

## From The Stoop-December2013



Today on the stoop could be called the “why” day. Why are they standing at the end of my sidewalk arguing? Why are they blaming each other for everything that has happened in their lives together? Why does none of it seem remotely associated with what the argument started about, it seems? Why does everyone have to make somebody or something responsible for everything that has gone wrong in their life? And why at my stoop?

I do have to admit I too have played the blame game. The one where your job, your wife, your dog, your mother-in-law, your neighbor six doors down, the media, the government, the receptionist at your doctor’s office, or the lumberyard attendant who measured wrong is somehow responsible for the problems you’re having. We all do it and somehow expect that because there is a justification for the dark cloud it all makes sense. I don’t think so.

We all need to sit down at some point in our lives and take stock of all that has gone wrong and of course what has gone right. For this exercise however we need to concentrate on what contributed to our own unhappiness and what role did we play in making it happen as it did. It is like a floodgate. Once one revelation happens countless more follow.

Isn't it weird that the woman who can't leave her old unhappy relationship without starting a new one is always in an unhappy relationship? Or the man who quits his job because he can't stand his overbearing and ungrateful boss lands a new job with a boss who seems even more overbearing and ungrateful? Life continuously throws us lessons with the hope that we will learn from them and not repeat the same mistakes over and over again.

Taking the idea to heart that there is a lesson to be learned and agreeing to learn from it is step one in a journey towards life acceptance. We all have a role in the creation of the problems we own. Admitting our role means we have stepped away from the playing field of the blame game and are no longer in competition.

I believe it is especially important to free your vocabulary of the blame verb especially at this time of year. It is bad enough that when something happens we throw out the comment that it is "so an so's fault" without giving a thought to the damage done to the accused and the accumulative effect it has on you but, to carry over the blame into what should be the ultimate sharing time for family and friends without assuming and understanding your own role in whatever keeps us apart is such a disheartening shame.

Forgive yourself and accept others for who they are. See the good that overshadows another's shortcomings and love them because of their best not their worst. The overwhelming feeling of good is contagious, not a soul can escape the new sense of happiness.

The couple at my stoop are angry at something one of them did or perhaps didn't do. If they don't resolve it they will bring it home with them and share it with their children, their friends and family. I believe silence, an expression of the love that is hidden at the moment and a brief timeout with a hug would be that breath they need to say sorry "I accept responsibility".

