



## The Lure of Accountability

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How do we really know the affect we have on others, positive or negative?

When I meet a new client who says he is 'passionate' and sometimes his passion is taken the wrong way, this tells me that his passion often turns to anger.

Passion is exciting and draws people to you. Anger frightens the recipient, immediately putting them into a state of 'fight or flight'. They will either raise their voice in angry retaliation, or escape mentally or physically. Either way, anger voiced loudly is a losing proposition.

According to the Better Health Channel, long term anger can produce the following physical effects in individuals on your team: headache, indigestion, abdominal pain, insomnia, anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke. The results, increased absenteeism, lower morale and shorter retention.

Please know that anger is an authentic, even healthy emotion. It tells us that something is not right, helps us make needed changes and declare boundaries.

### **The key is to express anger in a healthy, respectful manner.**

Everyone experiences anger. The next time you feel your hot fuse will cause collateral damage please remember my top '7' tips for dealing with your anger.

1. **Acknowledge.** Rather than blurt, yell or attempt to hide your anger, silently acknowledge it. Something has brought about this emotion. You don't have to act on it right away, just acknowledge how you feel.
2. **Question.** What is really bringing about this anger? Oftentimes it has nothing to do with the other person or situation. It is something within you, as that feeling of 'not being good enough' that someone or something has triggered.
3. **Step away.** The hotter you feel the greater need to create space between yourself and the subject of your anger. Go for a walk, run, or sit in a park. Swimming works great for me. Sometimes it takes 10-20 laps to gain clarity and I am a different person.
4. **Share with an appropriate source.** It is imperative that you share your anger with a trusted someone (not the entire world). You'll not need someone who will agree or sympathize with you. Instead, find someone who will listen intently and help you gain a better understand of the situation. Holding it inside will intensify it.
5. **Neutralize.** What do you want to come about as a result of your anger? Change, boundaries, something that will prevent this from happening in the future? Focusing upon what you want instead of regurgitating it will bring about your desired result.

6. **Express.** It is not always necessary to express your anger to the recipient after going through the above steps, however if you feel the need then first set the stage for a productive discussion: make an appointment, create a safe environment, rehearse what you'll say, be respectful and clear, provide examples, clearly state desired action.
7. **Look forward.** Move forward. If you are not ready to leave this incident behind, then go back through the above steps. When ready to put this behind you, be thankful for another of life's gracious lessons that make you the strong, insightful leader that you are.

Be the leader that others want to follow. Know yourself and your people well enough to know if, when and how your anger affects them. When in doubt, simply ask. Join in any discussion today. You'll likely find yourself in a whirlwind of blame, judgment...even anger.

With the uncertainty of recent years, it's not difficult to find colleagues and friends who have an increased need to be 'right.' This, of course, makes others (anyone who opposes them) 'wrong.'

I've found one refreshing trait to stand out far above the 'right' and 'wrong' blame game: *accountability*.

To the fast-paced, highly-skilled leaders and executives with whom I am honored to work, few qualities are more alluring than the simple act of one being accountable for their words, choices, and actions.

**Case in point:** Sam and George joined their firm in 2002. Since then, Sam has maintained strong relationships in and outside of work receiving the accompanying financial and promotional benefits.

George, on the other hand, has stumbled from one bad decision or relationship to the other, always having an excuse for why this 'happened to him.' There was always another guy or situation to blame for his misfortune.

Sam didn't always make wise decisions on his path to the top, and George didn't always make poor decisions.

**The differentiator was that Sam was *accountable* for his mistakes and learned from each one while George made excuses and blaming others his art.**

If you are a leader reading this, you know that it takes far less time and energy for your people to come to you with a quick description of a current mistake and how they'll solve it, than having to discover it later and clean it up after the fact.

Irrespective of your role as a leader, partner, team player, spouse or friend, you owe it to those who trust you to be *accountable* for your actions. Not doing so is damaging.

So, let's elevate your effectiveness factor with my **Top 7 Tips to Be Accountable**.

1. **Accept your role.** Your role comes with responsibilities. Some are written in job descriptions. Most important ones such as respect, honesty, integrity, hard work are not. Your mirror will reflect whether you are living up to what is expected of you. Honor that.
2. **Be present.** The weakest excuse that drives leaders mad is: 'I didn't know...'. Of course you knew or should have known you were in error. Your job is to be aware and present of both your actions and how you affect those around you.
3. **Be honest.** Stop often to be honest with yourself. Reflect upon whether you are acting in accordance with expectations (yours and others) and what, if anything, needs to be eliminated, strengthened or changed.

4. **Care about your role.** You surely know someone who simply doesn't care. They slide through life only thinking of themselves. To be truly effective, be accountable to care if you are exceeding what is expected of you. Care about others as much as yourself.
5. **Look for patterns.** If you lack accountability in certain areas, you've likely done this throughout much of your life. Now is the time to break that pattern in favor of succeeding. Is your pattern fear of failure? If so, be accountable for your failure (instead of hiding it) and feel the great release of acting upon it.
6. **Develop Potential Solutions.** Owning up to an error is only part of your accountability. Don't put it on someone else to solve it for you. Instead develop your own creative solutions. This is a two-way win—having fully thought it through, you'll succeed in the others' eyes and not make the mistake again.
7. **Speak, listen and learn.** When presenting a situation for which you are accountable, focus on the feedback you receive. Most people only focus upon the emotion of the receiving party. Instead clearly listen, ask questions and take this opportunity to learn from this situation.

If you have been shocked, dismayed and disappointed in someone who has not had the strength or wisdom to be accountable for their actions you may want to share this article.

Sadly, lack of accountability often ends up in the termination of a previously trusted relationship.

I urge you to step it up in the area of accountability. Strengthen your own self respect and the respect of others by being more honest and accountable in all of your thoughts, choices and actions.

Read all of Ann's Writing and Wisdom at: <http://gvasuccess.com/writing-and-wisdom.htm>

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