HOLDING YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR MISTAKES

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WHAT IS ACCOUNTABILITY?
Author Brian P. Moran, in the book The 12 Week Year: Get More Done in 12 Weeks Than Others Do in 12 Months, defines it as “simply taking ownership of one’s actions and results.” That is accepting that our actions have consequences, and the ball is in our court to create the results we desire. The fact of the matter is that successful people are accountable.

Leadership author, Michael Hyatt, considered the vitality of accountability both in leaders and in individuals. “When you make a mistake, own it. It will restore people’s confidence and increase your influence.” Also it gains respect from the ones around you because this shows both humility and your willingness to learn. According to Linda Galindo in The 85% Solution: How Personal Accountability Guarantees Success, personal accountability contributes 85% to success and the other 15% depends on the way the wind blows.

But where do you begin?

1. RESPONSIBILITY
Start by learning responsibility. When you’re truly responsible, you believe that overall success or failure is up to you, even if you work within a team or are blinded by unforeseen circumstances. Responsibility is what you must first train yourself to have before taking charge of a task, it is a way of thinking. It’s easy to claim responsibility when things go well, but it’s hard when they don’t. A truly responsible person claims responsibility either way, both the flaws and success of a task but also deals with what is. Instead of figuring out who’s to blame or worrying about how things “coulda woulda shoulda” been if only something had gone differently, you deal with the matter that is at hand and seek a solution. Hence, one must equip one’s self with the responsibility and the possible outcomes of a task and be prepared to own up.

2. EMPOWERMENT
Self-empowerment begins from within. By empowering yourself, you take the actions and risks to achieve what you aim for rather than waiting for someone to drop it on your lap. Once you have ingrained responsibility, empower yourself to stand up and take a challenge, but remember to always be accountable at the end. The most direct route to self-empowerment is to be clear about expectations—what you want, what they want and what you can contribute. To do that, you need to ask questions, make agreements, and clarify everything in writing. Otherwise, you risk suffering the source of all misunderstandings—missed expectations.

But always remember to never blow your own trumpet about something you did! Take stock of your personal talents and triumphs and let the higher-ups know who you are and how you are contributing. All the time, ask yourself what your role is to be clear about the outcomes of your choices, actions, and behaviours. This must not be confused with responsibility (Point 1), which is the mind-set one must have before taking up task, and personal accountability, which is the action of owning up to the results of the task. When you’re personally accountable, you stop using excuses as a “spare card” to justify your failure.

3. PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
It’s the willingness to answer for the outcomes of your choices, actions, and behaviours. This must not be confused with responsibility (Point 1), which is the mind-set one must have before taking up task, and personal accountability, which is the action of owning up to the results of the task. When you’re personally accountable, you stop using excuses as a “spare card” to justify your failure.

Be your own cop and critique. Are you accountable for your actions even if nobody holds you accountable or nobody catches you? You bet you are. So be your own “accountability cop” and police yourself. A little integrity won’t hurt nobody.

And when trouble arises, look first to yourself and ask four specific questions: • What is the problem? • What am I doing—or not doing—to contribute to the problem? • What will I do differently to help solve the problem? • How will I be accountable for the result?

4. WHO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH MATTERS
Ever come across somebody who always seems to be “down on their luck”? Like they’re constantly shrouded in negativity and usually has nothing positive to say. You know how they say birds of a feather flock together, well that holds water here. Not only does associating with negativity eventually reflect on ourselves, but we begin to slowly get sucked into such a vibe until we unconsciously end up like such.

So replace the negative with a positive. It stops you from feeling unhappy as you have come to accept that you are now going to be solely responsible for how you feel, not other people or other external factors. Associate yourself with “accountable.”

FINAL THOUGHTS
If all else fails, be willing to take different actions. If you want different results, you have to do things differently. One of our biggest problems is that we don’t like to fail and, moreover, we don’t like to be seen to fail. But in order not to do so, one must be willing to learn from mistakes. Hence, it is important for one to be personally accountable as it not only ensures success, but it also builds character.