

Try This No. 1 Way to Be a Victor, Not a Victim

True confession: I totally got the idea of this blog title while I was watching TV.

Pretty spiritual, huh?

But as I was really wrapped up in the plot of this show, I felt like God whispered a little secret in my ear about the characters I was watching. And as usual, it was pretty profound. Wanna know what He said?

Okay, let's start at the beginning. One of the main characters on the show—let's call him Dan—ran into an old friend he hadn't seen in years, not since the days when they were Marine pilots together. The two old friends went out to dinner to reminisce about old times. But as they sat talking, the friend confided that he and his wife were separated, heading for divorce.

Dan felt terrible for his friend and said, "I'm so sorry to hear that. Man, marriage is hard, isn't it?" In response, the friend spit out sarcastically, "Not for Dan Do-Right."

Dan was stunned as his friend followed that barb with a long bitter diatribe about how perfect Dan's life was, how selfish Dan was and how it was Dan's fault that he (the friend) had ended up where he was today. When Dan asked him what in the world he was talking about, the friend got increasingly hostile.

A 25-Year Grudge

To Dan's amazement, his friend spat out, "You should have stopped me! It's all your fault!" He was talking about an incident that had happened 25 years before. It had happened

when they were serving as Marine pilots and were out bar-hopping until the wee hours. Unbeknownst to Dan, his friend had an important flight test coming up the next day, but he got roaring drunk.

At 1:00 a.m., he finally told Dan about the next day's flight test, and as soon as Dan heard it, he insisted they should go home. But the friend wanted to keep partying, and they stayed out even later. As a result, the friend failed the flight test, which in turn disqualified him from flying in Desert Storm with all his other pilot buddies. Basically, that one decision to stay out late changed the course of his life.

The amazing thing was that he had been bitter toward Dan about it for 25 years! Never mind that it was *his* fault (and not Dan's) that he drank too much and went to bed too late (and never mind that *not* having to fly in Desert Storm was probably a blessing in disguise!).

We all know someone like this. When they talk about an issue that hurt them years ago, it sounds as if it happened yesterday. The pain has held them in bondage all that time, and wreaked havoc in their life.

That's what unforgiveness can do to you. And as I watched, I heard the Lord whisper, "Forgiveness was his answer, and he chose bitterness instead." Wow. The No. 1 way to be a winner instead of a victim is to *forgive*.

That may sound easier said than done, but it's so worth it. Ephesians 4:31-32 tells us to "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, outbursts, and blasphemies, with all malice, be taken away from you. And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." Forgiveness is freedom.

And God just wants you to *want to*. So I encourage you: forgive today. It's never too late to become a winner instead of a victim.

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This is an excerpt from Karen's book "I Forgive You, But ..."
For more help with forgiving those who have hurt you, read the first part free right here. This article originally appeared at .