

'It's not my fault'

I have spent the majority of my life believing that I was, if not wholly at least partially, responsible for just about anything that happened in my life. I had the unenviable knack of being able to take any situation and somehow making it my fault.

It is really only in the past couple of years that I have been able to start to look at what is happening and to put the responsibility where it belongs. I think by nature I would have a natural tendency to 'take the blame' but I am sure too that my childhood would only have increased that trait. My parents divorced – must have been my fault! After all didn't I knock the wedding picture off the mantelpiece and of course that would break a marriage up! My mother struggled with me – must have been my fault! I spent so much time trying to work out if I had not done this then that would not have happened or if I had been more lovable then that wouldn't have happened and so it would go on. A peaceful mind was definitely not part of my life.

My understanding of who I am and how I operate in life has grown over the years but I think trying not to turn things back on myself has been one of the hardest and most painful things I have learnt, and to be honest, am still learning.

Why would anyone try to make things their fault? I guess because if it is your fault you have some measure of control over it and you can chastise and berate yourself whereas if the blame goes where it belongs you are often left not being able to do anything.

There is a real freedom in being able to be objective but it also has been very painful to acknowledge the way I have been treated. This past two years has probably been the most painful time of my life. I have faced a death of a close relative and the dilemmas that caused when the dignity I wanted for them as they slowly came to the end of their life was totally missing. In times past I would have turned that back on myself and I would have spent many an hour punishing myself for not having made it different. Thankfully, this time I was able to say – it was not my fault.

Close members of my family have also made choices that have caused me a great deal of sorrow. There have been times when I have not caught myself in time and have done a 'what if I had not' or 'if I had done, said, etc. etc.' the truth is they are adults and they have made their own choices. I will have made my mistakes over the years but at the end of the day their choices are exactly that and they are not my fault.

I haven't changed overnight and I still have a tendency to make things my fault but I know that with each day it gets better. When I first recognised and felt what I was doing I was shocked at just how often I did it. I know I am much less likely to do so now or if I find myself heading down that path I am able to stop and realise what I am doing.

