

If You Like Someone, Don't Make Excuses for Them

One of the most disrespectful things you can do to a person is not to blame them, but to make excuses for them.

At their deepest level, most people desire self-realization, which requires responsibility, which implies capability. At the same time, most people are far less capable than they should be or want to be. This mismatch and the insecurity that comes with it is the birth of many excuses. "I didn't have the right resources." "I'm too young/inexperienced." "You didn't tell me what you wanted."

Excuses are all attempts to avoid responsibility, and they're disgusting. But they're no better when you give them: "You couldn't have been expected to do this." "This situation wasn't something you could handle."

When you make these excuses for someone, you might mean to be kind. But you are really denying the hearer's own responsibility and confidence. It's far better to know that you are capable and fell short than to believe that you were always short and never expected to go further.

Never make excuses for yourself. And if you care about people (and you should try to care about all), don't make excuses for them either. Treat people with enough respect to allow them to claim responsibility, too – even when it's hard.