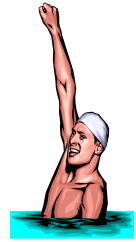


The “No Excuse to Lose” Attitude

By:
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Many people make excuses, because when it comes right down to it, they *want* an excuse to lose.

Why Have Excuses?

Leaving yourself and excuse is a protective mechanism we all have, to a greater or lesser degree. It's a way to lower the risk and protect your self-image. When you have an *excuse* to lose, you can always blame losing on something external to yourself. But when you have *no excuse to lose*, that means you did the best you could. Everything was perfect, but you lost anyway.

For some people, that's too much to accept. It's a blow to their self-esteem. Far better to have something or someone to blame, rather than to pin it on themselves.

This kind of attitude can run rampant. So you have...

- The manager who blames his associates for failure to back him up.
- The athlete who blames his coach or training schedule for poor performance.
- The student who says he would have done better if he'd had more time to prepare for a test.
- The parent who blames the school system for all the troubles a child is having.

When you hear blaming, recrimination, complaints, backbiting, or regrets, you're hearing excuses to lose. Someone's saying, "It's not my fault. I *would* have succeeded, if -"

Listen carefully to everything that comes after the "if." Nine times out of ten, you'll hear something that was preventable or correctable.

I'm not saying you can control everything. You can't. And I'm not saying that you can win every time, because that's impossible.

But on the other hand, if there's some detail or problem that *know about* and you can *do something about*, why not chase it down and fix it? Why should *that* become your excuse to lose?

.... But if I knew about these things and didn't fix them, I'd have a few little excuses – and when you add up all the little excuses, you have one big excuse to lose. And I don't want any excuse to lose.

Excuses are for Punks!!!

What Happens?

Compare the “I have an excuse” attitude to “I have no excuses.” It goes like this:

| <i><u>I have an excuse...</u></i> | <i><u>I have no excuse...</u></i> |
|--|---|
| The computer broke down just as I was finishing up. | I arranged for a backup just in case something like this happened. |
| It was a minor mistake; I thought no one would notice. | Even though it was a little mistake, it wouldn't leave me alone until I fixed it. |
| My idea would have been the best, but I met a lot of resistance. | I anticipated some resistance, so I sold people on my idea before the meeting. |

When things go wrong, when ideas aren't accepted, when a proposal bombs, there are *always* excuses. Plenty of them.

The odd thing is: *Most people know the excuses even before they know the outcomes.*

We tend to load up on excuses, thinking to ourselves, “Well, if I'm blamed for *this*, I'll have *that* excuse.” It gives us comfort and safety.

What happens if you *eliminate* excuses? ... If you do that, you don't have any excuses *left*. You're just out there performing for everyone to see, and if something goes wrong, you don't have *anyone* or *anything* to blame.

If you adopt this policy, you'll find there's a certain amount of danger in this approach, but also a lot of reassurance. *Knowing you've given yourself the best chance of winning is a great feeling.* When you get to the starting line of the race, you can say, “I'm ready. I've done everything I can do up to this moment. Now I can concentrate on performing to the best of my ability.”

And with the “no excuse to lose” attitude, even if you don't win, you still come out ahead. Because you don't have regrets. You don't need to weigh yourself down thinking “If only...” You optimized your performance to the best of your physical and mental abilities. Your attitude was good, you worked hard, and win or lose, your proud self-image should be intact. You're ready for the next race.

That's why, if you go into one race with *no excuse to lose*, you can *always come back* for another.

Ken's Tips

1. Separate your self-esteem from your performances and behavior. You are not bad because your performance or your actions were bad. Attitudes and behaviors can always be changed. You can do something about it!!!
2. Sometimes we don't know we're making excuses for ourselves. Analyze your excuses carefully and remember 9 out of 10 times, they can be controlled.
3. **Responsibility is required.** The greatest power you have is the ability to choose. However, your choices require responsibility. Because you choose to be on a team, you must accept responsibilities of your choice. You can choose to study for an exam or to watch television during your available study time. While in training, you can choose to get the necessary sleep each night or you can decide to stay up late and report to practice tired (or not at all). In any case, you bear the responsibility for choices you make.