



### **Warrior or Victim?**

Every day I battle excuses. I can either choose to be a Warrior who overcomes them or a Victim to them. Excuses are like demons, and they are powerful and relentless. They never quit. We must battle and overcome them. If not, if we lose this battle, if we let these demons overpower us, we become Victims of them. Do not allow it. Choose to be a Warrior!

Warriors do not make excuses. Warriors take responsibility. “Responsibility,” does not necessarily mean that we are at fault for the adversity that which we are faced or for what we have accomplished or failed to accomplish because of it. Responsibility means that we have an ability to respond to it. Excuses mean that we do not.

Warriors do not make excuses, nor do they allow others to make excuses for them. And the people that love us the most will often make the most excuses for us. They come from a good place; the love that they have for us. They are excuses nonetheless: it is someone else’s fault, the conditions were not right for our success, the officials are corrupt, bad call by the referee, hostile crowd, bad weather, bad economy. And currently, the one heard most often, COVID-19. Instead, Warriors take responsibility, they take ownership. They focus not on those things that they have



no control. They focus on that which they do: their attitude and their preparation. Warriors accept that they alone are responsible for both.

However, when we choose to accept the excuses that we make for ourselves or those made for us, we become Victims. Excuses shift blame, they redirect responsibility, and, like everything we do in life, this is habit forming. We all know people who have an abundance of excuses for the adversity that which they are faced and their response to it. They choose to be Victims. Are we one of them?

Further, although some excuses are perfectly valid, our opponents do not care what they are. Often, we are told about someone's rough, unfortunate upbringing and why, as a result, they do not follow rules, rebel against authority and are poor communicators as a result. A poor home life and the lack of opportunity it typically provides is certainly a valid reason for why someone does not follow the rules, rebels against authority or has trouble communicating. Unfortunately, their opponent does not care, and someday, nor will their boss. Rather, quite simply, can we be great teammates and great team leaders? Can we help our team accomplish the mission or are we a detriment to our team's doing so? "Yes" or "no?" Our competition will never make excuses for us. We must not make them for ourselves or let others do the same.

Excuses deteriorate our discipline. Instead, force ourselves to do things that will make us better. Force ourselves to get out of bed early, go to practice, study, prepare, plan, and execute at the highest level. Get comfortable being uncomfortable. Warriors do. Victims makes excuses.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005, while on patrol in Iraq, I was blown up by an Improvised Explosive Device, an IED. While lying on the road, with my life bleeding out of me, I had a choice to make; was I going to be a Warrior, or I was going to be a Victim? On July 4th, 2005, I chose to be a Warrior. I kept fighting, trying my best to help my team accomplish the mission that day. I continue to do so.

We may not be to blame or at fault for the adversity that we are facing, but we can all still choose to be 100% responsible for our response to it. Do not make excuses or let others make them for us.

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