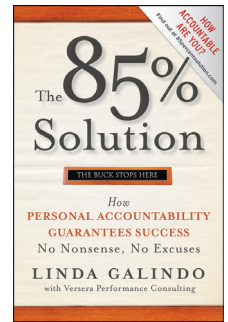


# The 85% Solution

**No nonsense. No excuses. A straight-talking accountability expert delivers a timely new book on personal accountability.**



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

**—Linda Galindo  
The 85% Solution**

Imagine that you’re lying on a cold metal gurney in a hospital operating room.

Four others are there, too: the anesthesiologist who will soon render you unconscious; the orthopedic surgeon who will repair the damaged disk in your back; the scrub nurse who will pass sterile instruments to the surgeon; and the circulating nurse who will watch over your safety.

Already woozy from the anesthesia, you hear the two nurses arguing. The circulating nurse thinks that the scalpels haven’t been sufficiently sterilized. “Mind your own business,” retorts the scrub nurse. “I know how to do my job.”

The circulating nurse takes her worries to the anesthesiologist. “Leave me out of it,” he tells her. “That’s not my responsibility.” So, she turns to the surgeon, but before she can say anything, he snaps, “Quiet! It’s time to start.” As you lose consciousness, the scrub nurse hands a scalpel to the surgeon.

Which one of those four professionals is responsible for the condition 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 speak up? Or the surgeon who used it to slice through your skin?

Suppose you wake up with a serious infection from the incision. Now which member of the team will you hold accountable? The scrub nurse? He believed that the scalpel was 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 individual is willing to take one-quarter of the responsibility for making sure that you’re free from harm—that you don’t die on the table?

“Enough!” exclaims accountability expert Linda Galindo, author of *The 85% Solution: How Personal Accountability Guarantees Success—No Nonsense, No Excuses* (Jossey-Bass, 2009, \$22.95).

Galindo is a woman on a mission—fired up to ignite a national conversation on personal accountability. Fed up with widespread irresponsibility—in business, politics, sports, entertainment, you name it—she argues that Americans are starving for accountability.

A consultant specializing in individual and leadership accountability, Galindo asserts that the only true accountability is “personal accountability” and that unless you own at least 85% of the responsibility before the outcomes of your decisions—*your* choices, *your* actions, *your* behaviors—you, in all probability, blame your problems and failures on other people, outside circumstances, or just plain bad luck.

**THE 85% SOLUTION:  
How Personal  
Accountability  
Guarantees Success—  
No Nonsense, No Excuses**

Linda Galindo  
with  
Versera Performance Consulting

Jossey-Bass

ISBN 978-0-470-50016-3

Hardcover  
256 pages

October 2009  
\$22.95

In *The 85% Solution*, Galindo reveals personal accountability as not only a mind-set, but also a skill-set that everyone can learn. She introduces an essential three-step process: responsibility (being 100% responsible for a result before you even take action); self-empowerment (taking the actions and risks to get what you want); and personal accountability (answering for the outcome of your choices).

Galindo also provides an eye-opening self-assessment tool and presents specific, straightforward tips for everyday life—the workplace, career development, personal growth, relationships, and more. Additionally, she illuminates real-world examples of accountability—the good, the bad, and the ugly. More:

- ▶ The most common excuses for shirking accountability—and how to avoid them
- ▶ Why you are 100% responsible for a team result, not just for your part
- ▶ 10 ways to “self-empower” at work—owning your attitude, time, and words
- ▶ What to do when you mess up, and why lies and cover-ups make it worse
- ▶ How to make accountability an organization’s central organizing principle

Bottom line: Personal accountability is sorely lacking—but urgently needed—in our lives and across our society. Galindo delivers new, no-nonsense solutions and shows individuals and organizations how to own up and succeed.

**Linda Galindo** is an accountability expert and author of *The 85% Solution: How Personal Accountability Guarantees Success—No Nonsense, No Excuses* (Jossey-Bass, 2009, \$22.95).

Founder and president of Galindo Consulting, Inc., Galindo advises CEOs, leadership teams, and boards of directors in making personal accountability their organizations’ central organizing principle. She works with a variety of business, government, and non-profit organizations—from Abbott Laboratories to the Sundance Institute—and is a widely respected specialist in the healthcare industry, regularly consulting with leadership in hospitals, insurance groups, and medical technology companies.

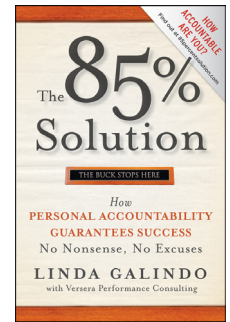
Galindo is a faculty member of the Governance Institute, Medical Leadership Institute, and Institute for Management Studies, and a board member of the Center for the Public Trust of the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA). A former broadcast journalist, she is a frequent media source and a sought-after keynote speaker. She lives in Park City, Utah.

**Contact Patti Danos at (312) 335-1464 or [pattidanos@earthlink.net](mailto:pattidanos@earthlink.net).**

© 2009 Linda Galindo. All rights reserved.

# The 85% Solution

Choosing accountability—3 steps to owning your success at work and in life



**“...act on the fact that you, and you alone, are 100 percent responsible for your own successes, opportunities, and happiness. Too big a leap? Start at 85 percent.”**

**—Linda Galindo  
The 85% Solution**

How much of your success is up to you—*your* choices, *your* actions, *your* behaviors—versus outside conditions?

Your answer speaks volumes, declares Linda Galindo, an accountability expert and author of *The 85% Solution: How Personal Accountability Guarantees Success—No Nonsense, No Excuses* (Jossey-Bass, 2009, \$22.95). If you said fifty-fifty, or anything less than 85%, says Galindo, you almost certainly blame your problems and failures—big or small, personal or professional—on other people, “circumstances beyond my control,” or just plain bad luck.

Instead, Galindo challenges you to choose accountability and own your personal success and happiness. It’s not as easy as one-two-three, she warns, but it is a three-step process.

## 1. Responsibility

Responsibility is not something you do—it’s a way of thinking and being. When you’re truly responsible, you believe that success or failure is up to you, even if you work within a team or are blind-sided by unforeseen circumstances. You own your commitment to a result before the fact—before you even take action. Getting started:

**Be responsible “either way.”** It’s easy to claim responsibility when things go well, but it’s hard when they don’t. A truly responsible person, however, is responsible either way. So next time you take on a project, be 100% responsible for the outcome. Not a little. Not somewhat. Not pretty much. Not “I guess so” or “as long as.” Own it 100%—good or bad—with no wiggle room.

**Recognize your power.** You already have the ability to be 100% responsible—everybody does. Yet most of us don’t realize—or at least don’t admit—that we alone have the power to manage our lives and careers. Sure, you can give that power away, but that is a conscious choice—it doesn’t happen without your permission.

**Deal with what is.** When was the last time you were able to change the past? Truth is, it doesn’t matter what *should* have happened—it matters what *is*. That saves you the trouble of figuring out who’s to blame or worrying about how things “coulda woulda shoulda” been if only something had gone differently. It didn’t—and that makes your choice a cinch: “How do I want to react to the situation that is?”

## 2. Self-empowerment

There is only one kind of empowerment, and that is *self*-empowerment. Unlike granting authority, empowerment comes from within. By empowering yourself, you take the actions—and the risks—to achieve a result and get what you want. Rather than waiting for someone to declare you empowered or give you that one lucky break, you step outside your comfort zone, make things happen, and answer for the outcomes. Getting started:

**Manage expectations.** The most direct route to self-empowerment is to be clear about expectations—not only what you expect, but also what’s expected of you. To do that, you need to ask questions, make agreements, and clarify everything in writing. Otherwise, you risk suffering the source of all upset: missed expectations.

**Take back your time.** “No” is an empowering word. So every time you utter, “I can’t say no,” ask yourself if you can’t—or if you’re unwilling to. Take back your time in other ways, too: get rid of your to-do list (track projects and deadlines on a calendar instead); resist over-scheduling (you can’t cram 12 hours of work into eight hours, so stop trying); and estimate realistically (let’s face it, most everything takes longer than we think).

**Sing your own praises.** It’s an all-too-common workplace mantra: “One day they’ll notice how much I do around here and give me the recognition I deserve.” NOT! Take stock of your personal talents and triumphs and let the higher-ups know who you are and what you contribute.

### 3. Personal accountability

Unlike responsibility (the *before*) and self-empowerment (the *during*), personal accountability is the *after*. It’s a willingness—after all is said and done—to answer for the outcomes of your choices, actions, and behaviors. When you’re personally accountable, you stop assigning blame, “shoulding” on people, and making excuses. Instead, you take the fall when your choices cause problems. Getting started:

**Tell the truth.** Everybody messes up sometimes. Lying about it or trying to cover it up always make it worse—no exceptions. (Just ask former President Bill Clinton, who paid a steep price—impeachment—for lying to a grand jury.) Save yourself some time: Don’t tell untruths. Nobody believes them anyway—not even you.

**Police yourself.** Are you accountable for your actions even if nobody holds you accountable—or nobody catches you? You bet you are. So be your own “Accountability Cop” and police yourself. On the long and winding road of life, choose accountability at every turn.

**Look to yourself—first.** When trouble arises, look first to yourself. Ask four specific questions: “What is the problem?” “What am I doing—or not doing—to contribute to the problem?” “What will I do differently to help solve the problem?” and “How will I be accountable for the result?”

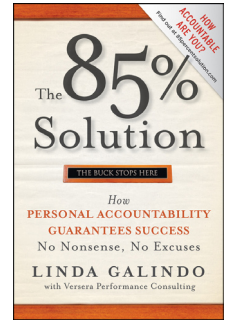
Finally, stop waiting—do it now. Choose accountability—no nonsense, no excuses—and watch it rock your world!

Contact Patti Danos at (312) 335-1464 or [pattidanos@earthlink.net](mailto:pattidanos@earthlink.net).

© 2009 Linda Galindo. All rights reserved.

# The 85% Solution

**Excuses, excuses—the most common excuses for evading accountability**



***“Our society doesn’t talk in a formal way about what responsibility means. We don’t deliberately learn it in school or even—unfortunately—on the job.”***

**—Linda Galindo  
*The 85% Solution***

Accountability and excuses are like oil and water—they don’t mix, proclaims Linda Galindo, an accountability expert and author of *The 85% Solution: How Personal Accountability Guarantees Success—No Nonsense, No Excuses* (Jossey-Bass, 2009, \$22.95).

Yet, says Galindo, excuses for shirking accountability—for not owning up to the consequences of personal choices, actions, and behaviors—can be heard in workplaces and homes everywhere. The most common excuses—and how to avoid them:

**1. “I forgot.”**

Keep your agreements with others on your calendar—not in your head or on a cryptic to-do list. Every night, check your calendar and see what you’re accountable for the next day.

**2. “You never told me.”**

If you’re hearing a request for the first time, figure out how to be accountable for it. Say to the other person, “I am hearing this for the first time and will let you know within the hour when I can deliver my draft.”

**3. “I didn’t have time.”**

Talk about a built-in excuse—no one has enough time. The answer: Get clear on your priorities. Press for particulars upfront, insist on clarity on prioritizing competing to-do’s, and say “no” when possible. Also, make your calendar transparent; that way, when you do say no, it’s data-based—not a meaningless diatribe on how busy you are.

**4. “That wasn’t our agreement.”**

Put your agreements in writing. You may think it takes up valuable time or makes you look controlling, needy, or incompetent. The good news? You’d be wrong!

**5. “It wasn’t a priority.”**

Avoid assuming that a casual request from the boss or a coworker is “just one more thing to add to the list.” Be clear and accountable—and ask. Remember, too, that the pen is your friend. Jot the details down and then transfer them to your calendar.

**6. “I was out—and didn’t know.”**

The mind-set “I am not accountable for what I missed” can be dangerous, even deadly, to your reputation and career. Fact is, not knowing is never an excuse for not being accountable. Your work culture may tolerate it, but you don’t have to.

**7. “It was a stupid assignment anyway.”**

Who cares? Pure and simple, if you’re personally accountable for something, you’re accountable. Even if it is a stupid assignment, just do it—no excuses.

**Contact Patti Danos at (312) 335-1464 or [pattidanos@earthlink.net](mailto:pattidanos@earthlink.net).**

© 2009 Linda Galindo. All rights reserved.