Who's Responsible?

'No one can make you feel inferior without your consent'
Eleanor Roosevelt.

If there is one thing on the rise in our society it is finger pointing – the blame game. We often hear the statement `he made me do it' or 'you make me feel…'. People are blaming others more than themselves for their own actions or feelings. When we make these statements *we are actually saying* we have no control over our actions or feelings - others have the capacity to manipulate us without our consent. But is this the case? An example of this has occurred lately in the news. TV commercials have been blamed for creating overweight youngsters, because of the time slot they advertise 'unhealthy products', but we need to recognize who buys the food that is in the house (not the TV commercial people).

It comes down to accepting responsibility for one's actions/ one's feelings. When others are blamed it takes away the need for action and change. In shouldering responsibility ourselves, we are giving ourselves the power to shape our outcomes, and are therefore taking an active role (accepting or making change) and not a passive role (hoping someone else will fix the problem) in how the outcome turns out.

Nelson Mandela (South African activist for human rights) is a fine example of taking responsibility and working for change. He was held in prison for 27 years because of his beliefs of equality for all people. Many people have remarked on the apparent lack of bitterness that characterizes Mandela's conduct since he was released from prison. He himself has said that perhaps he would have harboured bitter thoughts if he had not had a job to do (which was to create a South Africa for all people to live harmoniously).

Here are some tips:

- Take responsibility for your actions/ feelings. If you are in the wrong, admit it immediately and say you are sorry. Too many disagreements or arguments could be solved by merely admitting you were wrong. If your are feeling a certain way, know it is your choice to feel that way; if you don't like the feeling change what you are doing.
- Find a solution – Make change where possible. If you were wrong, find a solution to fix the matter.
- Don't delay - It is very important to not delay taking responsibility for your actions/ feelings. The longer time passes, the more people you may hurt, the more you may lose respect, or lose friendships