

# CATALYST Veterinary Practice Consultants

## Veterinary Team Accountability-Look in the Mirror



**CATALYST**  
Veterinary Practice Consultants

Ouch, looking in the mirror and “looking within” can be enlightening and something we often avoid. We will dive into a conversation around accountability, personal habits, and self-awareness. Together we will look at accountability in team members and how accountability can be improved upon (by measuring and tracking improvements).

### Topics:

1. Where does accountability begin?
2. What does accountability look like?
3. Adjusting Personal Habits, A Paradigm Shift
4. How To Hold Yourself Accountable
5. How To Lead By Example

## **Accountability Begins With You**

I find it ironic when I ask team members “How many of you would like for your co-workers to be more accountable?” Every hand in the room goes up! Then I reverse the question. “How many of you feel you hold yourself accountable?” Once again, all the hands in the room go up. I just think that is funny!

Apparently, everyone on a team wants everyone else on the team to be more accountable.

The truth is, accountability begins with you, in each day, in each moment. That can be a hard pill to swallow. On the Building Champions Blog, the author writes, “Before you can be accountable to your business plans, to your organization, or those that you love, lead and serve you must be accountable to yourself.” <http://www.coachdanfoster.com/leadershipblog/2015/01/accountability-begins>

One of the greatest myths around is that we are *entitled* to a meaningful, happy life filled with a successful career, supportive relationships and financial security. There is a great disappointment when we expect all of this to just *happen* to us. Is there any chance of living a fully integrated satisfying life in this age of chaos, uncertainty and ongoing change?

Yes, if you are willing to be 100% accountable for your actions, responses and outcomes.

## **Know Thy Self**

Self-awareness, knowing yourself beyond the surface, may elude us until we are placed into personal challenges and growth. Nobody has ever said to me, “Man, while my life is peachy keen I just assessed my life, my purpose, and feel like I have a real handle on my life!” Quite the contrary. Personal growth tends to elude us until we have survived a tumultuous time in our life. When there has been reflection, focus, and understanding. For our conversation regarding accountability, this deeper sense of who we are, where we have been, and where we are going comes into play.

### 6 Questions to Answer (No Delegation, Own It!)

1. Do you recognize your life and career are in your hands, alone?
2. Who is responsible for your happiness and success?
3. What do you want in your life?
4. What do you want in your career?
5. What steps are necessary for you to take to achieve what you want your life?
6. What steps are necessary for you to take to achieve what you want in your career?

## Adjusting Personal Habits: A Paradigm Shift

One of the most compelling and steadfast books I have ever read is Steve Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Because of the profound impact it has had on my life, I felt it offers the tools for making changes in accountability. Adjusting personal habits happens each day, in each moment, through conscious awareness. As you become more aware of your actions (those that serve and those that DON'T), recognize the habits you are proud of (yes, that felt GOOD!) and those that to be improved upon (could have responded, acted, felt differently). Celebrate the GOOD and learn from the moments you could have improved upon (without remorse).

You are encouraged to read *7 Habits of Highly Effective people*.

1. **Be proactive:** take responsibility of your life
2. **Begin with the end in mind:** visualize who you want to be, what you want to be doing
3. **Put first things first:** life management and prioritizing  
(saying no gracefully to reach your potential)
4. **Think Win-Win:** life is a cooperative arena, supportive, and connected
5. **Seek first to understand, then be understood:** listen, wholeheartedly (active listening), then explain
6. **Synergize:** "two heads are better than one"  $1+1=3$
7. **Sharpen the saw:** fill your cup and continue to learn, be a sponge

## Hold yourself accountable

"You have the power to be in control of your own life. Step up to the role by making small manageable changes in your actions and attitude. Life is made up of small choices made one day at a time. Start small and think big to create a life where you are actively in charge of your outcomes. Remember that attitude and action are the keys to getting to your desired outcomes in life." Gwen Pettit, CATALYST's Life Coach

*Today, how did I...*

- help a team member?
- develop as a professional?
- add value?
- see something and do something about it?
- make excellent choices?
- take ownership?
- have a positive attitude?
- practice "if it is to be, it's up to me"?

## How to lead by example

“First and foremost, it means that you accept responsibility for the outcomes expected of you—both good and bad. You don’t blame others. And you don’t blame the external environment. There are always things you could have done—or still can do—to change the outcome.” Michael Hyatt  
<http://michaelhyatt.com/leadership-and-accountability.html>

1. “I” statements
2. Know why you are making a decision
3. Admit mistakes
4. Don’t wallow in remorse or self-pity
5. Take action to correct problems

Remember, you are solely responsible for your own actions and outcomes. As Harry Truman stated, “the buck stops here.”

## Personal Accountability

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Yes, if you are willing to be 100% accountable for your actions, responses and outcomes.

No, if you blame outcomes on outside events, other people and wait for the good things to just happen to you.

No, if you keep blaming yourself for poor outcomes without making any change in your behavior or attitude.

There is a simple formula to explain accountability. Outcomes are a result of your actions and your attitudes.

Here is an example. Are you frequently late to work because of the traffic? Do you blame the traffic or do you plan on how to get out of the house earlier to allow for the traffic? Your actions are responsible for your outcomes. When you find yourself in the blaming, complaining mode: will this situation ever improve? Complaining about events will not help you change or improve the outcomes. Complaining just means that you know there is a better option out there. The feelings and consequences of starting off the day late is just a small warning signal that your actions are creating a difficult beginning. Your driving may put you at a greater risk when you are rushing or trying to make up time. So instead of waiting for a bigger negative effect of your behavior- you could choose to change your response to traffic. Successful people accept their own behavior as part of the outcome and determine what they need to do to improve the situation. Making a small change helps prevent the bigger disasters.

The next question is: Are you willing to change and take action to change your outcomes?

Life becomes much easier when you respond to uncomfortable situations sooner.

If you just accept that traffic will make you late, this leads to a sense of hopelessness and lack of control. Can you control the traffic? No. What is under your control? You are directly responsible for your thoughts, attitudes and actions. You can change your actions to avoid traffic by taking a different route or changing the time that you leave home. You can change your attitude by listening to educational material or favorite music to use the time in your car differently. Either of these solutions will change your outcomes. Both of them require you to change instead of expecting the traffic or situation to change for you.

What happens when you end up working late every night? You are working as hard as you can, trying to keep up with notes, phone calls and all the demands of a busy practice. The small stress of a few weeks of this turn into bigger stress as your health suffers; you are losing sleep and never really feel relaxed. Does this sound familiar? You are too stressed out to pay attention to family, friends or do anything after work. After months or years of this, the outcomes built up to lost relationships, no support system and feelings of despair that now create a mental health crisis.

Sometimes no action allows a bad situation to escalate into a very poor outcome just from lack of awareness.

What are your choices? Start by paying attention to the situation. To make a change in patterns you need to start by understanding them. How do you spend your time each day? Look for situations where your time flows and where you get stuck. Ask for help. Find out who does get their notes done and how do they do it.

Here is a coach approach to personal accountability- Use these questions to make a plan for a better outcome.

1. What is a difficult situation in your life?
2. What are the benefits you have for keeping this the same?
3. What are the costs to you to keeping it the same?
4. What are you doing or not doing that allows this situation to exist?
5. What are you ignoring or pretending not to know?
6. What do you want?
7. What actions are you willing to take or what requests could you make to get what you want?
8. When will you take the first action?

To make positive changes in your life: you must be accountable for your outcomes.

Practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is simply the ability to be fully present in the current moment.

Mindfulness will help you notice the small stress situations.

Look for solutions- find areas where you can make small changes. Take action. Monitor the results of that one action. Keep adjusting small steps until you are satisfied that you are getting the results you want.

Give up the language of blaming and self blaming- look for where you can make a change to get a better result.

Practice self-compassion. Self-compassion is treating yourself with kindness and understanding that you are human and will make mistakes. Allowing mistakes to be part of your learning process instead of feeling badly about them.

Practice self-care. Taking care of your own physical, emotional and health needs gives you the energy and ability to enjoy life to the fullest.

Personal accountability does not mean you have to make changes alone. Most people are more successful with making a change when they have a support system.

Get help if this is overwhelming. Talk to friends, family, colleagues, a counselor or a coach.

You have the power to be in control of your own life. Step up to the role by making small manageable changes in your actions and attitude. Life is made up of small choices made one day at a time. Start small and think big to create a life where you are actively in charge of your outcomes. Remember that attitude and action are the keys to getting to your desired outcomes in life.

*Personal Accountability was printed with Permission from Gwen Pettit, MA, MS, PCC of SPIRAL CONSULTING*

*Gwen Pettit, a CATALYST Team Consultant, is a certified life coach with the International Coaching Federation with a Masters in Organizational Development and part of Catalyst Veterinary Practice Consultants. Gwen specializes in coaching veterinary professionals who are overwhelmed with the competing demands on their time and want to create an integrated meaningful life.*