

 Leadership Checklist

ACCOUNTABILITY

To appreciate accountability, start by identifying who and what you blame. Then shift your mindset from blaming to proactively taking responsibility and seeking solutions.

I. Moving Beyond Blame

Identify a person, a work situation, an external factor, or a self-limitation that you blame for holding you back. Can you change the cause of your frustration?

A person (describe who/why): _____

Can you change him or her? Yes No

A work situation (describe it): _____

Can you change it? Yes No

An external factor (for example, the economy, politics, weather, competition): _____

Can you change it? Yes No

A self-limitation (for example, weight, time, age, education): _____

Can you change it? Yes No

For each **yes**, write down what you can do to effect change:

Person _____

Work situation _____

External factor _____

Self-limitation _____

Go back and look where you answered NO. These are situations/people where you are spending time and energy blaming or worrying about someone or something that you can't change or control. What you can do in those situations is to step away from blame, take action, or change your attitude. For example, if you don't like your boss, you can't fire him, and you can't change him. So what can you do? You can leave the job or decide that you will look for the positive in him and eliminate negativity and blame from your internal and external conversations.

Blaming things and people out of your control is a waste of your precious time and a diversion from taking responsibility. Rather, constantly shift your focus to creative problem solving and solution seeking.

II. Shouldering Blame and Dealing With Failure

Below are some questions relating to failure and mistakes. As you answer the questions, listen to your inner voice and be aware of your gut feelings. Those indicators will tell you where you need to focus attention.

Circle the response that best describes you:

I admit to failures.	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
I learn from failure.	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
I admit my mistakes.	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
I say I'm sorry when I'm wrong.	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
I hold myself to a high standard of accountability.	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Others can count on me to be accountable.	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

As a leader, you are held to higher standards for personal and organizational accountability. If you are uncomfortable with failure and tend to hide your mistakes, you need to work to overcome that tendency and learn the value of accountability.

III. Creating a Culture of Accountability

- A. Identify someone you work with who is incessantly complaining and blaming.

Who and what (describe): _____

Have a nonjudgmental but direct conversation with this person about blame, accountability, and taking responsibility. Share this chapter with her. Encourage her to brainstorm proactive solutions to the issue.

- B. Inform your staff that from now on, you will not discuss problems with them unless they have solutions. Let them know that blaming others is no longer acceptable. From now on you want to hear solutions. Stick to it. Give immediate feedback when you hear people complaining about the same thing over and over. Create a culture of accountability.

Blame, judgment, denigration, and condemnation are not good tools for a leader who desires to grow and contribute. Accountability is an essential leadership attribute for overcoming persistent barriers, resolving long-standing conflicts, and creating new solutions to old problems.