

HOW
ACCOUNTABLE
ARE YOU?
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The 85% Solution

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

How

**PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
GUARANTEES SUCCESS**

No Nonsense, No Excuses

LINDA GALINDO

with Versera Performance Consulting

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Praise for THE 85% SOLUTION

“Now, more than ever, we all need to know that we can’t blame the economy, weather, Wall Street, etc., for the situation we are in. We need to stop pointing the finger, look in the mirror, and muster up the courage to realize and admit it all starts with our thinking about personal accountability, which eventually turns into our reality and results. *The 85% Solution* masterfully demonstrates that a mind-set of personal accountability is where it all begins! The message is now ingrained in my brain and has changed my life!”

—**Irene Perez Zucker**, president, Verbacom Executive Development

“This book gives practical advice for your personal and professional development, pertinent in today’s world. Galindo inspires you to choose your attitude and behavior and to live with those choices.”

—**Stephanie Grenfell**, nurse manager

“In an engaging and humorous style, *The 85% Solution* provides the key to finding and defining success and living the life you’ve only dreamed of.”

—**Janet Buchanan**, Buchanan Consulting

“You feel like you are there as you read Linda Galindo’s examples, like someone filmed your life and showed it to you and suddenly it all became oh-so-clear why the misery and frustration in your life is of your own making.”

—**Andrew Thweatt**, president, SKS, Inc.

“Change your life! Follow Linda’s lead in moving from the Queen of Victims to a life of *accountability*. This book is written in a way that anyone can understand, enjoy, and most important, get the results you want, be happier, and lower your stress.”

—**Jona Raasch**, president, the Governance Institute

The 85% Solution

HOW PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
GUARANTEES SUCCESS—NO
NONSENSE, NO EXCUSES

Linda Galindo
with Versera Performance Consulting

Foreword by David A. Costello

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To Mike, Lea, and Kayla You inspire me every day to live accountably, learn enthusiastically, and laugh when I need to.

Foreword

I watch the news, read the papers, and follow the Websites. They're all full of distressing failures, disappointing behaviors, dire economic results, and doomsday commentary.

Are you yet growing weary of the widespread irresponsibility, abuse of power, and accountability vacuum so prevalent among us? I am! And if you are, I invite you to join me in an exciting journey of responsibility restoration, self-empowerment awareness, and accountability makeover leading to your success and joy in your work and play.

Linda Galindo's book, *The 85% Solution*, is our starting point . . . and what a great orientation to an exciting journey.

In a style that reminds me of Ben Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack*, Galindo suggests that success is at least 85 percent of *my* doing, *my* attitude, and *my* being whom I should be.

The 85% Solution's practical guidelines for true success include:

- Responsibility: "Responsibility is not something you do; it's a way of thinking and a way of being."
- Self-empowerment: "Take the actions and take the risks that you need to in order to ensure that you achieve the results you desire."
- Accountability: "Accountable people put a 'who' with every 'what.'"

A refreshing and enjoyable distinction made by Galindo is the three-part assessment of the accountability quotient: responsibility, self-empowerment, and personal

accountability. When completed, the quotient indicates one's strengths and areas for improvement and is a personal road map for achieving 85 percent and beyond in our quest for an accountability lifestyle.

With all the books at your disposal about success and responsibility, why in the world would you want to read *The 85% Solution*?

One reason is the author, Linda Galindo, a nationally recognized author, educator, speaker, consultant, and expert in executive leadership development. She knows what she's talking about because she lives responsibly and accountably.

Another reason for reading the book is the very practical guidance you receive in real-world settings and the void-filling encouragement you find on every page.

The 85% Solution not only answers the question, "How much of your success depends on you?" but it also places you on the journey of joy in achieving success more fully.

July 2009 David A. Costello, CPA
President and CEO, National Association
of State Boards of Accountancy
President, NASBA Center for the Public Trust

Introduction

You're lying on your stomach on a cold, metal gurney in an operating room, woozy from the anesthesia that will, in just a few moments, render you unable to speak or feel or react.

Four others are in the room, too: the orthopedic surgeon who will repair the errant disk in your back; the anesthesiologist who is monitoring your reaction to the medicine she just gave you; a circulating nurse who will watch out for your safety; and a scrub nurse who will pass sterile instruments to the doctor.

Through your haze you hear the two nurses arguing. One is chiding the other because she thinks the scalpels and clamps on the sterile tray have not been sufficiently cleaned.

"Mind your own business," the scrub nurse retorts.

"I know how to do my job."

The circulating nurse takes her worries to the anesthesiologist.

"Leave me out of it," the anesthesiologist tells her. "That's not my responsibility."

So the nurse turns to the surgeon, but before she can speak, he snaps to the bickering group, "Quiet! It's time to start!"

As you lose consciousness, the scrub nurse hands a scalpel to the doctor, *who uses it to cut your back.*

Which of those four professionals is responsible for the safety of that scalpel?

Is it the scrub nurse whose job it is to sterilize it? The circulating nurse in charge of looking out for your safety? The anesthesiologist who rendered you unable to be responsible for it yourself? Or the surgeon who used it to slice through your skin?

Suppose you wake up from the surgery with a painful infection from the cut. Now who do you think is responsible? Which member of the surgical team will you hold accountable?

The scrub nurse? He believed the instruments were clean.

The anesthesiologist? She isn't in charge of the instruments.

The circulating nurse? She tried to tell everyone.

The surgeon? He didn't know anything was amiss.

If just one of these people is responsible, does that mean the others aren't?

Perhaps each of the four is one-quarter responsible for your infection.

Sound good? Next time you need surgery, will it be good enough to know that each person participating in a procedure that involves cutting your skin, touching your organs, or removing a diseased body part is willing to take one-quarter of the responsibility for making sure you don't die on the table?

I didn't think so.

Here's the only acceptable answer: Each conscious person in that room is 100 percent responsible for the success of the surgery, right down to the squeaky-clean sterility of the instruments.

If the scrub nurse was 100 percent responsible, he would have recleaned the instruments just in case the circulating nurse was right.

If the circulating nurse was 100 percent responsible, she would have prevented the doctor from cutting you with a dirty instrument by interrupting the surgery, even though the doctor told her to be quiet.

If the anesthesiologist was 100 percent responsible, she would have insisted that the scrub nurse resterilize the instruments as soon as she learned there might be a problem.

If the surgeon was 100 percent responsible, he would have invited the circulating nurse and the other team members to air their concerns before assuming it was okay to start the surgery.

Next time you need surgery, how responsible do you want each person on your surgical team to be for your well-being?

One hundred percent—each. No question about it.

Now apply that to yourself. Next time you agree to do something, how much responsibility will you take for it?

Here's the only acceptable answer: 100 percent.

When you work as part of a team at your job, be 100 percent personally responsible for the outcome of the effort—good or bad.

If you and your spouse have divided the household chores, be 100 percent responsible for how well your household runs, not just for your part.

In every relationship with family, friends, and coworkers, be 100 percent responsible for the harmony and health of that relationship, not just for half of it.

Even when you're working on something whose outcome matters only to you, be 100 percent responsible for it. Don't leave your success up to anyone or anything else.

Own it.

Not somewhat. Not partially. Not pretty much. Not, "I guess so" or "as long as." Own it 100 percent. No wiggle room.

I can safely guess that this is not how you operate today. Most people don't.

Most people believe they're responsible only for "their part" of a job, and that if someone else screws up and the project fails, it's not their fault. So why be responsible?

Let me tell you why: Whether you admit it or not, you *are* accountable for everything you're involved with, whether it turns out good or bad, whether it fails because of something you did or because of something your partners did. The outcome belongs to everyone who touched the project, not just to the ones who made mistakes.

You share or take all of the credit when all goes well. And like it or not, you are implicated in the blame when it doesn't, even if you're not the one who messed up.

It's just how it is.

Once you realize up front that the result is going to be yours no matter who does what to cause that result, you'll get better results—because you'll make better choices. And you'll be in control of your own success.

This shift in mind-set isn't easy, but it's worth the trouble. It will help you

- Get things done more effectively and with less stress
- Feel a sense of accomplishment in your job
- Develop stronger, more positive relationships

- Improve personal productivity and satisfaction
- Change your organization or your family for the better

You already have this ability, and you already have the responsibility; everybody does. But most of us either don't realize—or aren't willing to admit—that we alone have the power to live our lives how we want to.

No other person or unforeseen circumstance can do that for us or to us.

We can give other people and outside conditions power over us, but that's a conscious choice. It doesn't happen without our permission.

This message—this book—is important right now because we are bombarded every day with messages from guilty officials, celebrities, and even the media, who tell us that outside conditions have the *most* to do with what happens to them—and to us.

Keep reading. I'm going to convince you that *you*—and nobody or anything else—are accountable for what happens to you.

If you believe the environment, the universe, politicians, or other people are responsible for your success, *good luck*.

If you believe you're responsible for your own success, your luck is bound to improve.

Change your *mind-set*. Be responsible.

The truly good news is that each of us has 100 percent personal responsibility available to us as a mind-set.

If it is to be, it's up to me.

It's total personal responsibility. It's mine. I own it. There are no trap doors.

The critical factor missing from most of our lives is a mind-set of commitment and ownership to a result before we set

out to do something, whether it's to get through our day, finish a home improvement project, or do our jobs.

What is your mind-set?

Your response to the following question will reveal the truth about you:

How much of your success is up to you, and how much of it is determined by outside conditions, like the environment, other people, or just plain bad luck?

What's your answer? Forty percent you, 60 percent environment? Half and half? One hundred percent you, forget the outside world?

What your answer reveals is how successful a person you are.

If you answered 85 percent (or higher) you, 15 percent (or less) outside conditions, that says you believe that you are responsible for your own success. And I'll bet you're successful.

On the other hand, if your answer is 50-50 or anywhere less than 85-15, be honest: Are you as successful as you would like to be?

Or does it seem that other people, situations, and influences seem to always stand in the way of your getting ahead?

Deep down, do you know that they're not the ones to blame when you don't finish a project, achieve a good result, or come through when people are counting on you?

Deep down, do you know *you alone* are responsible for everything you choose to do?

Would you like to solve—or prevent—your problems? Would you like to be more successful? Would you enjoy

feeling happier, more confident, and less burdened by worry and regret?

Here is your solution: Acknowledge, believe, and act on the fact that you, and you alone, are 100 percent responsible for your own successes, opportunities, and happiness. Just you and your choices, you and your mind-set. Not anybody or anything else.

Likewise, you, and you alone, are 100 percent responsible for your own failures, problems, and bad mood. You and your choices.

Too big a leap? Start at 85 percent.

Can you acknowledge that you are responsible for at least 85 percent of everything that happens to you, and that other people and conditions beyond your control are responsible for no more than 15 percent?

That's a mind-set that will help you improve your life so vastly that you will strive to be 100 percent responsible.

That is the 85% Solution.

Right now, you might think you know someone who could benefit from what I'm telling you: your spouse, a colleague, your best friend.

Go look in the mirror. That someone is you.

Stop blaming your problems and failures—big or small—on the people around you. Stop using “circumstances beyond my control” as the scapegoat for your own choices, behaviors and actions.

The 85% Solution will show you how.

In *The 85% Solution*, I guide you through a three-step process that will help you own your choices—all of them.

The 85% Solution will give you the tools you need to fully own your actions. It will offer you a tremendous opportunity

to change the outcome of your work, your relationships, your career, and even your life by taking charge of yourself and then accepting the consequences for doing that.

To get there, you will have to take these three important steps:

1. Be responsible for the success or failure of everything you do—for your choices, behaviors, and actions—*before* you know how it will all turn out. Own all of it, even if you're working for or with somebody else.
2. Empower yourself to succeed. Take the actions—and take the risks—that you need to in order to ensure that you achieve the results you desire.
3. Be accountable for your actions. Demonstrate your willingness to answer for the outcomes that result from your choices, behaviors, and actions, without fault, blame, or guilt.

Responsibility, self-empowerment, accountability. These are the keys to taking control of your own success.

I ought to know.

PART I

Responsibility

The Queen of Victims: A Fairy Tale

Once upon a time, I was the Queen of Victims, with a shiny scepter, a sparkling crown, and a plush velvet robe, walking up and down the runway of Poor Me. Life didn't work for me. My boss was a jerk. My parents didn't encourage me. My husband was controlling. I got divorced. I complained and whined.

One day, a good and smart friend put a stunningly quick stop to it by asking me a revealing question that stung me like a slap in the face.

"Have you ever noticed that all the bad things you complain about happened when you were in the room? Have you ever considered that you might have something to do with your own rotten luck?"

I hadn't.

This so-called friend must have lost her mind. "What kind of friend are you, anyway?" I pouted.

Honestly, it never occurred to me that I might be inviting sadness, heartache, confusion, and struggles with the way I was behaving: irresponsibly. Every time I hit a rough patch, I had someone to blame: my boss, my parents, my ex-husband, my fair-weather friends, my hairdresser, my dog.

My good and smart friend's point was this: Bad things were happening to me because of my own actions, my own behavior, and my own pitiful Poor Me thinking, but I was crying so hard I couldn't see it through my tears. I had so many excuses about why my life was a mess, and so many people to blame.