No More Pity Parties

How to steer clear of the victim mentality

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When folks feel they have no control over their lives, it becomes easy for them to avoid taking responsibility for anything that goes wrong. Maybe this is your mindset, or maybe you know someone who thinks this way. But whatever the case may be, no one should succumb to this paralyzing negative way of thinking.

Everyone experiences times when nothing seems to go right. But feeling sorry for yourself and laying blame won't help dissolve your problems. That's why it's key to take responsibility in order to get through these down periods.

"Determine what you want and what's important to you," suggests Nancy Colier, LCSW, a psychotherapist and author of several self-help books. "Name it, and do what you need to do to make it happen—for yourself."

Alternatively, if it's friends or family members who are wallowing in extended bouts of self-pity, the biggest challenge for us may be how to deal with these loved ones. Individuals who assume the role of a victim can be a drain on our emotions and overwhelm us with their neediness.

Therefore, don't feel overwhelmed and pressured to fix whatever ails them because chances are you'll never be able to do enough to achieve that goal, experts warn.

Often, just listening to relatives and acquaintances talk about their problems may be enough.

And if you're the one who's feeling like a victim?

"Shift your attention from what you're missing to what you have," Colier suggests.

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