

WHAT IS ACCOUNTABILITY?

Accountability is a term that we are hearing more frequently in our daily lives now. But do we really know what it means?



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DEFINITION

Accountability as it appears on the Merriam-Webster dictionary is "The state of being held accountable. Especially: an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions."

LINK TO THE DICTIONARY ENTRY HERE:
[ACCOUNTABILITY | DEFINITION OF ACCOUNTABILITY BY MERRIAM-WEBSTER \(MERRIAM-WEBSTER.COM\)](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/accountability)



THREE TYPES



Now, the definition listed above is extremely generalized. There are many ways and connotations for accountability as a practice and as a term. For this resource we're focusing on three types of accountability.

Personal | Social | Governmental

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY



The meaning of personal accountability is expressed differently in different fields.

Most of the resources you can find are for leaders and for the workplace, but you can practice personal accountability in all areas of your life. From work to relationships, here's an all encompassing definition from Forbes magazine article 'Personal Accountability And The Pursuit Of Workplace Happiness'

"Personal accountability is the belief that you are fully responsible for your own actions and consequences. It's a choice, a mindset and an expression of integrity."

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The exact definition of social accountability is continuously being debated and adapted by professionals and different organizations. The UN is one of those organizations that has power in the establishment of the definition. It is defined by the

UNDP as:

"... a form of accountability that emerges through actions by citizens and civil society organizations aimed at holding the State to account, as well as efforts by government and other actors to support and respond to these actions."



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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Of these three connotations, government accountability is the hardest to define as it can intersect and depend on social accountability to be practiced. Nevertheless, it is practiced as government accountability is one of the pillars that ensures that democracies function and thrive. Per the Encyclopedia Britannica, accountability in a constitutional government is the notion that:

"Under constitutional government, those who govern are regularly accountable to at least a portion of the governed...In constitutional democracies, the accountability of government officials to the citizenry makes possible the citizens' responsibility for the acts of government."

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IT STARTS WITH YOU!

When you start holding yourself and others around you more accountable, you can start to recognize what is lacking in your community. Which in turn leads you to find organizations and ways to practice social accountability that holds your government accountable for shortcomings. This pressures your government to behave accountably and distribute funds and proper resources to help your community.



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TIPS FOR HOLDING YOURSELF/ OTHERS ACCOUNTABLE



From videos found on the Accountability Resources for All - Youtube Playlist

Don't blame - putting blame on anything makes you and others defensive, not willing to take responsibility.

Ask what happened - What went well? What deviated from your plans? When you identify what is the cause of your problem or your success, you can begin to repeat or changes patterns.

Make space for conversation and reflection on what happened - After you identify the outcome, you need time to reflect and figure out what you wish to repeat and what you wish you would've done differently.

Determine what's the plan of action - After you identify what will change or stay the same, how will you ensure that you or others actually follow through.

[Accountability Resources for All- Youtube playlist](#)

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UP NEXT

Reflect on what you learned from this post

- Go to the YouTube resource
- Watch at least one video.
- Choose one area of your life in which you want to incorporate accountability from yourself and others. Little by little, start implement the tips.
- Watch yourself and others grow!

