



The Family Business

A successful businessman has 6 young sons and one daughter who was the youngest. One day, unexpectedly the businessman had to go overseas for an emergency situation for an indefinite amount of time. The man had not yet trained his kids to take over his business but he had to leave in a hurry. The man entrusted the care of his business to his 6 sons, telling them – “Please, all of you do your best to take care of things while I am away” Then he left his sons and went on his journey, hoping for the best from his sons.

It did not take long for the man’s sons to quickly learn how difficult and involved it is to run a successful business. While the man was away each son ended up with the following reaction to the challenging new situation:

Johnny the oldest son said to himself: *“I didn’t ask for this! This isn’t my problem”* – With that thinking, Johnny did very little to help and left the majority of the work for others to take care of

Mike the second son then said to himself: *“If Johnny isn’t going to help then I’m not going to either! This just isn’t fair”* – With that thinking, Mike ended up doing very little to help

Tommy the next son was crafty. Instead of helping, as soon as he saw that his older brothers weren’t paying close attention any more, he withdrew some money out of the business account and spent it on himself. Then he wrote his father a deceptive letter saying how everything was going just fine now that he had it all under control

Ben, the next son, simply said to himself – *“I don’t care about what happens”* Then he proceeded to go about with his own life, providing no help at all while just ignoring the situation. When confronted, Ben would just promise his brothers he would help tomorrow but then never come through for them

Garry the next son said to his brothers: *“I would help but you guys are better off without me because I would just make things worse”*. Deep down he knew he should have been helping but in reality he was afraid

Finally **Tina**, the youngest little sister decided that since her brothers were not taking care of things she attempted to give it a try herself. Tina, was inexperienced and lacked the “know-how”, strength and skill level that her brothers had so she struggled a great deal in her efforts keep the business running. She continued to try to do the best that she could to the degree she was able and she never gave up in spite of the many struggles and mistakes she had to deal with each day. She was often overwhelmed but kept on trying

Eventually, the businessman father returned home from his trip and he saw that things with his precious business were going terribly. He then spoke to each sibling individually to learn about what happened while he was away in an effort to find out what went wrong. The businessman was disappointed to hear that all that his sons had to offer him was:

- Excuses
- Blaming and finger pointing (Not my fault)
- Lies and deception
- Indifference (not caring)
- Avoidance and negligence
- Apathy and inattention

Tina however made no excuses and didn’t point any fingers. Instead she humbly apologized for any mistakes she may have made and then she stated that she sincerely wished she could have done more.

Finally, the father gathered all of his children together. He stood Tina up and put his hands on his daughter’s shoulders and then said to all of them: *“Tina – from today forward, I will train you to take over the family business. Even though things were difficult with me gone and you are the youngest and least experienced, you were the only one who took **responsibility** – and that I can work with”*



Responsibility - the state or fact of being *responsible*,

To be responsible means to be:

- **Reliable**
- **Dependable**
- **Accountable**
- **Answerable**

Responsibility can be likened to a road with many detours and exits along the way. It is OK to ask for help along the road but when you are truly acting as a responsible person, ultimately the road ends with you taking ownership of the situation, regardless of how it turns out.



1 - Responsibility Road Exercise

Review the "Responsibility Road" handout on the following page. Think about the actual reason(s) why you are currently in the situation you are in (Substance use, legal, family problems, etc.)

Get honest – Under each box on Responsibility Road there are general examples provided. Try to come up with some **specific and personal examples** you may have used yourself to avoid responsibility for your current situation based on the examples provided on the worksheet

For example, under "Blaming and Excuse Making" a specific, personal answer could be something like "For years, I used the fact that my father and older brothers were alcoholics as my excuse for drinking myself"

Another example, under "Dishonesty/Deception/Avoidance" a specific personal answer could be "When I relapsed in the past, I would do everything I could to hide it from my counselors, my family and everyone else"



RESPONSIBILITY ROAD

Blaming and Excuse Making

- “It’s not my fault”
- “If things were different... “If – If – If.”
- “It’s _____’s (*fill in the blank*) fault!”
(My parents fault, society’s fault, my probation officer’s fault, etc.)

Helplessness/Playing the Victim

- “This just isn’t fair, why should I bother?”
- “This is just too hard”
- “The world is stacked against me, so what’s the point?”

Indifference/Apathy/Denial

- “I just don’t care enough to try”
- “This just isn’t my problem, it doesn’t matter how many people say it is”
- “I feel numb and disconnected to the point where I stopped thinking about what’s really important”

Fear/Low Self Confidence

- “I just don’t have what it takes
- “I am afraid to fail so why try at all?”
- “I don’t deserve anything better in life”

Dishonesty/Deception/Avoidance

- “I’ll just yes everyone to death then just go about my business
- “There has got to be a scam or shortcut to avoid having to do this the hard way”
- “I’ll lie, cheat, sneak and steal until I get caught, then I’ll just lie some more



2 – Increasing a Sense of Responsibility

What is involved in process of learning to accept responsibility?

Review the following and place a star ★ next to the areas you believe that you are currently doing well with, and place an **X** next to the areas you think that you may need to work on:

Discuss each of the following:

___ **Let go of the “Fallacy of Fairness”** (Also referred to as the “Fairness Myth”) - In short, sometimes people avoid responsibility because a situation is not fair or just. For example, it is not fair that some people are born poor, while others are born wealthy, nor is it fair that some people are have disabilities while others are others are in good health. ***Regardless of how fair or unfair a situation is, each person is responsible for doing what they can to try to better their situation.***

___ **Stop Making Excuses.** Excuses can be like an anchor around your waste holding you down. Keep in mind, that just because something is true, that still doesn't mean it's a valid excuse to avoid responsibility. It's better to look at negative things as obstacles or challenges that you need to overcome instead of dead end excuses that immobilize progress

___ **Practice Taking Ownership.** When you “own” a situation, you take responsibility for the outcome, whether that is good or bad. This involves being accountable for your own decisions and ready to answer honestly for your choices and for your mistakes

___ **Dedication, Commitment and Resilience.** Responsible people bounce back when things go wrong. A few unexpected bumps in the road shouldn't mean that you have to turn around and go home. Responsible people stay committed to their goals, their promises, and their obligations in good times and in bad. Simply put, learn not to quit when the going gets rough

___ **Learn to Delay Gratification.** Responsibility is often about struggling now in order to receive rewards later. Responsible people develop the ability to tolerate a little discomfort now for the achievement of greater long term goals. Responsible people put in work now and reap the benefits later instead of making pleasure seeking the number one priority in life

___ **Develop Qualities that Coincide with Responsibility.** It is a lot easier to be responsible if you are:

- ___ Honest
- ___ Punctual
- ___ Organized
- ___ Helpful
- ___ Hard Working
- ___ Able to Follow Directions
- ___ Reliable and Able to Keep Promises
- ___ Self-Motivated and Goal Driven
- ___ Caring and Conscientious
- ___ Other? – Can you think of anything else needed to be more responsible? _____

DISCUSS:

- ***Which areas are strengths for you?***
- ***Which areas do you need to work on so that you can increase your level of responsibility?***