

Ask Dr. Robertson 12 — Fault and Responsibility: If You Pass the Sentence, Then You Should Swing the Sword



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By [Scott Douglas Jacobsen](#)

Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson is a [Registered Doctoral Psychologist](#) with expertise in Counselling Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Human Resource Development. He earned qualifications in Social Work too. Duly note, he has five postsecondary degrees, which is a lot, of which 3 are undergraduate level. His research interests include memes as applied to self-knowledge, the evolution of religion and spirituality, the aboriginal self's structure, residential school syndrome, prior learning recognition and assessment, and the treatment of attention deficit disorder and suicide ideation. In addition, he works in anxiety and trauma, addictions, and psycho-educational assessment, and relationship, family, and group counselling.

Here we talk about personal responsibility, victim culture, and more.

Listing of previous sessions with links at the end of the interview.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: You [comment](#) on a couple of cases of personal responsibility and, more particularly, personal fault passed onto others or systems & institutions. How can

institutional systems and legacies completely disempower parts of new generations of peoples?

Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson: As I re-read the commentary I wrote nearly twenty years ago, it seems, sadly, to be even more relevant today. At the time I viewed the legal cases from lawsuit happy U.S. America, as bizarre and slightly humorous anomalies. For example, the thief who got trapped in a garage and subsisted on Pepsi and dog food until the home owner came back from holidays, and then had the nerve to sue for unlawful confinement, had to be one of a kind. So I thought. But it is like a mental virus that has grown and evolved into something quite dangerous.

My original conclusion was that if we blame others then we are basically saying they have power over us and we are mere victims. About a dozen years after I wrote that an indigenous man murdered his wife and kidnapped his stepdaughter in my home community. After the man was apprehended, his sister told the press that her brother was the real victim because he had gone to an Indian residential school. My point is that yes, bad things have happened in the past, but that is not an excuse bad behaviour in the present. We have the power to choose how we will respond, and from that realization comes our own empowerment. We may not be able to control what others do, but we can always choose how we will react. And we can react with dignity in a way that makes the world a better place. Unfortunately, there are psychological reasons, and sometimes money, to be made from playing the role of disempowered victim, and this has contributed to the rise of a victim culture in Canada.

Jacobsen: Please explain what you mean by “victim culture.”

Robertson: Certainly, Scott. I operate from a humanist perspective that accords every individual worth and dignity by virtue of being human with the implication that people should conduct themselves accordingly. But if your self-identity is moulded around being a victim, you are proclaiming that power rests with the perceived victimizers. The victim then attempts to persuade people with even more power to punish the victimizers and redress the wrongs, often through financial compensation. But this comes at great cost to the individual. Let me give you the example of marriages. I have found marriage counselling to become more challenging over the past thirty years despite the fact that I have become more skilled with experience. Half the battle in marriage counselling is communication and developing the ability to understand the other’s perceptions with empathy. Increasingly I find that one or both partners have developed narratives of being a victim. And when they are presented with an alternative perception they simply repeat their own victim narrative verbatim, only more loudly. And when this does not work they declare themselves to have “not been heard,” and this further increases their sense of victimization. A couple of years ago I published some research on secular [weddings](#) and I found that people are as likely to have been legally married at least once by the time they reach my age, as they were 50 years ago, but at any given time over half the adult population is single. There is a reason for that.

We have evolved to the point where people’s primary identity is as a member of a victim group who have been considered historically wronged. Academics have even coined the word “transectionality” to describe people who are simultaneously members of multiple victim groups thereby attaining a higher ranking in the world of victimology. This is not to say that some of the

victimization isn't real. Even white males can point to accurate examples of [victimization](#). But if our primary identity is based on something negative as opposed to something positive, then we pay a heavy psychological price.

You asked about the role of institutions. Ultimately, victim culture leads people to become helpless victims waiting for the state, or others, to make things right. Whole classes of victim groups have emerged with status accorded to ascribed degree of victimhood. Some politicians are only too happy to gain votes by acknowledging various groups sense of victimization and even apologizing for it. They may even pay compensation. But in the end this only reinforces dependency and disempowerment. Which suits the politicians because then they can go after the same votes, in the same way, time and again.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Dr. Robertson, again.

For previous sessions, please see: [Ask Dr. Robertson 1 — Counselling and Psychology](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson 2 — Psychotherapy](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson 3 — Social and Psychological Sciences Gone Wrong](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson 4 — Just You and Me, One-on-One Counselling](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson 5 — Self-Actualization, Boys, and Young Males: Solution:Problem::Hammer:Nail](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson 6 — It's All About Me, Me, Meme, and the Self: From First Nations to Second Nations, Building Third Culture Counselling](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson \(and Teela\) 7 — Elate, Hawkeye on Roberts: A Happy Counselling Psychology Family Affair](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson 8 — A Social Work Betrayal of Male](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson 9 — The Age of Psychology, Low Self-Esteem, Crazy Making, Schizophrenia, Racism, and Religious Fundamentalism](#), [Ask Dr. Robertson 10 — Real Life Effects of Fantasy Categories](#), and [Ask Dr. Robertson 11 — Smells Like Teen Spirit: Hell Hath No Fury Like a Youth Scorned](#).

Image Credit: Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen founded *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal* and *In-Sight Publishing*. He authored/co-authored some **e-books**, free or low-cost. If you want to contact Scott: Scott.D.Jacobsen@Gmail.com.