Radiance Hobart
Counselling & Self-Development

Responsibility

What is Responsibility?

Responsibility is the state of being responsible. We are accountable for what we do and say. We accept that we are the person that caused a particular thing to happen. We attribute our actions to ourselves, not to someone else. We are dependable and trustworthy. Responsibility has practical and moral aspects.

Practical Responsibility

When we take responsibility for our actions, we decide on the quality of our actions, what outcome we want and whom we want to benefit. We recognise our own role in what we do and expect to be accountable for it. Taking full responsibility means we work hard and try to get the best outcome.

Moral Responsibility

The moral dimension of responsibility includes recognising that there is a moral imperative to be responsible for our actions. It is the right thing to do. There would be something immoral about trying to evade responsibility. We have an obligation to act in a certain way and are responsible it. Being morally responsible contributes to a good character and being reliable and trustworthy. Others can depend on you because they know that being responsible is part of who you are and how you like to be seen. You won't let them down. Moral responsibility does not always equate with legal responsibility, which refers to acting in accordance with the law, rather than what we see as our personal responsibility.

Personal Responsibility

When we take personal responsibility for our actions, we act in accordance with our conscience – what we believe to be right or wrong. We have moral agency. We weigh up pros and cons and make decisions about what to do. We act in accordance with those decisions, and expect to be accountable for them. We may be praised if they are good actions, or punished if they are bad. Taking personal responsibility for our actions means we accept and deal with the consequences. We are answerable for them.

Workplace Responsibility

Responsibility at work means you are required to take charge of certain tasks and make sure they are carried correctly. In government organisations, it may be your responsibility to see that a certain service is delivered correctly. In business, you may responsible for the manufacture, distribution or sales of a product, or for customer service. Whatever your area of responsibility, the livelihood of others will be affected by the degree to which you exercise your responsibility.

Blame

Blame is the state of attributing responsibility to someone else. We may do this because the person *was* responsible, or we may do it when we don't want to take responsibility for our own actions. When we blame someone for what they have done, we find fault with it, and criticise them as having done something wrong or inadequately. When we blame someone else for what we have done, we are shifting the responsibility away from ourselves to someone else. This is problematic, not only because it is unfair to the person we are blaming, but also because without accepting and taking responsibility for our mistakes, we are less likely to learn from them and more liable to repeat them.

Taking Responsibility

Taking responsibility is a sign of emotional maturity. To say 'sorry' when we have done something wrong or missed doing something right is a sign of moral strength, not of weakness. We are human, not perfect, so we will stuff up sometimes. But if we take responsibility, we have a better chance to learn from our mistakes than we would have if we refuse to take responsibility for them. We can learn new things, grow in ourselves, and take responsibility for the example we show to others who are aware of our actions.

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