will you benefit or suffer?

**You can never alter causal events, but each day, moment by moment,  
you have a choice whether to continue a thought process or not.**

Your thoughts can lead you up or down. Only you can make that determination. You are the only one who has control over your reactions and subsequent actions. When you decide something is bad, refuse to accept it, and get upset, all you've succeeded in doing is doubling the negative.

Everything is positive until you have your first negative thought formed by a judgment or criticism. That's number one. That's the stone thrown into the pond. The first ripple from the impact of that negative thought in a sea of calm is registering that thought in your body. Your body gets upset and lets you know in some manner. Your body can become rigid, your hands can clench, your arms crossed in front of you. Your feelings suddenly change to unhappy, sad, angry, lonely, depressed. You haven't changed what has happened. All you've done is spread the negativity by allowing it to affect you.

**Choose to stop the ripple of negativity.**

Since none of us are alone, negativity can spread to others as long as we each choose to keep it going. The Ripple Effect is like what happens when a pebble is dropped in a pond. Visually you can

see the ripples spread out from the central point where the pebble fell. In the same manner when an event happens, its effect can be spread over many other events and people. Much like a stink in the air, it slowly spreads outward poisoning everything it envelops.

When an event takes place, it's neutral until you decide it's bad. Once you decide it's bad, you become upset. Then you can take your negative mood out on the next person, and they can take it out on the following person they encounter – and so on, and so on. To stop the ripple effect, all any one person has to do is refuse to not take on the projected, repeated negativity. Should something negative hit you, accept it as an event that happened and let it be. Otherwise all you do is make yourself and everyone around you miserable. Like spreading a disease, it is a dis-ease of the spirit. Stop the ripple effect, don't pass it along.

The actual cause of a particular ripple of negativity could be many, many people and instances away from the present moment and yet still it is having an effect because each person is willing to pass it along. Often hours and days after an unpleasant incident we're still rehashing the scene, creating clever retorts we never delivered, telling others about our awful experience, and by doing so we keep generating more negative energy.

**Anyone lashing out at you is generally doing so  
from a position of ignorance or insensitivity.**

Some days we tend to feel like everyone is out to get us, but that's not true. When we feel that way, we tend to strike out offensively to ward off further imagined attacks before they have a chance to happen. Basically, an "I'll get you before you get me" attitude puts us on the defense. It is seldom meant as a personal attack even though that's the way it feels when you are the recipient.

**It's not about you, even when you feel like it is.**

You can feel like a target when someone projects his anger upon you. Anyone who reacts in this manner does so out of habit. You aren't the first and certainly won't be the last person to be treated this way. Once you see the truth of the situation and realize it's not about you at all, you can avoid taking it personally. Then when it is over, it will have no claim on you and you will be able to let it go with ease.

The best reaction is to examine the incident to determine if it is personal in any way. If it needs to be addressed, do so. If not, let it go and be done with it, because it wasn't about you in the first place. No one has the right to be unkind to you. There is no reason to ever torment yourself about it.

**Don't *take* it personally.**

**Don't *make* it personal.**