

SITUATIONS - CT #1

“I’m basically here because I had some bad luck.”

On the one hand, bad luck can certainly happen to anybody. Purely by chance, we can have an accident, or random bad event.

But on the other hand, being in the wrong kind of place, or being with the wrong (or dangerous) kind of people, or around stuff like drug sales or stolen goods is probably not bad luck. It’s more likely a choice - or a series of choices- that put us there. Unless we look a little further, the explanation about “bad luck” could hold water - or not!

How would you feel if the person told you he had never been arrested? Or if he had a totally clean record and a model life?

On the other hand, how would you feel if they had a long rap-sheet?

When someone tells us things like this, we can decide for ourselves how likely it is. But what if they are telling themselves this? What if they believe it, in spite of the clear choices they made which set them up for problems?

Some people do have bad luck and end up in a difficult situation, But much of the time, people who believe that have made a series of bad choices. They got to the place where things turned bad because of their own thinking - their own decision making.

Risk factors: if you choose to be around high risk people, places, things, and situations, that’s not “luck.”

Think about the times where someone has used the word “luck” to describe this kind of situation? What sorts of similar things have you heard people say?

What were the circumstances?

How much of the problem was caused by their choices?

SITUATIONS - CT #2

“I have always had the short end of things. It’s no wonder I’m here.”

Some people have decided that they are not getting treated fairly by life. And they may have had some good reasons to think like that. Their childhood. Their family life. Or their opportunities in school or in sports. And even their work opportunities may have been limited unfairly. So thinking that they got the short end of things may be based on some of their experiences.

How does that describe your experiences - or the experiences of someone you know?

SAMPLE

When we are younger, we have very little control over some of these things. For example, in certain family situations, there may be a lack of balance - fairness - in certain kids are treated. This can be from a parent showing favoritism, or even abuse directed at one child. Or it can be from a situation where one child has a disability or other problems and thus demands more time and attention. So if someone thinks that have been getting less attention, less support, or fewer opportunities that can actually be real.

How can that lead to problems?

Sometimes it can lead to the decision to make up for the unfairness by taking matters into our own hands. And that can be either bad or good.

A good way might be to decide to take control of our lives. If others are not giving us the opportunity to do well, we can make our own path. One example of this are people who have left dysfunctional homes or neighborhoods and joined the military. Others have aggressively gone after education or training opportunities. They have a chance to succeed on a more level playing field.

What are some similar examples of ways to overcome difficult situations?

And some people simply give up. For them, the unfairness leads to being hopeless or helpless. What are some examples you can think of?

And sadly, other people make a different kind of choice. Their way is cheating, stealing, conning, aggressive crimes like robbery, or running frauds or scams. Their sense of being treated unfairly leads to an alternative view. It's almost a feeling of being entitled to do these things, just to balance things out.

What example of this kind of thinking, of these kinds of choices, have you seen?

SAMPLE

What sorts of things have you heard people say about the unfairness of their early lives - and the choices they are making today?

How did some of their choices work out badly for them?

Ultimately, it comes down to choices, again. We can't do much about unfairness or dysfunction in our childhood, our family, or the neighborhood we grew up in. At what point do we have to take responsibility for the choices that we make today?