



“Those who enjoy accountability usually get it; those who merely like exercising authority usually lose it.”

~ Malcolm Forbes

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Accountability is the greatest freedom we can create for ourselves. When we turn the tables and “own” the thing that owns us, we eliminate “victim mentality.” Accountability allows us to take full responsibility for our own lives, acknowledging what we’ve chosen and standing by it.

A Shearson/Lehman Brothers print ad from 1987 sums up accountability:

- Accountability is taking responsibility before the fact, rather than after the fact.
- Accountability is taking a stand, and standing by it.
- When those who are accountable are right, they take the credit.
- When they are wrong, they take the heat, a fair exchange.
- Accountability is a way of working.
- Those who practice it have an unspoken respect for each other and a visible disdain for the absent-minded apologizers, mumbling excuse-makers and, trembling fence sitters who run from integrity as if it were the plague.

Shearson/Lehman Brothers was one of the most successful brokerages of their time--they took accountability seriously and they stood by their word.

And how do we get to accountability?

When we take full responsibility for our own lives, acknowledge what we’ve chosen and stand by it. When we can **choose our responses**, instead of blindly or unconsciously reacting to circumstances, we gain power and freedom. While we may not always like our choices--and they may not always be the right ones--the best thing we can do is choose, move forward, learn, and expand.

Consider any situation in your life: is there something for which you can be accountable? If you feel that you are at the mercy of something bigger than you, think again. What was your part in getting or allowing the situation to become that way? Can you “own” the steps you took or didn’t take that got you there?

Conversely, **is there something for which you haven’t taken or been given credit?** Have you given up acknowledgement for your contribution and regret it? Go have a conversation with someone about that and get yourself and him or her clear about what really happened.

This week **consider how accountability shows up in your life** at work and at home. Do you take responsibility for your actions? Are you accountable for the outcome of your choices and decisions? Do you take the credit when things go well and take the heat when they don’t? How might you make better choices and more appropriate responses to life’s circumstances?

After all, **you are the only person responsible for your own actions.**

Be aware of the impact you make--and stand up for doing the right thing.

