



## The power of response-ability

The following exercises are taken from the workbook for the fifth Agents of Conscious Business class, with Fred Kofman. This class' main topic is putting the philosophy of conscious business into practice.

The first 'move' of the practice of conscious business, is to show up and put yourself in the picture. Showing up, here, means acknowledging that you are a part of the system that is producing the situation you want to change.

This doesn't mean that you're to blame, or that you're responsible *for* the situation. However, the fact that you didn't create the situation doesn't mean that you're not being affected by it!

There is a different notion of responsibility, which is being *able to respond* to the situation. It doesn't matter who created it – you're being affected, and therefore you need to respond to it.

### Exercise!

Another way of looking at what Fred calls 'unconditional responsibility', is by looking at two typical characters: the *victim* and the *player*. Both of these characters have a very different way of explaining challenging situations.

As the victim, you only pay attention to those factors you cannot influence, and therefore you see yourself as somebody suffering the consequences of external circumstances. Answer the following questions to explore how these dynamics show up in your own life and work.

Where in your work are you currently showing up as a victim? Briefly describe the situation and the main reasons why you can't be held responsible. What happened to you? Who wronged you? What was unfair about what they did to you? Why do you think they did this to you?



As the victim, you *only* pay attention to those factors you cannot influence. As the player, on the other hand, you pay attention to those factors that you *can* influence. You see yourself as somebody who has the *ability to respond* to external circumstances (response-ability).

That doesn't mean that you are to blame for them, or that you are omnipotent and can change these circumstances as you see fit. It simply means you acknowledge you are *a part of* the situation, and that gives you the ability to respond.

Consider the same situation we explored above, but now from the player stance. How are you a part of this situation? What challenge did you face? How did you contribute (by acting or not acting) to create this situation? How did you respond to the challenge? Can you think of a more effective course of action you could have taken?

Compare your 'player' story to your earlier 'victim' story. If you want you can read both out loud. What sensations and feelings do you notice? What does your voice sound like? What's different between the two stories?

Remember the player story is not 'better' or 'more true' than the victim story. It *is* however more empowering as it puts you 'in the picture' and gives you the ability to respond and influence the situation.