

Take Accountability and Take Back Your Power

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A biographer made up the story about George Washington confessing to cutting down the cherry tree. Yet, it's easy to believe based on his character.

The story has also been useful for generations of parents as an example of taking accountability. As a child, you may have learned that it's more honorable to own up to your actions rather than blame others or make excuses about why it's the tree's fault.

On the other hand, holding ourselves responsible can feel risky. Admitting our faults may threaten our self-image and open us up to criticism from others. It may seem safer to focus on external circumstances instead of looking at our own actions.

The truth is that you could be missing out on more happiness and success by trying to evade responsibility.

Learn more about the importance of developing personal accountability.

Benefits of Accountability:

- 1. Build confidence.** True self-esteem requires having the courage to take an honest look at yourself. Accept your weaknesses and missteps, as well as your strengths and accomplishments.
- 2. Make positive changes. Taking responsibility puts you in control of your life.** You can learn and grow. You'll show yourself that you're capable of adapting to change and handling the consequences of your actions. You can take action to resolve negative circumstances.

- 3. Strengthen your relationships.** Earn trust by living up to your commitments. You'll deepen your connection with family, friends, and coworkers.
- 4. Reduce stress.** In the long run, facing the truth usually creates less anxiety than trying to cover it up. Being responsible allows you to enjoy greater peace of mind.

Tips for Taking Accountability:

- 1. Evaluate your performance.** Make it a habit to assess your role in any situation. While external events do matter, **focusing on what you can control is more productive.**
- 2. Monitor yourself.** Pay attention to your behavior even when there are no other witnesses around. Assume equal responsibility for successes and setbacks.
- 3. Set realistic goals.** Do you sometimes excuse your conduct because you're trying to juggle too many activities? Respect your limits and shorten your to do list. **Creating priorities will help you to accomplish more.**
- 4. Listen carefully.** It's difficult to hear what others are saying when you're on the defensive. Listen with an open mind, so you can understand their position even if you disagree.
- 5. Apologize skillfully.** Express regret promptly and sincerely when you let someone down. If possible, try to make amends and avoid repeating your slip ups.

6. **Consider others.** If you need another reason to work on accountability, think about your impact on others. Remember how you feel when a business or a loved one harms you and refuses to take responsibility.

Tips for Fostering Accountability:

1. **Communicate clearly.** Encouraging a more accountable culture makes it easier to assume responsibility. Start by clarifying your expectations and the consequences for not meeting them. Ensure that you understand what others expect of you as well.
2. **Be forgiving.** Help others to be truthful. Respond with mercy rather than anger. You're bound to need a second chance sometime too.
3. **Exchange constructive feedback.** Talk with others about how to make progress moving forward. Share specific observations, praise, and criticism. Be grateful for any insights they give you.
4. **Provide a role model. By assuming more accountability, you can automatically have a positive impact on others.** You'll be teaching your children an important life lesson and contributing to a healthier workplace and society.

Accountability is a skill that grows stronger with practice. **Take charge of your life by assuming responsibility for your actions.** You'll empower yourself to build the future you really want.