

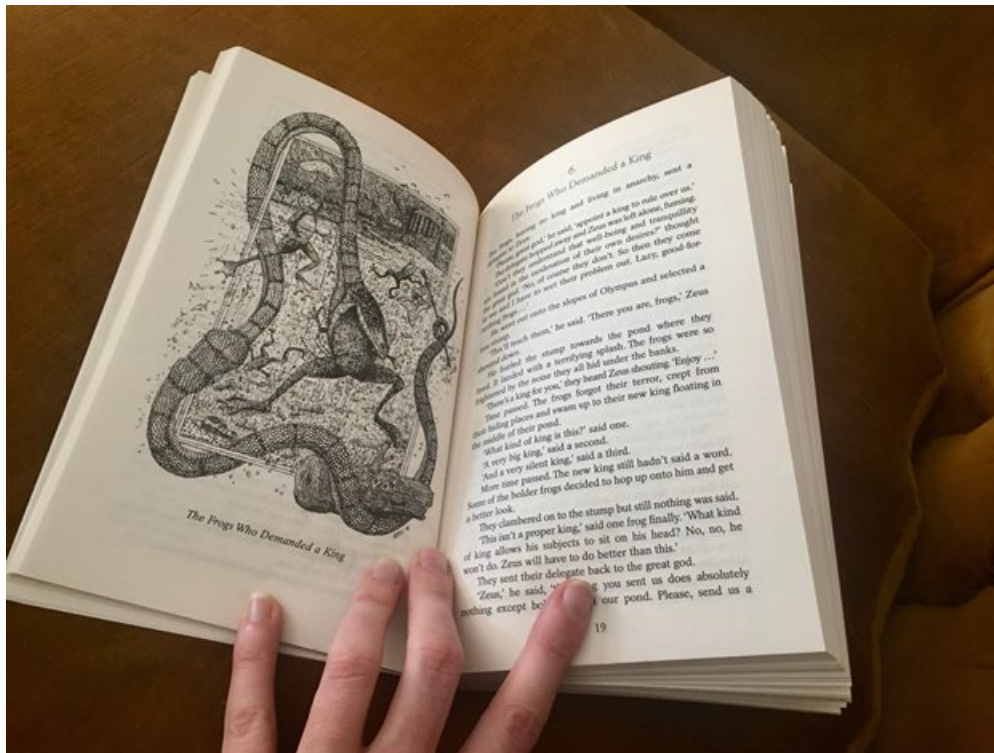
The lessons we never learn

By [Bronwyn Williams](#)

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I've been reading a version of Aesop's Fables written for adults, and I have been reminded of how timeless human problems and solutions really are.

Over the centuries, generations of humans have struggled with the same temptations, the same issues of power, greed, envy and corruption. Although we may *resist* learning the lessons of our forefathers, it is still in our best interests to at least *try* to avoid repairing the same mistakes.



One of my favourite of these lessons we can learn from Aesop's Fables and apply to life and business today is the one about the frog king. In the story, the frogs are tired of taking responsibility for their own lives and disagreements and decide to demand the gods give them a king to rule them. In disgust at the short-sighted request, the gods first throw a tree stump into the frog pond and tell the frogs that the stump can be there as a king. The frogs are unhappy with this and demand the gods give them a real and powerful king. The gods oblige the request, this time by placing a serpent into the pond, who promptly eats up all his new frog subjects.

The moral of this story, of course, is to be careful what we ask for, particularly when it comes to attempting to delegate our responsibilities to a higher power. It is far easier to give away control than it is to get it back.

This, in turn, has insights for our current social media landscape conundrum. There is no doubt that social media has highlighted social divisions and given a platform for people to air unpopular, offensive, untrue and even downright dangerous ideas. In response, indignant people all over the world are demanding that social media platforms police their users; and demanding that governments regulate the social media platforms themselves and censor the discourse that takes place on them. However, we need to be careful that these demands are not a veiled attempt to *shirk* our own personal responsibilities around what we say and how we resolve our disputes. The more we outsource responsibility, the less authority and freedom we will have from those very same authorities.

Taking responsibility for our own actions is the price we need to pay for the freedom to direct the course of our own lives and businesses. If we fail to accept our responsibilities, we have to expect to lose the privileges that go with them.

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