

Chapter 7

Theme:

The teacher is the only person/variable in the classroom that the teacher can control.

Single Best Quote:

“Success in any profession starts with a focus on self. After all, we are the one variable that we can most easily and most productively influence.”

Points:

1. Like the business leaders in Whitaker’s story it is easy to say “we cannot do anything because this other group is failing to do their part.”
 - a. Business cannot blame education
 - b. Education cannot blame parents
 - c. Parents cannot blame society
 - d. Society cannot blame politicians
 - e. Politicians cannot blame media
 - f. Media cannot blame business
 - g. Business cannot blame...
2. Everyone, including the teacher in the classroom, must take responsibility for their situation and the results produced in that situation.
3. Empowered or Victimized? When people focus on their own performance they feel empowered to actually make a difference. If they can somehow find someone else to blame they become a victim. A victimized attitude is mentally trapped and their performance is paralyzed.

Self-evaluation and application as a:

- **Shop teacher** – I learned early in the 1980’s that victims of the educational system and those oppressed by the school system they work for hang out in the teacher’s lounge. They feed each other’s powerless attitude and rebellious spirit. Thus, I do not go in the teacher’s lounge or spend time with victims.
- **Bible teacher** – If there is oppression and you are a victim of false teaching and a corrupt system then organize, rebel, take a stand, make your statements, but be ready to stand and fight alone. If you really are a victim then empower yourself to make a change and fix the system.
- **Parent** – Do NOT blame your kids! If you do you are teaching the next generation how to think.
- **Person** – I am the result of decisions I have made over the last several decades. I created my situation good or bad.

Questions/Criticisms/Evaluations/Comments of Whitaker’s presentation or perspective:

- A powerful chapter.
- Sadly, we live in a generation, in a period of cultural decline, that cannot understand this.
- Hopefully (and, it has happened in past cultural cycles), this is the time a generation of people (20-40 year olds) say, “Enough! We will take responsibility and we will fix this!” It has happened before, but if it does not happen this time the devastation and collapse will be sudden and great.