HOW TO DISCARD EVERY EXCUSE YOU CAN EVER IMAGINE

A Self-Coaching Guide by Art Turock, Elite Performance Game-Changer & Comfort Zone Demolition Expert

“Live each day with a healthy disregard for the unreasonable, and you will experience extraordinary freedom.”
Maybe you are intrigued and in semi-disbelief about the brash title, “How to Discard Every Excuse You Can Ever Imagine.” WOW! Is that wording sheer hype? Or is this a remarkable practice tool?

What qualifies me to make such a claim?

I compile the World’s Largest List of Victim Language, meaning blames, justifications, rationalizations, and excuses. In going about my daily activities—reading books, engaging in conversations, listening to podcasts, writing in my journal—I can’t help but notice a plethora of victim phrases and add them to my list.

I don’t need to be incredibly alert. Victim language is pervasive---even in emails. I practice detecting victim language by inserting an NFL coach’s red challenge flag.

From: One of Art’s coaching clients  
Sent: Thursday, May 17, 2018 3:19 AM  
To: artturock@outlook.com  
Subject: Catching Up

Art, Sorry I have been MIA, things have been crazy.  
I have fallen back to my bad habit of putting other things as a higher priority than me.

At this point, I am trying to reset myself, so I can focus on me.

My world’s largest list contains over 2,500 examples of victim language and growing every day. Some victim language comes in the form of sentence stems which can be filled in with dozens of excuses or blames, so a more accurate number of examples would be closer to 10,000!

You probably don’t know anyone in your neighborhood (or the planet), who collects victim language. You might be wondering, “Art, why would you dream up this unique practice?”
Why do I compile this list?
I am not attempting to be eccentric.
My purpose is to expand my freedom to exercise the full array of choices available to me each moment of my life. The more I practice to become being alert to victim language, the faster I can shift to my accountability mindset and make choices to forward progress on my heartfelt goals.
Far than being eccentric, I am being fully awake to what’s at stake. I am literally practicing freedom.

Invitation to conduct your heroic experiment
I implore you to experiment with the steps outlined in this self-coaching guide for at least one month. I acknowledge you for expressing courage to expend your full effort and take risks without conjuring up excuses to fall back on. Indeed, this qualifies as truly a heroic experiment.

A heroic experiment gives you permission to test your self-imposed limits with the 100% guarantee of powerful learning, with 0% chance to fail.

Who knows what 30 days might lead to? If you are like me, you might get hooked and make this temporary experiment into a lifestyle habit. What if you become so well-practiced that you discard every excuse you can imagine and achieve most of your heartfelt goals?

I went first in this experiment, now it is your turn!

Art Turock
artturock@outlook.com
Self-Coaching Guide: How to Discard Every Excuse You Can Ever Imagine

"He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.”
--Benjamin Franklin

This Self-Coaching Guide provides a sample of the victim language you and I have unconsciously internalized in our vocabulary and inner thoughts. When you scan the lists on pages 7-11, notice yourself thinking:

“I’ve used that excuse… and that blame … and that one too.”
“My Dad uses that one to justify hours spent watching sports on tv.”
“Folks at work constantly use that blame.”
“I’ve heard politicians deflect responsibility using that excuse.”

Bottom line conclusion: Americans speak victim language fluently. By victim language, I refer to any phrases that capture the prototypical victim stance “I’d take action if only the effort required wasn’t so unreasonable, and the risks could be removed.” We are not choosing to limit our effort based on astute self-knowledge but from adhering to the pervasive “rules of reasonableness” imbedded in our culture.

Unfortunately, most people are well-practiced in excuse-making, justifying, and blaming triggered by a victim mentality. In contrast, we are under-practiced in taking accountability for our mindsets, choices, actions, and results. This ineffective practice pattern paves the way for a lifetime of excuses and missed opportunities.

This self-coaching guide prepares you to derail this predictable practice pattern. You will start a new and unique practice regimen with two goals in mind. In the basic experiment, you will sharpen your ability to recognize victim language while it is occurring in everyday experiences. In the advanced experiment, you will catch yourself offering up excuses, and instantly be triggered to: 1) rephrase using the language of accountability and 2) devise course corrections to achieve your desired results.

With literally thousands of victim phrases to access from your memory and from the ongoing public conversation, there will be no shortage of occasions to practice discarding excuses and adopting a new language of accountability to drive the choices in your life.
HOW TO PRACTICE WITH THIS SELF-COACHING GUIDE

Steps 1 +2 constitute the Basic Experiment.

Step 1: Getting acquainted with the categories of victim language.

Read pages 7-11 to increase your awareness of victim language and to understand the four rules/categories of victim language. On each page, circle your favorite blames, justifications, and excuses. At the lower half of each page, list your own version of victim phrases to fit each of the categories/rules.

Step 2: Practice noticing victim language. (Practice template p. 12)

Pretend you are a pro football head coach armed with a red challenge flag in your pocket. You are not going to call for review of a referee’s call on the football field. Instead, you lift a red flag out of your pocket or lying on your desk to signal an opportunity to challenge your own victim mentality.
On the top portion of page 12, write the victim language you either think to yourself or might say out loud and circle the rule/category it fits (rule 1: feelings, rule 2: circumstances, rule 3: past history, rule 4: identity)

Be alert for these common situations where you face the confines of your comfort zone:
*Avoidance.* When you talk yourself out of doing something you said you would do or is written down in your calendar.

*Fear or anxiety.* When you feel fear or anxiety, notice what you are telling yourself about the frightening risk or embarrassing failure.

*Take the easy way out option.* When you replace the task you are afraid of doing with a safer version, notice how you justify the ineffective substitute behavior.

**Step 3. Advanced Experiment (page 12).** Shift your mindset from victim language to taking accountability for choices that forward desired results.

Follow the “advanced experiment illustrations” on the bottom half of pages 7-11 as a model for filling in these two blanks on page 12:

Taking accountability for my choice to be a victim: Write down how you are choosing to blame a situation as a constraint to taking action or evade your responsibility for an outcome

Opening for new choices and courses of action: Describe the new courses of action that are freed up by taking accountability.

**Summary.** As victims, we create a charade that there is really no choice but to cave to supposedly unreasonable obstacles. As accountability takers, we acknowledge our choice in determining our unique sense of what conditions constitute unreasonable effort and risk.

As truth about your accountability replaces the self-deception of a victim stance, unreasonable effort and risk cease to be barriers. You are empowered to make new choices, even if only to test the supposed severity of obstacles you anticipate. Essentially, you shift your personal power orientation from being a victim with no say in the matter to being the cause of the results you produce.
CULTURAL SCRIPT FOR VICTIM LANGUAGE*

*aka Red flag material

Each rule of reasonableness has victim language scripts to use to avoid discomfort.

**Rule #1: Feelings:**
You must feel emotionally ready to do any task well.

You make me feel....angry, anxious

I feel awful/sorry but...

I feel fine. (done to cover up dissatisfaction or selling out on true desires)

This job is driving me crazy.

My depression/anger got the best of me.

You get under my skin.

Stop pressuring me.

She puts doubt in my mind.

I've been an emotional wreck.

He made me into a very unhappy person.

I hate .... the sound of my alarm clock going off, asking for help, sticking to a budget

You're getting on my nerves.

I'm plagued with bouts of self-doubt.

I'm afraid.....

**Plus your own variations:**

---

**Advanced experiment illustration**

- **Victim language:** “I’m afraid my brother will get defensive if I bring up his overeating, lack of exercise, and putting on weight.”

- **Taking accountability:** “I chose to stay quiet and enable my brother to eat unhealthy foods at restaurants and never get around to his intended plans for workouts.”

- **Opening for new courses of action:** “I take accountability to prepare a way to communicate my love and concern for my brother’s health so he feels safe accepting my support to improve his lifestyle habits.”
**Rules #2: Circumstances:** Gauge circumstances to see if they will permit you to get your desired outcome with reasonable effort.

**Sentence stems that convey being powerless in the face of circumstances:**

I can’t... stay focused, decide, say “no”, make a commitment
I should or shouldn’t...
I have to/must...
I had no choice...
I’ll try...
It’s difficult/it’s hard to... give up chocolate cake
I hope to be able to....
Reality is... Millennials eyes are always scanning screens or You can’t fight city hall.
My wife won’t let me…. (substitute husband, boss, kids, etc.)
I was just doing my job.
What was I thinking?
Nothing is working.
You never let me do anything.
We didn’t have a good week of practice (football coaches’ top excuse for losing).
I’ve got to lose 10 pounds before I can attend Pilates class
I worked out today, so I burned these calories already.
I have no life. My life is Netflix.
I’m doing the best I can under the circumstances.
**People can’t handle the truth**

**Plus your own variations:**

**Advanced experiment illustration:**

**Rule 2a: The “right circumstances aren’t in place” mindset shift**

- **Victim language:** “People can’t handle the truth.”

- **Taking accountability for my choice to be a victim:** “I chose to generalize my claim to all people so I can avoid what seems like a certain failure.

- **Opening for new courses of action:** “I will figure out a way of communicating this potentially sensitive message in a way that is unlikely to upset my Mom.. I will read books on crucial conversations and role play my communication approach with my brother, before speaking with Mom.”
Rule 2 continued: The most common circumstance to blame, “lack of time,” has its own lengthy script of victim language

I’ve got enough on my plate.
I’m tied up in meetings.
I’m swamped/slammed.
I want to keep my options open.
I hadn’t counted on/planned on…. traffic jams, foul weather, an unexpected phone call
I don’t want to box myself in/spread myself too thin.
I’ll eventually get around to doing it.
We’re in a firefighting mode.
My life is too hectic and unpredictable to plan my time/schedule.
I get sucked into the daily haphazards of being a manager.
Whenever I have an important appointment, traffic is always at a standstill.
I ran out of time.
That’s….writing copy for my website, preparing a healthy meal… going to take an awful lot of time.
If I don’t take enough time to do it right, it’s not worth doing.
Important things are happening in the world and I need to take time to be informed.
Time has a way of getting away from me.
Sorry I’ve been MIA. Things have been crazy.

My time gets shang-haied

Plus your own variations:

Advanced experiment illustration

Rule 2b: The “right circumstances aren’t in place” mindset shift for “lack of time”

▪ Victim language: “My time gets shang-haied.”

▪ Taking accountability for my choice to be a victim: “I chose to let other people’s requests for my time take precedence over my plans for privacy to work on high priority projects.”

▪ Opening for new courses of action: “I will protect my arranged time slots for high priority goals. I will alert my team in advance when I really need to concentrate with no interruptions.”
**Rule #3: Past history:** Consult your past history (includes presumed personality traits, genetic flaws, family and cultural upbringing, and ineffective habits) to see if there’s sufficient evidence to suggest you are capable of achieving your desired results.

I’ve never done that before
Unfamiliar situations are stressful.
I’m not good at that...
I lack.... self-discipline, the right experience
I come from a broken home/crappy neighborhood/impoverished environment, etc.
I didn’t have a father/mother growing up...
We’ve always done it this way…
I’m not cut out for…. sales, playing sports.
I’ve always been afraid of…. conflict, thinking for myself, failing
I’ve been busting my balls for 60 years, I deserve … to watch TV, to sleep in late.
My terrible upbringing will hold me down forever.
If he hasn’t gotten the message by now, he’s never going to get it.
It’s best to stick with what you know.
I can’t believe we keep going over the same problem.
Talking is getting us nowhere.
I have nothing new to say.
My words didn’t come out the way I intended. (frequent phrase used by politicians)
Human beings have good days and bad days..
**After several years of success, people naturally grow complacent.**

**Plus your own variations:**

---

**Advanced experiment illustration**

**Rule 3: The “past history as a predictor” mindset shift**

- **Victim language:** “After several years of success, I like most people tend to naturally grow complacent.”

- **Taking accountability for my choice to be a victim:** “I chose to make up a conclusion that all successful people have no choice but to feel complacent.”

- **Opening for new courses of action:** “Success can be a source of confidence to fire up people to be even more successful. I will raise my goals to go after bigger results. I will make the necessary changes in my self-management practices and enlist an accountability partner to sustain my success.”
Rule 4: Identity/Self-descriptors—Blame “presumed” genetic deficiencies, personality traits, and human nature for failure to achieve desired results.

I’m not a morning person/an evening person
I’m not… tech-savvy, creative, mechanical
I’m a glass half-empty type.
I’m socially inept
I’m hard-wired to…
I can never….
I have a tendency to …. suffer from diarrhea of the mouth
I have a terrible habit of… interrupting people, forgetting to return phone calls
It cramps my style to…
I’m horrible at…. public speaking, saying “no’ to requests
It’s not in my DNA to…
I’m just another flawed human.
It’s only natural/human nature…. for successful people to grow complacent
We have conflicting personalities.
Why fight being who I am?
It’s my ADD/PTSD kicking in.
I’m not cut out for….
I just don’t have what it takes to…do this job, operate a smart phone, be a good parent.
This is how I roll, bro.
I’m…. a compulsive organizer, forgetful, set in my ways, tight with money, indecisive, a loner

Plus your own variations:

Advanced experiment illustration

Rule 4: The “I inherited bad genes” mindset shift

- Victim language: “I’m a compulsive organizer.”

- Taking accountability: “I’ve chosen to fabricate an apparent personal deficiency as an excuse for refusing to delegate to my direct reports."

- Opening for new choices and courses of action: “I will reframe my desire for being organized not as an excuse but as a strength. I will be organized in allotting time and in preparing to train my direct reports so I can delegate tasks effectively.”
Basic experiment:

My victim language:

Circle the corresponding rule represented by your victim language:

#1 Feelings     #2 Circumstances     #3 Past History     #4 Identity

===============================================================================

Advanced experiment: To fill in these blanks, follow the advanced experiment illustrations near the bottom of p. 7-11.

Taking accountability for my choice to be a victim:

Opening for new choices and courses of action:

Within 48 hours after filling out this practice template…
Did you execute on your new choices and actions that opened up when you took accountability? If “yes,” what lessons did you learn?

Print copies of this template to guide your ongoing skill practice in discarding excuses.
IN CLOSING…..

A heroic experiment gives you permission to test your self-imposed limits with the 100% guarantee of powerful learning, with 0% chance to fail.

Keep discarding your excuses/blames/justifications one by one.
Keep learning about how you go about making ineffective and astute choices.
Keep improving your effectiveness on achieving your goals that truly matter.
The cumulative effects of your doing dozens/hundreds of these practices is to achieving proficiency in mindset mastery to discard any excuses you can imagine.

If you want to purchase red flags for yourself, your organization, or your sphere of influence, my source is The Beistle Company, and order their product from Amazon.com or partycheap.com
SPREAD ACCOUNTABILITY CONTAGION FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA

*What if* self-appointed leaders sprung up in America and created accountability contagion from sea to shining sea?

*What if* key people in your life, followed your lead and refused to accept rationalizations for unwanted outcomes and their courageous desire to demolish comfort zones became contagious?

Invite your friends/contacts to join up for The Extraordinary Freedom Experiment, Phase 1.

Here’s the link to send them [www.artturock.com](http://www.artturock.com)

© 2021 Art Turock. All Rights Reserved. Methodologies, examples, and practice drills in this self-coaching guide are provided for programs offered by Art Turock only. Any other use, reproduction, modification, or further distribution is expressly prohibited in accordance with national and international copyright laws. No quotes from these materials may be used in any way in whole or in part without prior written permission.