



Accept Responsibility

I love the scene in the movie *The Blues Brothers* when John Belushi is caught in a tunnel by his machine gun-wielding ex-fiance (Carrie Fisher) who is out to exact revenge for leaving her at the altar. In pleading for his life he says, "I ran out of gas. I . . . I had a flat tire. I didn't have enough money for cab fare. My tux didn't come back from the cleaners. An old friend came in from out of town. Someone stole my car. There was an earthquake. A terrible flood! Locusts! IT WASN'T MY FAULT!"

It's never our fault. There is always someone else to blame. In the early 1900's, *The London Times* asked, "What is wrong with the world?"

In his response to the editor, British writer G.K. Chesterton, a convert to Catholicism, answered, "I am." What a wonderful example of responsibility! Rather than include contingencies and conditions, Chesterton simply accepted his responsibility for all of the failings in the world.

Although no one is expected to accept all of the woes of the world, civility requires that we accept **our role** in disagreements, such a small task compared to the global accountability of Chesterton.

Credit: Oshkosh Civility Project

Visit the Door County Civility Project for more information: <http://www.doorcountycivilityproject.org>



Keys to Civility - Keeping Your Cool

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ." -Philippians 4:6-7

Because It Matters:

Though the expression "keeping your cool" was not around in Biblical times, the Bible reminds us of the importance of staying calm and putting our trust and our faith in God even in the most trying of times. In these pressure-packed days, it is all too easy to lose our cool. Indeed, many things can cause us to become angry, from life-challenging situations to minor frustrations. When was the last time you slammed down the phone when faced with yet another computerized voice? When did you utter some not-so heavenly thoughts about a bad driver who nearly caused an accident? Can you recall a shouting match with your partner or spouse?

Although anger is a natural emotion, the trick is to control it, rather than allowing anger to control you. While frustrations and challenges will always be a part of life, remember we have a choice about how we respond to those situations.

Applying it to my life:

1. Describe a recent situation in which you lost your cool. How could you have handled the situation differently?
2. What are some anger-management techniques that can help you deal with life's frustrations and challenges?
3. How does your faith help you "keep your cool?"
4. What are some techniques you can use to help diffuse the anger of others - helping them to regain their cool?

Credit: Because it Matters - Bringing Back Civility - Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

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