



The Blame Game

**The Complete Guide to Blaming
How to Play and How to Quit**

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to those who brought me here—my mother, Linda, and my late father, Michael; those who will carry me through—my children Kaelah, Daniel, Shoshana, Lauren, and Sarena; and my beshert, my life partner, and my unending support, Susan. I thank you and love you all.



1. What is The Blame Game?

“The man who can smile when things go wrong has thought of someone else he can blame it on.”

Robert Bloch

The Blame Game is one of the most popular games ever invented. We all play it some time in our lives. But what do you really know about the Game? How long has it been around? Who started it? Who can buy the Game and who can play it? What exactly are the rules of the Game and when does it officially end? This chapter is the background for some of the other concepts found later in the book. If you do decide to skip it and later get lost in terminology, don't blame me! Now, let's get started.

What is The Game?

He runs, arm outstretched, index finger pointed toward a stranger, yelling, “It was him, it was him, he did it!” He blames—he scores! The Blame Game is a fascinating competition in which the participants try intensely to find fault in others. After pronouncing liability, through several techniques such as the “responsibility shift,” the blamers falsely receive self-accolades. Like golf, bowling, poker, and pool, there is much debate whether blaming should be technically considered a “sport.” London has applied and received the honor to host the summer Olympics in 2012. The International Blaming Federation (IBF) has made a convincing case to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for the inclusion of “Blaming” in

the Olympics. In order to be included on the Summer Olympics program, it must be widely practiced by men in at least seventy-five countries on four continents, and by women in at least forty countries on three continents. No problem.

When did it start?

The *Guinness Book of World Records* has awarded *Blaming* the title of the world's "Oldest Game." Although rarely publicized, the Blame Game has been played since the beginning of recorded time. The first successful blaming was performed shortly after the creation of the world, according to the Judeo-Christian-Muslim view.

Adam and Eve were the first man and woman created by God according to the Bible and the Qur'an. This story is told in the book of *Genesis*. God creates Adam from the dust of the earth, and subsequently Eve, from Adam's side. God tells them that they can have anything they want, except to eat or even touch the forbidden fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil or they will die (John Milton described the fruit as an apple in his *Paradise Lost* novel in the 1600s, but that's not in the Bible). A serpent tells Eve that eating the forbidden fruit won't actually kill her. Eve explains to the serpent that God said that she shouldn't do it, and then Eve goes ahead and does it anyway. Then Eve, in turn, gives the fruit to Adam who, being of sound mind and body and with informed consent of what it was and the potential risks involved, also partakes of the fruit.

God is upset about Adam and Eve hiding themselves because of their nakedness, and asks rhetorically, "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" Adam responds with the "Original Blame." "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." It wasn't just a blame, it was a double-inclusive blame (worth more points). Adam blamed Eve for giving him the fruit, as if he was drugged with mind-altering poppies, tied to a Tree of Life and force-fed with pureed fruit. He also cleverly reminded God that it was God who gave him the

woman in the first place. Thus, he argues, the initial blame and ultimate responsibility lies with God. God then turns to Eve and asks for her explanation of the events that transpired. Eve doesn't say, "I ate the fruit." Instead, she exclaims, "The serpent duped me, and I ate it." God didn't buy these excuses or accept the blame.

Having lost their jobs, Adam and Eve had to leave Eden and seek alternative career paths. Adam is cursed to labor and the woman is cursed to submit to her husband and to bear children in pain (until the introduction of epidurals). Thus, we can blame Adam every morning on our way out the door to the office, and women in labor can blame Eve.

The tradition of blaming was subsequently passed on to Adam and Eve's kids. Cain worked the land and Abel cared for the sheep; Abel's sacrifices and offerings were more favorable to God. Instead of looking at diverse forms of sacrificial offerings, seeking counseling, or trying to improve his self-worth, Cain blamed Abel for his troubles and killed him. Like his parents, unsuccessful in the Blame Game, Cain is also punished and forced to wander the earth.

Bruce Feiler has written a book titled, *Abraham* about the man that many consider the father of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths. There is a Midrash (early Rabbinic story) that is similar to a story in the Qur'an that tells of a young Abraham employed in his father's store, whose merchandise consists primarily of idols for pagan worship. While his father is away, Abraham smashes all of the idols except the largest, and places the axe in its hands. When his father returns, Abraham blames the destruction on the idol. As Abraham knows how the idols were destroyed, his blaming was for the sake of his father's education. When his father says the idols are merely clay, Abraham uses this point to claim that there must be something more powerful than these idols.

Many years later, when Abraham was a spry one hundred years old he had a son named Isaac. When Isaac was nearing the end of his life and blind, he was to bestow his greatest blessings to his firstborn son, Esau. Esau had a twin brother, named Jacob, and in a moment of hunger and weakness, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob in exchange for some of his homemade Lentil soup (that must have

been some soup). Jacob then goes to his father and pretends to be Esau. His father buys the ruse and gives the blessing. Upon finding this out, Esau exclaims, “he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing.” He blamed his brother for his own indiscretion and vowed to slay Jacob. After many years of separation, Esau calmed down and forgave his brother.

Years later Jacob has twelve sons (and a daughter). Joseph, the second youngest, walks around wearing a very cool-looking colored coat that he received from his dad. Jacob did what parents shouldn't do; he played favorites. No one else got a really cool coat. They didn't even get a scarf or a pair of galoshes. Rather than having a family meeting or open discussion time with dad to work this out, the brothers blamed Joseph (first example of group blame) for their lack of colored coats and for not being the favorite. Joseph also told them of his dreams suggesting that he would rule over them. His brothers then blamed him for having these dreams. They were going to kill Joseph, and then decided to sell him into slavery instead. Years later, living in Egypt, Joseph's dreams had come true. His brothers were forced to pay him respect and ask his forgiveness. Had they not been so blinded with blame in the first place, they never would have been in that position.

There are thousands more biblical stories that clearly demonstrate that our forbearers were not above blaming parents, siblings, offspring, or anyone else who might come along. While Jews, Christians, and Muslims have traditionally understood Adam and Eve to have been real, historical figures, the science of human evolution does not always support that understanding. However, in a similar fashion to Adam and Eve, biologists have theorized that all living human beings have evolved from a matrilineal ancestor, known as Mitochondrial Eve, and a patrilineal ancestor, known as Y-chromosomal Adam. If you don't believe in Adam and Eve, there are interesting blaming stories involving uncouth prehistoric Neanderthals (sorry Geico® cavemen), which I was lucky enough to find in an old book called, *One Caveman's Story*. The book was written in pictographs and petroglyphs, since there was no ancient written

language with a pronounceable alphabet until 3,000 BCE, so I paraphrase.

There was a fellow named Emalb who had been chasing some kind of large beast for over one thousand moons. He chased this animal through forests and over glaciers; around mountains and across large bodies of water. Emalb was obsessed with killing this animal. After losing the creature's trail for several suns, Emalb wandered into a neighboring village where his best Neanderthal friend lived and was shocked and dismayed at what he saw. His best friend Tluaf was sitting with his family enjoying a roast beast meal. It was *his* beast, the beast that Emalb had so painstakingly pursued for so long. He couldn't understand why his so-called friend had done this and blamed Tluaf and his family until the next ice age. Emalb never realized that the animal had actually died from old age outside of Tluaf's cave. Emalb's blame was so fierce that he went back to his village and spread the word that Tluaf's village had stolen "his beast." With his entire village blaming the neighboring village for this loss, they immediately went to war. There was much devastation, and had they known how to make fire, I'm sure things would have been burned as well as pillaged.

In prehistoric times, the cause of natural disasters was largely unknown. When bad things happened, the cavemen would look to something familiar to accuse. There are several examples listed suggesting that blame was typically placed on the shoulders of the weaker and slower members of the clan. When volcanoes would erupt, snow would start falling, lightning would strike, ice ages would appear, billion-pound ice ledges would fall into your supper, dinosaurs would eat all the children, or important elders would die, a member of the clan would shout out the name of someone who they thought should incur blame. The rest of the clan would take a vote. The guilty party would be fed to the wolves or banished from the rest of the group. If three or more cavemen shouted out the same name at the same time, they didn't need to vote; they took that as a sign of incredibly strong blame power and initiated sentencing.

Whether you believe in the Bible or believe in evolutionary theory, or both, there is an abundance of evidence that strongly

suggests that blaming has been around for as long as man has been on this earth—if not longer. That something has stood the test of time doesn't make it right! Blaming others hurts us more than them. And when I say "us," I mean all of us. I will do my best to try to show you why I think there are problems with the Blame Game and the benefits of quitting the game.

Who bought The Game?

We all bought the game. We purchased the online, extended version and have been playing it non-stop since it arrived. We have been fooled into thinking that this is a game that we are supposed to play. Not wanting to feel guilty because all of our friends were playing, we bought the stupid thing. They said that playing it would make you feel better about yourself; it would get you out of work and school; it would keep you out of trouble and make you feel like you were better than everyone else. I could have left mine sitting in the corner of my room, gathering dust like most of my other games. It could have remained buried underneath my Pictionary and Monopoly (The Anniversary Edition) and no one would have ever known that it was there. Or, I could have kept it hidden under my *Learn Mandarin Chinese in a Day* audio tapes and my *Memorize Your Way to Success in the Food Industry* DVD series. I was not that smart; I kept it out in the open where I was constantly reminded that it was there. I'd use it every chance I got.

Even though the game is ancient, it is not antiquated. The Blame Game is able to adapt to all new situations, across all cultures. You never need to purchase more parts, gadgets, upgrades (sorry Bill Gates), or accessories for the Game. That's the good news. The bad news: the game is usually purchased on credit. There are no obvious upfront costs, which is one reason that the game is owned by so many people. There are some class action law suits pending at the time of this writing against the manufacturer of the Blame Game for falsely advertising that the game is "free of any costs." However, no one admits to inventing the game.

Who can play?

Two cavemen walk into a bar and start buying drinks for everyone. The bartender asks, “What’s the special occasion?” One cavemen answers, “We just finished a jigsaw puzzle and it only took three months to complete.” The bartender says, “Three months? That seems like a long time for the two of you to finish a jigsaw puzzle.” The caveman responds, “Oh ya? The box says three to five years!” Well, the Blame Game has no age limits. Everyone can and does play. Once purchased, this is a game that you can play until the moment you die.

Many do not realize that blaming was actually the first Game with active participants in every village, town, and city, in every county and country and on every continent. It is played equally by men and women, old and young, alike. Rosetta Stone, the popular language software program is available in thirty languages. The Monopoly game is licensed in 103 countries and is printed in thirty-seven languages including Icelandic and Croatian. This would be quite impressive yet these accomplishments pale in comparison to what blaming has achieved. The Blame Game is actively played by all inhabitants of every one of the 200 countries of the world. There are 6,912 known languages in the world. Blaming is played in every one of them! Blaming is also played in over 2,200 written languages! Most foreign editions of the game adopt their own culturally-sensitive and politically-correct accusational systems.

Some examples of blaming around the world:

- Blame in Danish is *skyld, beskyldte, bebrejde, ansvar*
- Blame in Swedish is *klandra, skuld*
- Blame in Dutch is *beschuldigen, Blaam, de schuld geven aan, schuld, verantwoordelijk stellen, aanrekenen*
- Blame in German is *blamieren, schuld, beschuldigen, die schuld geben*
- Blame in Latin is *accuso, culpa, crimen*
- Blame in French is *accuser, blâme, blamer, faute, condamner, reproche*
- Blame in Norwegian is *klandre*

- Blame in Canada is *blame, eh*
- Blame in Middle English was *blamen*
- Blame in Greek is ψέγω, μέμφομαι, κατακρίνω, καταφέρομαι εναντίον, κατηγορώ, ρίχνω την ευθύνη, υπαιτιότητα, ευθύνη, φταιξίμο
- Blame in Arabic is توبيخ, لوم (الاسم) وبخ, عاتب, لام (فعل)
- Blame in Hebrew is גינוי, אשמה, על אשמה הטיל, האשים
- Blame in Russian is винить, порицать, осуждать, вина, порицание, осуждение
- Blame in Croatian is koriti, kriviti, krivnja, optužiti
- Blame in Czech is svádět, obviňování, obvinít, hana, svalovat vinu, obviňovat, dávat vinu, vina
- Blame in Hungarian is felelősség, szemrehányás, vád
- Blame in Turkish is ayıplama kabahat, kusur azar, mesuliyet, azarlarnak, suçlamak, sorumlu tutmak
- Blame in Hindi is दोष, दोष-लगाना, अपराधी~उहराना
- Blame in Portuguese is culpar, culpa, acusar
- Blame in Italian is accusare, accusa, rimproverare, olerne a, colpa, dare la colpa a, critica
- Blame in Spanish is culpa, reprender, reprimenda, reprension
- Blame in Simple Chinese is 责备, 归咎于, 指责, 责任
- Blame in Traditional Chinese is 責備, 歸咎於, 責備, 指責, 責任
- Blame in Korean is 남을 비난하다, ~의 책임을 지우다, ~을 저주하다, 비난, 책임
- Blame in Japanese is ブラム, とがめる, 負わせる, 非難, とがめ, 責任

American Sign Language has also adopted the Game. To show “blame,” take your right fist held vertically with your thumb pointed upward, your left hand flat out in front of you with your palm upward. Now sweep your right hand forward across your left palm, three times toward the person you are blaming. To sign “accuse,” position your hands the same way and slightly bounce your right hand off the left, outward toward the accused. With a little practice, you’ll be blaming and accusing in American Sign Language in no time at all.