

## Five Common Examples of Taking Less Than 100% Responsibility

We've identified five common examples of taking less than 100% responsibility. Do you recognize yourself or others in these?

**1** **Avoiding ownership**

This is when you have an awareness that something needs to be done, but you avoid getting involved. You slide into a passive role, expecting others to do the work. You willingly take less than 100% responsibility without consciously acknowledging it or bringing awareness to the dynamic.

**Telltale language:** "It's not my job." "We should do something about it." "No one showed me how to do it."

**2** **Assuming no agency**

This is perhaps the most costly example of unhealthy responsibility. It's where you feel captive by your circumstances and believe you have zero or almost zero control in your situation. You gossip, complain, or fail to see your part or your choice in the results you're getting. You blame or make excuses rather than feel and express your feelings, make requests, provide ideas, or mobilize action.

**Telltale language:** "That's just the way it is." "We don't have enough people."

**3** **Making others responsible for my happiness**

This is where you as an employee take on the belief that the owner/leadership is responsible for the employees' happiness. Or you as owner/leader blame your employees as the source of your unhappiness. In all cases, you've outsourced your responsibility and well-being to something external.

**Telltale language:** "My job is so hard and they don't care about me or appreciate the work I do." "I need the team to change their attitude." "I've inherited troublesome employees, I can't get them to do their work."

**4** **Ignoring or resisting feedback**

This is where you've trained people through your defensiveness to either refrain from giving you feedback or to tell you only what they think you want to hear. Or you know there are some painful truths about your behavior that people would share if asked, so you resist asking for feedback. Alternatively, you've received feedback that you resist.

**Telltale language:** "I'd ask for feedback, but there's not enough time." "I have an open door and no one's come to me with any problems." "That doesn't apply to us." "That's the way we've always done it."

**5** **Blaming**

This is where you ignore any ownership in a situation and shift the blame fully to someone else (e.g., the manager who gives vague guidelines or micromanages, the client's unreasonable expectations) or something else (the weather, the traffic). Or you point the finger inward and saddle yourself with recrimination. Whether you lay the blame externally or internally, you've succumbed to playing a victim role.

**Telltale language:** "The account rep didn't let us know the client was unhappy; it's their fault we lost the contract." "I'm late because the train ran long." "We told Blake to take care of this and he didn't." "You didn't communicate clearly that that was what you wanted." "It's all my fault."