



**TAKE BACK CONTROL  
OF YOUR LIFE**

14 DAY CHALLENGE

**WORKBOOK**

# A WELCOME LETTER

Welcome to your 14-Day Challenge! Over the course of the next two weeks, we'll learn and grow together through our mastery of one of the most IMPORTANT SUCCESS PRINCIPLES— $E+R=O$ . Taking control of your life really comes down to this simple equation, but mastering it is harder than it seems.

This is why I've created 14-Day Challenge, together we'll build the foundation to truly step into the driver's seat of our own lives by choosing how we respond in each and every moment!

Every day I'll provide you with a specific challenge designed to help you put this powerful equation into practice. When you choose your responses intentionally, it's amazing how magical life becomes.

As a coach, I've seen people use this equation to heal relationships, ask for what they really want, and ultimately, truly change their lives! Think about it... we can't control what happens in life, but we always have 100% control over how we respond! I've seen people who've gone through the most unimaginable of circumstances respond with grace I didn't even know existed, and I've also seen some of the most privileged people I know lose their minds when some small detail in their life wasn't perfect.

WE ALWAYS GET TO CHOOSE which leads me to congratulating you for being here! It all started with a choice to sign up and then show up for this challenge! My hope is that you'll find the following pages engaging and that by the end of the 14 days you'll have built the muscle to intentionally respond to all the events, both positive and negative, in your life.

I'm so excited to be on this journey with you, so let's get this party started!

## DAY 1: A LITTLE BACKGROUND...

### **$E+R=O$ : The Formula That Will Change Your Life**

Jack Canfield, my most important success mentor, taught me a simple, yet powerful formula that I believe should be the primary rule guiding your successful life:

$$\mathbf{E+R=O}$$

**Event + Response = Outcome**

Stated succinctly, every outcome we experience in life is a direct result of how we respond to an individual event that occurs.

Sometimes that event is an unexpected opportunity that shows up. Other times, it's a crisis we didn't see coming. But in any case, it's just the way things are—the existential reality of our life.

So how can we create the best possible outcome in relation to an event we have no control over? By taking responsibility and changing the way we respond to that event.

Take a look at these two examples:

**Event:** You are given a \$1,000 bonus.

**Response:** You spend it on a weekend trip.

**Outcome:** You miss out on creating the emergency fund you planned.

OR

**Event:** You are given a \$1,000 bonus.

**Response:** You set up an emergency fund.

**Outcome:** You're prepared and avoid having to put such charges on a credit card.

### HERE'S ANOTHER EXAMPLE:

**Event:** Your spouse comes home from a bad day at work.

**Response:** You don't have time to listen and may even launch into your own tirade, saying, "You think yours was bad?"

**Outcome:** You end up with an unhappy spouse who feels disconnected and unheard.

OR

**Event:** Your spouse comes home from a bad day at work.

**Response:** You listen and respond lovingly with compassion and interest.

**Outcome:** Your relationship becomes closer, with a spouse who feels heard and supported.

Can you see how your response—and your response alone—can significantly improve your life, or alternatively, create negative outcomes (either now or in the future)? When you really get this concept and understand the power of your response, you can be a success in every area of your life. Your happiness, your health, your financial situation, your relationships— everything will start to improve, once you improve your responses.

Today, and over the course of the next 13 days, begin to look for the opportunities to respond differently in each area of your life. Our power truly lies in our ability to respond intentionally!

## DAY 1 EXERCISES:

In what areas of my life do I find myself reacting vs. responding intentionally?

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How would my life improve by being more intentional in my response in these areas?

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How can I use this simple equation to improve each area of my life?

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## DAY 2: OLD EVENT / NEW RESPONSE

Are you ready to take control of an outcome right now?

I'm willing to bet most of us are holding on to something recent that didn't go the way we wanted it to. Think about something that happened in the past week that didn't go the way you wanted. Try to think of something that you are still feeling right now.

Maybe you were late to work and feel guilt or worried? Maybe you got into an argument with someone and wish you could take back something you said? Perhaps you went over your budget and you are worried about upcoming bills? Are you beating yourself up over something you ate or a task you didn't complete?

Here's an example from a past student: "I had so much on my task list for the week and I spent the entire day procrastinating. I did small tasks like sweeping the floors, organizing the closet, and eventually ended up on Netflix. I did everything except what I set out to do and I'm so mad at myself right now!"

This is a situation I'm willing to bet many of us can relate with! So let's break this down using Event + Response = Outcome.

**Event:** They had a task list to complete.

**Response:** They procrastinated.

**Outcome:** They are mad at themselves!

But there is another  $E+R=O$  happening here. One that they could control RIGHT NOW to change their outcome.

**Event:** They did not complete their task list.

**Response:** They are angry with themselves.

**Outcome:** They are creating stress and punishing themselves over something they can no longer change.

They can't go back in time and change the fact that they procrastinated and didn't complete their task list. But they do have control over how they feel about it. Being upset and punishing themselves is not going to serve them, and let's be real, who WANTS to feel bad? Probably none of us. But how often do we allow ourselves to feel bad about a situation we can no longer change? This student can still control their outcome by changing their response. So how did this student change her response?

**Event:** They did not complete their task list.

**New Response:** They forgave themselves, and made a promise to avoid Netflix until their task list was completed.

**New Outcome:** They have less stress and more mental clarity to focus on what needs completed instead of what wasn't completed.

Notice the event did not change. They didn't go back in time and complete their task list. The only thing that changed was their response to what happened, but that new response completed an entirely new outcome radically different than what they were experiencing before.

## DAY 2 EXERCISES:

Are you ready to change an Outcome you are experiencing right now? I hope that example helped, because now it's your turn! Did you think of something that happened recently that didn't go the way you wanted?

Think about something that happened that is still affecting you right now and fill out the prompts below:

**Event:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Old Response:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Old Outcome:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Event:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Old Response:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Old Outcome:** \_\_\_\_\_

# DAY 3: OLD ROUTINES

Think about what comes up in an average day. You start out the morning with good intentions, then suddenly—for some reason, it doesn't matter why—you're late getting out the door for work.

After work, and after several more unintentional responses, you walk through the door and barely acknowledge your spouse or teenagers. Collapsing in front of the TV after dinner, you stay up late watching shows you could care less about and which aren't even entertaining. You roll into bed following the nightly news at 11:30, only to toss and turn over the latest political outrage, then wake up sleepy the next morning.

## **What exactly is happening here? Could this entire day have been different?**

It's important to distinguish between a reaction and a response. On the surface a reaction and a response may look exactly like, but the outcomes they create are very different.

A reaction is instant. It is based on the moment without taking into consideration the potential outcomes you might create, and is often a survival or defense mechanism. Our ability to react protects us when we have to make a split decision that might be the difference between life and death, where the immediate consequence outweighs any long term impacts of our actions.

A response is a choice based on information from both the unconscious and conscious mind that weighs the possible long- term outcomes. A response takes into consideration not only your well-being but also other people that might be affected by your response, and allows you to stay in line with your values.

Let's take a look at the difference in action. Imagine you are walking down the sidewalk wearing a nice white shirt or dress, your choice, and someone bumps into you and spills coffee all over you.

A reaction might be, "You idiot! Watch where you are going!" What outcome does that create? You are angry. The person who spilled their coffee may be provoked to anger. A potential client or colleague could witness your reaction and think poorly of you. Your entire day could be ruined by this one interaction, if you allowed it!

A response might be, you take a deep breath, and realize that the coffee wasn't hot enough to burn you. It didn't soak your cell phone or anything important, and you know absolutely nothing about this person or what type of day they had leading up to this encounter. They could be rushing to the hospital to say goodbye to a loved one. They could be on the way to a big job interview and have to show up with coffee all over them. So you pause a moment and respond, "Are you okay?" What outcome does that create? Instead of being angry you are grateful it wasn't worse. Your compassionate response may lead to a new friendship or connection. A potential client or colleague could witness your response and think more highly of you. Your shirt may be ruined, but your day isn't!

Guess what? Whether we choose to react or respond in this situation... we still have coffee on our shirt. The only thing we can change in this situation is our response. The coffee is staying on our shirt no matter what, but the outcome is entirely in our hands.

E+R=O and controlling our responses is a tool we have to practice in order to master it. Just understanding how this formula works does not mean we will immediately implement it into every area of our life.

To help you begin responding differently to life's events as you go through your day, complete the exercise below to create a more deliberate, purposeful and stress-free day that gets you closer to your major life goals.

## DAY 3 EXERCISES:

### RESPONDING DIFFERENTLY THE EVENING BEFORE

To prevent feeling rushed tomorrow and to anticipate events such as weather or traffic, make a list of what you can prepare tonight. I've listed some ideas to get you started. Fill in the remaining blanks with your own plans:

- Set out the next day's clothes including shoes and accessories; pack your laptop before bed.
- Ask the kids to pack their backpacks by 9:00pm and put it in a dedicated place every night.
- Cut up fruit, chop ingredients for omelets, and otherwise prep for a healthy breakfast.
- Make a healthy salad to take for lunch the next day.
- Start the ingredients for a slow-cooker or instant pot dinner, placing them in the refrigerator for the next morning.
- Set a permanent reminder on your smartphone alarm to prompt you to be in bed by 10:00.
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### RESPONDING DIFFERENTLY IN THE MORNING

To create a stress-free day tomorrow, decide what you will commit to do each morning to stay focused and happy. Here are some ideas:

- Wake up naturally without an alarm.
- Stretch or exercise.
- Replace your coffee with herb tea.
- Spend 20 minutes doing a meditation or guided visualization.
- Review your life goals.
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Having a rock solid routine for your morning and evening is one of the best ways we can use  $E+R=O$  proactively, before events happen. Also called PRIMING and it's a powerful way to intentionally start your day going in the right direction. I've heard countless people tell me what a difference creating a routine plays in their day to day life, and I've felt the difference for myself.

## DAY 4: RESPONDING DIFFERENTLY AT HOME AND AT WORK

### AT HOME

Yesterday you created routines that empowered you to take control and respond even before the events of the day begin. This is a huge piece of  $E+R=O$  because you're proactively preparing for the known stressors of the day before they happen.

But what about the unexpected? What happens when your spouse comes home 2 hours late without a phone call or your child decides they also want to take control of their life (and you definitely don't have the same idea as they do of what's in their best interest)? What happens when the dishwasher breaks, or you discover that you forgot to put an important event on your calendar?

Today is all about responding differently at home. We all have a different home life experience, but there are always stressors that come up in this area. It may be finances, family relationships, unexpected events — whatever the case may be, whatever EVENTS might come our way, our ability to RESPOND is crucial to our success.

### AT WORK

Imagine, you hadn't just learned about the power of creating a solid morning routine a few days ago. You're heading out the door when you fumble your coffee and now you need to change. You already have so much on your plate, and you begin to feel overwhelmed. On top of this annoyance, you soon hit break lights on the freeway, and you know you're going to be late. This immediately puts you in a stressful mood as you rush to the office and, awkwardly, walk in to an impromptu staff meeting.

Back in your own office at last, you immediately open your email and find dozens of messages from colleagues all clamoring for you to deliver, delegate or decide. You spend the next two hours meeting other people's priorities, eyeing that stack of paperwork on your own desk that's still left over from yesterday afternoon.

By 11:00, you're simply overwhelmed.

You know you've got a major deadline at the end of next week, but instead of starting the project and gathering the data you need, you dazedly tackle mundane tasks that are of lower importance—even congratulating yourself as you cross each one off your list.

You break for lunch, but instead of eating a healthy salad you brought from home, you "treat" yourself to a delicious hot lunch at a popular restaurant across town to make up for the miserable morning you just had. You'd like to linger over dessert, but your to-do list beckons, so you drag yourself back to the office to complete your day. Unexpectedly, your boss pops her head in your office: she's



leaving for a client meeting at 2:00, but didn't finish her report for the Steering Committee. Asking you to drop everything and finish it for her because the Committee meets the next morning, she sails off to her afternoon appointment.

Cheerlessly, you stop all your own work to handle something that should have been done a week ago by someone else.

At 5:30, you finally drop the printed copies of the report on your boss' desk. By now you're exhausted and haven't even thought of what to do for dinner. Like many other nights, you get take-out from a local restaurant—which strains your household budget and impacts your family's health.

## DAY 4 EXERCISES:

What is one of your biggest struggles/stressors in your **home** life?

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How could you respond differently in this area?

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What **will** you commit to do today to create better outcomes at **home**?

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What is one of your biggest struggles/stressors in your **work** life?

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How could you respond differently in this area?

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What **will** you commit to do today to create better outcomes at **work**?

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## DAY 5: TAKE 5% MORE RESPONSIBILITY

What would your life look like if you decided, right here, right now you would take 5% more responsibility in every area of your life? Not 50, not 80, just 5%. One of the ways we respond in life is by either showing up a little bit better each day or not. It's always a choice, but most of us make it overwhelming in our minds by thinking we have to run the marathon before we can even run the mile.

Today is all about taking that first small step. It's about getting up off the couch and making it around the block. It may not be a mile, and it sure as heck isn't a marathon, but we've all heard the saying, "You have to crawl before you can walk."

So, what does crawling look like in your life? What can you do to take just 5% more responsibility as a wife/husband, as a business owner, as a parent, as an employee? What can you do to be 5% more healthy or more productive?

Imagine this principle multiplied... if you took just 5% more responsibility in one area of your life every week for only 20 weeks, you would be living 100% more intentionally!

Think about what taking just 5% more responsibility really means. I'll give you an example:

"If I were take 5% more responsibility for my health and well-being I would..."

- I would exercise 30 minutes a day.
- I would drink one less soda per day.
- I would get 30 extra minutes of sleep per night.
- I would meditate at least once per week.

Are you ready to take just 5% more responsibility for an area of your life? Feel free to pick as many areas as you want! You can do more than one!

Pick an area of your life you want to take 5% more responsibility for:

- Health and Well-Being
- Goals
- Relationships
- Financial
- Fun and Recreation
- Career

## DAY 5 EXERCISES:

What does taking 5% more responsibility look like for me?

*Example: If I were to take 5% more responsibility for my relationship I would call my husband every night when I'm traveling.*

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Complete the following, "Today I will take 5% more responsibility for my \_\_\_\_\_ by doing \_\_\_\_\_."

BONUS: Ask this question for at least 3 areas/categories of your life.

**NOW GET OUT THERE AND START TAKING ACTION!**

# DAY 6: RESPONDING TO OPPORTUNITY

Knowing that how you respond can mean the difference between an awesome life—or regret about what could have been—creates a powerful incentive to master your responses. In fact, one of the greatest differences between successful people and those who would merely like to be, is how they respond to the opportunities in their life.

How often have you reacted with fear or “I can’t” when opportunity knocks? Have you walked away from a life-changing opportunity? Or worse, did you fail to recognize and respond to opportunity that actually appeared as a crisis or other disaster?

Take a look:

**Event:** Your co-worker continually misses deadlines, forcing you to work late to bring projects in on time.

**Response:** You grumble to yourself and others, but say nothing to your co-worker or boss.

**Outcome:** You end up working late nights, putting a strain on your relationships at home and becoming more and more resentful.

OR

**Event:** Your co-worker continually misses deadlines, forcing you to work late to bring projects in on time.

**Response:** You investigate ways to streamline the process, then quietly present your better plan to the team.

**Outcome:** Your boss creates a special job title for you, giving you more oversight on projects, which leads to a year-end bonus and an increase in salary.

The truth is... when confronted with a negative event, if you can stop and think before you REACT, you will almost always find a way to transform that negative event into an opportunity.

By simply responding with intention to create the outcomes you desire, you become more and more proficient at creating the future you want.

## DAY 6 EXERCISES:

Are there any events in the past month that I could have framed as opportunities?

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What are some of the habitual thoughts or stories I've developed that hold me back from opportunities that may present themselves?

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What is my new response when opportunity knocks?

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## DAY 7: EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL RESPONSES

Welcome to Day 7! Congratulations! How do you feel after an entire week of implementing  $E+R=O$  and taking 100% Responsibility for your outcomes? On a scale of 1-10 (10 being totally happy) how do you feel right now? Seriously. Close your eyes for a moment and think about how happy you feel right now on a scale of 1-10.

How would you feel if I told you that if you didn't answer 10 you failed the test and you were a total idiot?

Don't worry. You didn't fail, and you definitely aren't an idiot. But how did that make you feel when you first read it?

Did you feel angry?

Hurt?

Confused?

Like I clearly had no idea who you were?

This is actually a trick question, because I didn't make you feel anything. I didn't ask "how" you felt. I asked how I "made" you feel. I can't make you feel anything. It doesn't matter what I say to you. But you already know that.  $E+R=O$ . It is your response to what I said that determines how you feel about it.

Today we are going to learn about an aspect of  $E+R=O$  that will give you the ability to create total emotional freedom in your lives. You know I love examples, so let's take a look at how this can be applied in everyday life.

Imagine two co-workers named Erin and Jesse. Erin walks up to Jesse and says, "Jesse, of all the people we work with you, are the biggest idiot in the entire company."

Would Erin lower or raise Jesse's self esteem with this statement?

Or would it not matter what Erin says to Jesse, but rather what Jesse says to Jesse after Erin stops talking?

It's important to understand that it's not what Erin says to Jesse, but what Jesse tells to Jesse when Erin stops talking. If Jesse thinks, "Wow. How did Erin know I'm such an idiot?" this will affect their self esteem in a negative way. If Jesse thinks, "Erin must have said that to push me because she knows I can handle it!" this will affect her self- esteem in a positive way.

How often do we give away our ability to respond and control over our outcomes to other people? Have you noticed that the people we wouldn't want to be in control of our outcomes are the ones we most often give that control to!

What people say to you is simply another event, and what it means and how it makes you feel is just another outcome you have the power to control. No one can make you feel anything. You have the ability to control how you feel about any situation.

Let's take this concept one step further with another quick example. Imagine Erin has blond hair. If Jesse told Erin, "You have green hair." How do you think Erin would respond? Even if Erin knew nothing about E+R=O do you think that would make her feel bad? Probably not... but why is that? It is because Erin knows she doesn't have green hair. It isn't what Jesse says that affects Erin's feelings. It's what Erin believes to be true about Erin that affects her feelings.

When someone says something to us that causes us to feel hurt, it's usually because at some level we have a doubt about ourselves in that area that existed before anyone said anything.

## DAY 7 EXERCISES:

What is a story you consistently tell yourself that doesn't serve you?

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What story could you start telling yourself to create a different outcome?

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Today notice the events that occur and the stories you create around them. Are those stories true, or is it just a story we are telling ourselves? Notice where you can create better stories to create better outcomes.

## DAY 8: BLAMING AND COMPLAINING

### Do you blame events for your outcomes?

Of course. Responding differently means you must give up blaming the event itself. This is very difficult. Our typical response when something doesn't work is that we blame what happened rather than our reaction to it: the traffic that made you late for an important meeting, the bounced check that made your spouse mad, the error on your tax return that triggered a costly penalty.

Does this sound familiar?

"If only my boss would give me enough time to do the job...If only my husband understood what I'm trying to do with the kids...If only the kids would clean up their rooms... If only we had more money... If only they would stop such-and-such... I would feel better."

### Stop blaming and complaining!

Understand that the E's in your life (events) aren't responsible for the O's (outcomes) you experience. Only your responses determine the outcomes you get!

### Complaining simply means you know there's something better.

Complaining about events won't help you change your outcomes, either. In fact, when you complain, what you're really saying is, "I know things could be better. But I'm not willing to risk creating that other, more desirable outcome."

It's simply easier and less risky to complain.

And it's certainly easier than responding the way successful people do. If successful people don't like the situation they find themselves in, they either:

- (a) Work to make it better, or...
- (b) They leave and go somewhere else.

The truth is... for as fast-paced as our lives are today, things are likely to change anyway. Left alone, bad situations often get worse. But you can do something to change them—if you're willing to take 100% responsibility for your Responses. It's up to you to do something different—changing your R's will change your life.

## DAY 8 EXERCISES:

Catch yourself blaming and complaining!

If you were completely honest with yourself and had to make a list of what you complain about, you'd probably notice some common denominators: things that are under your control that you can fix or eliminate altogether that are repeatedly causing events in your life. It might even strike you how long you've been complaining about these events.

For the next 24 hours, let's work to create a new habit: Take action versus complaining. Be alert to situations where you blame or complain. What more desirable outcome do you prefer?

Write down at least 3 times throughout the day that you notice yourself blaming or complaining and what your new response was:

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## DAY 9: DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS

Most of us have a few relationships in our lives that tend to be more difficult than others. Some are with family members we feel forced to interact with, some are the outcome of poor responses over long periods of time, and still others seem to be for no apparent reason at all.

It's important to remember these relationships are always happening for us. These people, more than anything or anyone else, can often be our greatest test for intentionally choosing our responses. It's easy to respond with love when someone tells you how much they love and appreciate you, but it's much harder to respond lovingly when our child tells you they hate you, or your boss continually overlooks all your hard work. It's how we respond in these moments though, that can really shape our lives.



When taking 100% Responsibility for your relationships be aware that you cannot force people to change. The only real thing you have control over is your expectations, how you allow people to treat you, your responses to their behaviors, and your boundaries.

Today can be difficult, especially if we have toxic relationships in our lives we have been unwilling to deal with. Some people are unwilling to change or respect our boundaries, and we may be unwilling to compromise on our expectations or how we allow them to treat us.

Take a few moments and think about the quality of your relationships and this area of your life in general. Are there specific relationships you want different outcomes in? Do you want different outcomes from your relationships in general? Is there an area of your relationships you would like to improve? This could be your romantic relationships, business network, friendships, relationships with parents, siblings or children.

Here are a few examples:

**Event:** Your mom always calls at the most unwelcome times. Whenever she calls she needs something and the conversation always turns combative and takes forever.

**Response:** You cut her off, telling her that you're too busy for this and hang up the phone frustrated and annoyed.

**Outcome:** You and your mom drift further apart over the years. As she ages, you feel guilty for never having time and your mom feels sad that she isn't closer with you.

**OR**

**Event:** Your mom calls and you are busy. She needs to talk to you about her latest problem and you know you'll end up annoyed because the call will take forever.

**Response:** You tell your mom how happy you are she called you to help you through this problem, and that you'd love to call her back later in the evening when you have time to give her your full attention.

**Outcome:** You feel grateful that your mom respects your opinions and seeks your advice and you and your mom continue to become closer and more connected.

Here's another example:

**Event:** Everyday you show up to work and do more than what's expected of you. You are always the first one to the office and the last one to leave, but your boss never acknowledges you for your dedication to the company.

**Response:** Overtime you silently become resentful for the lack of acknowledgement you receive.

**Outcome:** Eventually you snap, quit your job and are left looking for a new place to work.

**OR**

**Event:** Everyday you show up to work and do more than what's expected of you. You are always the first one to the office and the last one to leave, but your boss never acknowledges you for your dedication to the company.

**Response:** You ask to meet with your boss and let him know how much you appreciate working for the company and GIVE the acknowledgment you'd like to receive. You also express how much you'd love to grow within the company and ask what else he'd like to see from you to eventually move up the ladder.

**Outcome:** You're now on his radar as someone who he sees as a go-getter, and you have specific tasks you know your boss wants you to accomplish, so you focus your energy in those areas. As you do, your boss naturally gives you feedback because he knows you are looking to progress in the company.

## DAY 9 EXERCISES:

Think of your most challenging relationship. In the past, how have you responded when conflict arises with this person? Are there long-term outcomes you can take responsibility for by noticing patterns in the way you've responded in this relationship?

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How could you choose to respond differently in the future?

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In what ways could you be grateful for this person?

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Is there something you could do today to help nurture this difficult relationship? If so what is it?

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If you weren't able to think of anything, remember, we can always spend time sending loving thoughts to another person even if they don't physically know it. At a higher level, just this intention can have an amazing and immediate impact on your relationships!

## DAY 10: DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Just like difficult relationships, we all deal with difficult situations at some level. Sometimes it's losing someone we love, sometimes it's our children choosing a different path than the one we wanted for them, sometimes it's being laid off from a job because the company is going under.

Whatever the case may be, our response is truly the only thing within our control during these times. How we respond to crisis can truly be a "make or break" moment!

Have you ever known someone who went through an unimaginable situation, but responded so gracefully that you were blown away? Chances are they were practicing the  $E+R=O$  equation without even knowing it. Even though they were faced with a terrible EVENT, they knew what they wanted their OUTCOME to be, so they RESPONDED in a way that supported the O they desired.

Here's an example, one many of us can probably relate to, from a past student who gave us permission to share:

### **What is a difficult or troubling situation in your life?**

A friend owes me money, and they still haven't paid me.

### **What payoffs or benefits do you get for keeping it like it is?**

I avoid an uncomfortable conversation and don't have to face the reality that they may not pay me back.

### **What costs do you pay for keeping it like it is?**

The cost is literally money, but my friend is also avoiding me, so it is costing me my friendship.

### **How do you create it or allow it to be like it is?**

I loaned them money that I wasn't sure they could pay back. I put expectations on my friend they may not be able to meet. I have not been straightforward in asking them to repay me.

### **What do you want instead?**

I want to enjoy talking to and spending with my friend without the stress of them owing me money, and I would also like to be repaid.

### **What actions could you take and what requests could you make to get it?**

I could talk to my friend and ask about their financial situation. If they are unable to repay me, I can let them know that their friendship is more important than the money, and that they should consider the money a gift instead of a loan.

This student was able to save their relationship with their friend by communicating what was really important. They realized that their friendship was more important than the money, and one of two things had to change if they wanted to maintain that friendship. Either their friend had to change, or their expectations of their friend had to change. Knowing everything you know about taking 100% responsibility and  $E+R=O$ , what do you think was more likely to change? What was the only variable in this situation the student had control over? Their expectations of their friend!

Can you relate to this story at all? Have your expectations of another person become more important than maintaining your relationship with them? This is not always a bad thing either. We have to be aware of where our boundaries are, and respect ourselves enough to maintain them. There would have been nothing wrong with this student saying being repaid was more important than the relationship. It is important to be aware of the outcome you wish to create, and rather or not the outcome you are creating is in alignment with the outcome you desire.

Think about your difficult or troubling situation? Are you creating the outcome you ultimately desire, or are you allowing reactions to create an outcome for you? How confident are you that you will resolve your situation and create the outcome you really want?

*"You don't have a right to the cards you believe you should have been dealt. You have an obligation to play the hell out of the ones you're holding."*

- Cheryl Strayed

## DAY 10 EXERCISES:

What difficult situations have I responded to in a way that doesn't serve me?

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If I could go back to those scenarios, how could I have responded differently to create a more desirable outcome?

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What is a difficult situation I am currently dealing with?

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Knowing what I now know, how will I respond to this situation?

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As you repeat this exercise with other difficult or troubling situations, you may notice a pattern in the ways you create or allow them to happen. Taking 100% responsibility for those patterns will empower us to start creating the outcomes we desire automatically. I encourage everyone to run through the exercise a few more times before the challenge is over, and if you struggled doing this exercise, or you worked alone, be sure to ask for help in the comments below and try to connect with someone else who needs help. Working through the exercise together can take it to a much deeper level.

## DAY 11: TACKLING INCOMPLETES

There is nothing more frustrating and draining than having unfinished projects. Incompletes keep us from moving forward and kill productivity. Today is all about responding to these incompletes rather than continuing to ignore them, or even worse, having them distract you.

Just the very thought of cleaning up all the incompletes in your life might have you feeling a little overwhelmed, but don't worry. Remember Day 5 when you considered taking just 5% more responsibility? Today, we'll apply the same principle. What if you cleaned up just one incomplete in your life? And tomorrow you cleaned up just one more? By the end of 30 days, you'd have completed 30 incompletes, freeing up both your physical and mental world from the noise those unfinished projects have created.

### DAY 11 EXERCISES:

Create a list of the top 10 unfinished projects that keep you up at night. It may be a shelf you've never hung in your home that's sitting on the floor, or it may be a conversation you've been needing to have. It could be organizing papers at your job or importing your contacts into a new software program for your business. Choose 10 projects that bother you and you'd feel relieved to finally have complete.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

How will I feel if I complete all 10 of these tasks in the next 30 days?

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Decide on one incomplete task that you'll complete TODAY:

"Today I will \_\_\_\_\_"

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NOW GET IT DONE! Once you've finished your first incomplete, notice how you feel. Has a weight been lifted? Are you feeling more free? Do you feel a sense of accomplishment? Remember these feelings as you continue to check items off your list!

## DAY 12: IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS

Most people are surprised to hear that they're usually notified in advance about the "negative" events that occur in their lives. Like the "yellow alerts" in the old Star Trek television series, you receive advance warnings—in the form of tell-tale signs, comments from others, gut instinct, your intuition—that warn you of impending doom and give you time to prevent something bad from happening.

You have time to change your response (R) in the  $E+R=O$  equation.

You can act, as successful people do—facing facts squarely, doing the uncomfortable and taking steps to change the outcome. Successful people don't wait for bad things to occur. They take responsibility immediately. They respond in time. They prevent things from going too far.

Once you begin responding decisively to signals and events as they occur, life becomes much easier. The feelings of hopelessness and lack of control go away. You start seeing two kinds of improved outcomes—both internal and external.

Old internal dialogs like: "I feel like a victim. I feel used. Only bad things happen to me," are transformed into, "I feel better. I'm in control. I can make things happen."

External outcomes like, "Nobody comes to our store. We missed our quarterly goals. People are complaining the new product doesn't work," become outcomes like: "I have more money in the bank. I lead the division in sales. Our product is flying off the shelves."

Eventually, as you respond regularly to these yellow alerts, you begin to see events without needing these advance warnings. You begin to anticipate problems.

And, with this new awareness, you show up as mature in your thinking.

Finally, you can accept the fact that your responses (and yours alone) created the outcomes you're experiencing right now. You took the actions, you thought the thoughts, you created the feelings and you made the choices that got you to where you are now. With the exception of severe illnesses (95% of which scientists now know are caused by poor lifestyle habits and unregulated stress), virtually everything happening in our lives is created by us.

You are the one who ate the food. You are the one who stayed in that job that you hate. You are the one who married him. You are the one who wanted kids. You are the one who abandoned your dream. You are the one who ignored your intuition. You are the one who decided to go it alone. You are the one who decided you were damaged goods. You are the one who trusted him.

And, come to think of it, you're the one who said yes to the dogs, too.

It was you!

## DAY 12 EXERCISES:

Examine each area of your life and determine if there's a problem that you are ignoring or creating. What are you pretending not to know?

### Your Health

Example: My cholesterol is high. I'm pretending not to know I'm at risk for cardiovascular disease.

Example: Yeah, I drink several night a week. I'm pretending not to know that I'm likely alcohol dependent.

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### Your Money

Example: My credit card debt is insupportable. I'm pretending not to know that I'm at risk of bankruptcy.

Example: I just turned 50. I'm pretending not to know that I'm financially unprepared for retirement.

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### Your Family

Example: My teenager is distant and moody. I'm pretending not to know that he might be using drugs.

Example: My mom's health has declined. I'm pretending not to know she needs expensive home care.

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### Your Relationships

Example: My husband gets calls at odd hours. I'm pretending not to know he might be having an affair.

Example: My girlfriend trash-talks on Facebook. I'm pretending not to know she's immature.

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### Your Career

Example: I'm always missing deadlines. I'm pretending not to know that I'm at risk of losing this client.

Example: There are rumors at the office. I'm pretending not to know they're closing our department soon.

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### Your Lifestyle

Example: My friends don't call. I'm pretending not to know my work schedule is alienating them.

Example: I got another late notice. I'm pretending not to know that I'm disorganized and chaotic.

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### Other Areas Of Your Life

Example: I got passed over for that role. I'm pretending not to know that my skills need upgrading.

Example: The taxes here have skyrocketed. I'm pretending not to know that I can't afford to retire here.

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# DAY 13: CREATE IT

You alone have the power to make something happen in your life, whether you actively create it or passively allow it to happen or continue. This goes for outcomes that are both good and bad. When you confront a guy in a bar who is twice your size and say to him, "You're ugly!"—then find yourself in the hospital with a broken jaw—it's easy to see you created that outcome.

But what about those outcomes that are more difficult to see?

Let's say you work late every night. You come home tired and burned out. You eat dinner in a stupor, then sit down to watch television. You're too tired and stressed out to do anything else—like go for a walk or play with the kids. This goes on for years. Your wife asks you to talk to her. "Later," you say. Three years from now you come home to an empty house and find a note that she's left you and taken the kids.

You created that one, too!

Of course, in this kind of situation, it's easy to gloss over the obvious with self-righteous arguments like, "I was working hard to make a better life for my family. I'm entitled to watch a ball game every now and then. I was a good provider, wasn't I?"

Today is all about creating the outcomes you want before events occur. When we take the time to think about the outcomes we desire proactively, before being faced with events we set ourselves up for success in a big way! This is the power of visualization and creation. While we can't control all of the events that happen in our lives, by being proactive in visualizing our desired outcomes, we work with the universe to bring the events and responses into our lives that will eventually lead to our desired outcomes.

## DAY 13 EXERCISES:

If you could proactively create the perfect outcome in each area of your life what would it look like?

### Your Health

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### Your Money

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### Your Family

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## Your Relationships

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## Your Career

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## Your Lifestyle

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## Other Areas Of Your Life

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What will do today to proactively work toward your desired outcome in one of these areas?

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# DAY 14: CELEBRATE + SHARE WINS!

Today is all about CELEBRATING YOU! You made it through the entire 14 days and today your response is to celebrate all you've accomplished! This is an important lesson in the  $E+R=O$  equation. How often have you done something incredible only to downplay your success. That is a response! Over the course of the last two weeks you've made over your daily routines, relationships and mindset. You've completed lingering incomplete tasks. You've taken responsibility for past outcomes. You are a ROCKSTAR!

So, today I want you to look back at this challenge and look at all you've accomplished. Give yourself credit for taking back control of your life! It's no small task, and you should be proud of just how far you've come. Sure, there may have been days that you didn't complete all the homework or weren't engaged in the group, but what you've accomplished is more than most people do in an entire month, or even a year. Today is about focusing on your wins and choosing to respond to all that you've accomplished in the past 14 days with a celebration of your success!

## DAY 14 EXERCISES:

What are you most proud to have accomplished during this challenge?

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In what ways has your mindset changed as a result of this challenge?

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How have you grown over the past 14 days?

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What is one thing you'll do today to celebrate YOU and all you've accomplished?

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**NOW GET OUT THERE, CELEBRATE, & SHARE THIS EQUATION WITH EVERYONE YOU KNOW!**