

We are all faced with different and varying degrees of responsibility. Some of it may be placed on us by circumstances that seem unfair, beyond our control. It quite often results in a difficult choice to accept or reject the weight that is placed on our shoulders, because we know that it can profoundly change us and alter our lives.

There is also the responsibility that we seek out, the job promotion, a committee membership, political office, parenting, etc. It is, at least at first, a load that we eagerly shoulder and yet, (trust me on this) the real test of our resolve occurs later, when the full weight of the load rests squarely on our shoulders.

Then there are the personal day-to-day responsibilities that we have regarding our friends, families, partners, spouses and children. Strangely enough these can result in conflicts that can end up being aired on Judge Judy or worse.

Finally, there are the social responsibilities that we all share and should be included in everyone's "How to be a Human Being" instruction manual. Simple things like... not hurting people, being a good neighbor, being respectful, voting, being tolerant, not littering, obeying the law, being nice to the Mayor (oh...sorry, that slipped out) and other things that we should have all learned in kindergarten.

This subject gets a little messy, when we mix in expectations... the expectations reasonable and unreasonable that we have of ourselves, of others and that others have of us.

We have all given a lecture to someone about what we expect of them and we have all received one (or hundreds) as well. This can be done the old fashioned way complete with a pointed finger wagging, or remotely via email, phone call, or letter to the editor. But, it's probably rare that a lecture has a positive affect or the result that we are looking for. For the most part, I think that we all learn to accept responsibility (or not to) mainly through the example of others. Often, the most powerful set of expectations that can be placed on us are our own. But, maybe that's just me.

In the end, if our expectations are reasonable (taking into consideration things like, the inherent fallibility of human behavior, our own personal limitations and maybe the laws of physics) and we accept the responsibility of taking an active and constructive part in our Community and our Local government, we will be happier and lead a more fulfilled life. Well, at least I will.

So please, come to the Council Meetings, become an Advisory Committee member, volunteer with a not-for-profit, or participate in a City Sponsored Event and help create some real, positive change in your City and yourself. It is your City...and it's a great one, because of people like you. We are, after all, not only defined by the responsibilities that we accept, but by what our actions reveal about our character.