

# Responsibility Process

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# Responsibility Process

Christopher Avery, Ph.D. webinar

Leadership Gift Preview:

## **How to Unlock and Unleash the Leadership Gift in You**

Business owners **want** employees to have ownership for one's actions, outcomes, opportunities, and problems.

(Responsible)

They **find** a lack of problem ownership among highly educated, talented, well-meaning professionals. (Irresponsible)

Use Responsibility Process to **train** and **lead** employee to take ownership.

# Why not Responsible

**Why:** People own many of the problems that pertain to their role. They tend not to take responsibility for the everyday things that go wrong in organizations: misunderstandings, poor communication, lack of follow-through, broken agreements, self-created messes, etc.

**Why:** People are loaded with mental programming for avoiding owning up to it when things go wrong.

**Why:** This protects our egos from our own painful mistakes and, at the same time, keeps us from solving problems, adding value, and making forward progress.

# Irresponsible Stages

Only take productive ownership of a problem after you mentally climb through these stages of irresponsibility to the position of responsibility.

We are all **conditioned** to gravitate toward one or more of these stages

They **limit** past, present, and future available choices

They cripple your ability to respond productively to whatever is not right

Stage 0 Denial: Ignoring the existence of the problem

# Stage 1: Lay Blame

**Holding others at fault for causing something**

**Example:** Who took my car keys?! Who screwed up my laptop?! Who changed these requirements after the review?!

**Condition:** The wrong can only be righted by changing another.

**Limit:** You do not admit that you created, attracted, or chose to be in this situation because it is under someone else control

# Stage 2: Justify

**Using excuses for things being the way they are**

**Example:** Sorry I'm late, but the traffic out there was killer this morning

**Condition:** You still assume you are a victim, but of unavoidable circumstances rather than of a specific culprit  
The wrong will not be changed until the circumstances change.

**Limit:** Again, you do not admit that there is anything for you to learn about how you got yourself into this circumstance of seeming powerlessness.

# Stage 3: Shame

**Laying blame onto oneself (often felt as guilt)**

**Example:** I messed up the code and set us back a week. Blame me.

**Condition:** You go from externalizing the cause to internalizing it. You assume the problem exists because something's wrong with you.

**Limit:** You are wrong and deserve to suffer. You cannot correct, improve, or learn because you are focused on self-criticism.

# Stage 4: Obligation

**Doing what you have to instead of what you want  
to**

**Example:** I have to go to that stupid meeting.

**Condition:** You assume you are trapped and feel compelled to comply with a policy against your better judgment.

The wrong is that you must suffer an experience you do not want in order to have an experience you do want.

**Limit:** You are in a trap of your own design and assume you must stay there, taking the bitter with the sweet.

# Stage 5: Quit

## Giving up to avoid the pain of Shame and Obligation

**Example:** Keep leaving jobs because cannot stand boss and coworkers, maybe figure something else out before take another new position.

**Condition:** Escape from bad feelings of Shame and resented traps of Obligation.

You quit by leaving the problem without owning or solving it.

**Limit:** You have left the immediate problem behind, but since you have not figured out how you created, chose, or attracted it to you, you are likely to find yourself in the same situation again soon.

# Taking Responsibility

## Key 1: Intend to be Responsibility

First commit to the idea that you intend to operate as much as possible from a position of responsibility

## Key 2: Aware of the irresponsibility stages

Recognize the thoughts that accompany each stage

## Key 3: Confrontation the irresponsibility stages

Examine your assumptions. Ask yourself what is true about this situation

# Intent, Aware, Confront

**Lay Blame:** That customer is completely unreasonable

**Justify:** If we had not needed the business so badly, we would never have agreed to this project with this customer

**Shame:** We were crazy to take on this customer

**Obligation:** We will just have to do the best we can under the circumstances and absorb the loss

# Responsible: Method 1

Completely avoid all of the positions of irresponsibility by never judging any circumstance or outcome as wrong.

If you never judge anything as wrong, then you never enter the stages of irresponsibility, and you don't have to slog through them to get to a resourceful mental state.

**Not Realistic:** Especially in business, where analysis, judgment, and evaluation are critical.

# Responsible: Method 2

Responsibility is not a personality characteristic but a mental practice.

Rather than point out another's underbelly, demonstrate your own humility, your desire to take responsibility, and your capacity for correcting, learning, and improving.

Invite others to do it for themselves. Let them know you expect their best, and you know that mistakes are part of the process.

True ownership — and the lack thereof — seems to be contagious.

Ownership tends to beget ownership (although it is not guaranteed) and vice versa

# Conclusions

The Responsibility Process Model can only be self-applied.

Can be learn via self practices and with help from others.

Afterwards will see people use Lay Blame, Justify, Shame, Obligation, and Quit to avoid ownership

See how people get others to go along with these projections of their reality.

Keep making your observations and keep them to yourself.

Why: Every time you try to use it on someone else, it backfires.

# References and Information

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