

It's not your fault.

This phrase is intended by Psychologists, to relieve someone of guilt, shame, or irrational self-blame. It is meant to be used in situations where the circumstances were outside of a person's control. For example, challenges arising from past trauma, a sudden accident, or an unexpected life change. Yet, even in its psychological context, this phrase/awareness is often paired with the concept of **personal responsibility**. In other words, while the saying confirms that the origin of the event is not the person's fault, it encourages them to take ownership of how they heal, react, and move forward.

As the phrase has transitioned from therapy sessions into main stream language, its application has become more general, and indefinite. For example, as a sign of courtesy, or to de-escalate awkward situations, people quickly say, "It's not your fault". It is also used to avoid the "**Blame**" **Dilemma**, even where it is clear that there may be grounds for assigning blame.

As a result, this saying is now commonly used to suggest sympathy or compassion for a person who the offeror sees as facing a challenge. Its rapid adoption can be interpreted as an attempt to promote a more compassionate society, following years of bigotry and puritanical condemnation that defines the social and religious history of the past five hundred years.

But I must confess my utter surprise when I heard the phrase used in a television commercial for a pharmaceutical product. It's usage here automatically triggered a question that many do not ask themselves when they offer, or accept this consolation. The natural question being: "*So, whose fault is it?*"

We do not ask, for fear of coming across as **victim-blaming**. Yet, it is obvious that *things don't just happen!* Any event or outcome always has a cause. And something or someone is always responsible for the action. Whether the thing, or person deserves to be condemned or treated harshly is another matter. Without identifying the cause, we can never know or learn how to prevent its re-occurrence. Assigning blame, simply for culpability, to be followed by sanctions does not help prevent future occurrence. Just as not looking for, or understanding the source and the fault, is detrimental to preventing future recurrence.

Perhaps a way out of the blame dilemma is to decouple Responsibility from Blame. A person is more likely to take ownership (responsibility) for an outcome if there is no negative backlash (blame) attached. In fact, they may welcome the learning opportunity contained in the negative outcome. For example, institutions spend billions on Research and Development, a path that is fraught with many failed attempts. Through the lessons learned from each failure, they gradually evolve to the point where they are able to produce a stable and reliable outcome. Had each failure been approached from the perspective of assigning blame, the researchers would have made every effort to prevent failures from being assigned to them, or hiding such failures. And the result is easy to infer.

Failures and challenges in our everyday lives have to be approached in the same way.

It is natural for a person responsible for a negative outcome to feel a sense of shame.

People experiencing trauma may, in addition to shame, harbor the nagging question of “why me?”. But, focusing on shame denies both the onlookers and the “victim” the possibility of digging deeper into their inner being to seek an answer. This necessary effort for self-reflection is immediately thwarted when a person is encouraged to believe that their situation is not of their own making, therefore not their fault. The palliative may serve as a temporary balm to a troubled and inquiring conscience or spirit. But it never offers a complete resolution of the nagging question.

As hinted earlier, Psychologists recognize that just saying "it is not your fault" does not fully resolve an emotional crisis. Although it is a crucial starting point for neutralizing **shame** and **self-blame**, it only acts as a temporary narcotic to the shame associated with the pain. It does not process the intense emotions or reframe the negative beliefs or attitudes caused by the event. Therefore, resolving a crisis requires moving beyond innocence, and taking active steps toward healing. It requires:

- Fully acknowledging the reality of what happened or is happening, and understanding how it affected, or affects your daily life.
- Recognizing that while you cannot see your role in the cause of the crisis, only you can take action to improve your situation and **reclaim control** of your life.

Closing Words

We may pride ourselves with the steps taken by modern psychology to make the world more compassionate. But this is actually repetition of history, in a different guise. Its proper application requires the involvement of experts, i.e. the therapist or Psychologist. Similar to the interjection of religious officials between man and the Supreme laws of Creation. This resulted in the authorities gradually seizing power, to then use shame and blame to whip people into submission.

Also, we can already see how this new aid is being misapplied by the common man, just as many well-meant ancient advice was misapplied.

All sacred books by which all societies were once governed, never emphasized blame. They simply called for each person's recognition and acceptance of responsibility, followed by a genuine desire to correct one's errors.

It is natural that a sincere person should feel shame, upon sensing or accepting responsibility. This natural sense of shame is the spirit's recognition that it used its free-will to introduce disharmony into creation, in the face of the overwhelming love that it instinctively feels abounds around it. It is similar to the shame a child feels when it knows it has done something to upset its

parent. The memory of that shame serves as a deterrent against the possibility of making the same or similar mistake in the future.

Even very sad cases, or abusive relationships offer a spiritual learning opportunity. Something that is lost to onlookers and victims today, because of our ignorance of how the laws of Creation operate. In our ignorance, we impute injustice to situations in which we lack the necessary range of vision to arrive at a proper deduction. Take for example an abusive domestic situation. One in which the husband is humiliated and publicly disparaged by the wife. Although this is not an example of the usually celebrated cases, the parties involved suffer mutual emotional trauma and pain from the relationship.

Now, if one were permitted a broader range of vision, it may be seen that in a previous earth life, the roles were reversed. At that time, it was the husband who used his position of power and authority to terrorize his wife.

This knowledge shows how the laws of Creation have brought the two back together to experience what they inflicted on each other in the past. Not as an opportunity for the wife to exert revenge, but for the husband to learn firsthand the pain caused by his actions. More important, it is an opportunity for both to learn forgiveness from each other.

It is only through rising up to the level of forgiveness, that a person can free themselves from committing such acts in the future. This resolve can be strengthened by memory of the shame that is felt when the person finally accepts responsibility for their evil actions.

The sacred books encapsulated all of the foregoing in the following simple injunctions:

- There is no one among you so pure that he or she does not have to wash their own garments. (i.e. do not judge, condemn, or find faults in your neighbor)
- Nothing happens to you by chance. (i.e. you have a hand in whatever situation you find yourself, you just have not seen the connection)
- Seek and ye shall find. (i.e. seek answers to questions or situations that perplex you; to gain the spiritual lessons embedded in them)
- There is no injustice in the activities of the laws of creation. You will always experience what you have sown. Where one person undertakes a mission to help others, they have made a voluntary decision to face whatever comes their way during such mission. Thus, here too there is no injustice.

Therefore, the increasingly popular mantra *"It is not your fault"* is a misleading fallacy in creation!