



Pay it Forward

Develop your High-Potential Employees

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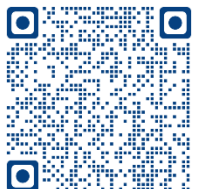
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Take 5% responsibility

This exercise demonstrates the concept that we are responsible for what we experience in life. It introduces the idea that other people don't "make us" feel things and demonstrates that we have control over how we feel and how we react to others.

Rather than placing blame on your staff, manager or co-workers on how they are behaving, take a step back and ask yourself how you could have created that situation? Let's also be honest. Taking no action, *is action*. Please write that down. When you are sitting back quietly, taking no action, you are still taking action. In other words, if you are not taking a stand for how your work relationships should evolve, then why would you expect different and more positive results from them? Your job is to set the stage, direct and delegate expectations so that your schedule and week run like a well-oiled machine and you can create the organizational outcomes you need.

Please complete the following statements about how you can take more responsibility for the outcomes in your life. This exercise is brief but will deliver exponential results if you commit to taking just 5% more responsibility in your career and life. Just 5%! Concrete real-life examples are shown below which will support you in this.

If I were to take 5% more responsibility for my employees' growth and ensuring my team feels valued, empowered to contribute and take on more activities...

Examples:

- I would set aside an Open Office Hours block of time each week for them to come in to speak with me.
- I would create team building experiences for us to better understand one another's backgrounds and experiences.
- I would host a brown bag lunch to solicit their ideas and recommendations.
- I would perform regular individual check-ins

If I were to take 5% more responsibility for my life and well-being....

Examples:

- I would exercise 30 minutes a day.
- I would only eat fast food once per week.
- I would meditate more often.
- I would get more sleep.

If I were to take 5% more responsibility for the attainment of my goals....

Examples:

- I would do three things a day to get me closer to my goal.
- I would share my goals with family and friends and ask for accountability.
- I would do the one thing that I have been procrastinating on.

If I were to take 5% more responsibility for the success of my relationships....

Examples:

- I would plan quality time with my kids and put it in my calendar.
- I would have a date night every week with my spouse or partner.
- I would talk less and listen more.
- I would keep my agreements and only say yes when I mean it.

If I were to take 5% more responsibility for the level of my self-esteem...

Examples:

- I would ask for what I want.
- I would take more trainings and seminars to stay positive.
- I would create a list of my successes and review them often.
- I would surround myself with positive people.

If I were to take 5% more responsibility for my employees' growth and ensuring my team feels valued, and empowered to contribute and take on more activities...

*I would*_____

*I would*_____

*I would*_____

*I would*_____

If I were to take 5% more responsibility for making a bigger impact at C.A.C. Industries...

*I would*_____

*I would*_____

*I would*_____

*I would*_____

Expressing Appreciation

Real recognition is about valuing people for their positive contributions, actions, and who they are. Think about how you can express appreciation to your staff. If you are already doing this, consider a new way to have them feel valued.

Asking for Feedback

What feedback do you need to ask for of your management, department heads or your team to increase your impact?

Often professionals dread asking for feedback in a formal meeting. However, there's no rulebook that says it must be a scheduled sit down. There are impromptu opportunities to give and receive feedback when you're heading out to lunch or in the elevator, right after a meeting which can feel more natural.

You want to address open-ended burning questions your employees have, such as:

- *What's one thing I could improve?*
- *What's one thing I could have done better in that meeting or presentation?*
- *It's been about 6-months since I've stepped into my role. I would welcome your feedback, particularly regarding where you see my biggest opportunity is for growth.*
- *What are some effective strategies that you've discovered to successfully partner with others to get the job done?*
- *How do you think I could have handled that person better?*
- *What do you think I could be doing differently to be successful on this project?*
- *How would you approach this if you were me?*

Make your feedback timely. No need to sit on ceremony to wait for a formal meeting or performance review.

You can also jumpstart a feedback loop by observing others' work and sharing praise for their results, irrespective of whether they are on your team. This can open a conversation later, where you can ask for their input as well and begin to build relationships, to support your growth.

You can share positive feedback with a department head on his or her team members, letting them know you appreciated their staff's contribution on a project. Sharing feedback is not often talked about but often an excellent "in" to connect with others, as long as it's genuine and not solely to "meet and greet" with someone strictly to broker a new relationship. You become a go-giver when doing this outreach.

All feedback is good feedback and it is a gift. Also, it may be hard for the person giving feedback. Many managers share that they have never been given any professional development on how to lead this kind of conversation or have had any managerial leadership training at all.

Keep a focus on what you can do differently after receiving the feedback to bring to your next project or role. Should this be an end of quarter or end of year period, ask others and your manager for feedback on where he or she sees you can make a measurable impact working on future initiatives and programs.

Engage Your Team through Feedback

When you are holding regular meetings, often there's not always enough time for everyone to recap the week, the issues, and challenges faced. Yet this is critical feedback to keep your projects on time every time.

Your projects or day-to-day environment may move very quickly and so it's important that when you meet, you are all able to focus on areas that will deliver the most progress. When starting a new week, a best practice approach to stay on time and focused with your team is to ask the following three questions below.

1. What did we do well?
2. What can we do better?
3. What do we need to focus on this week?

Let's break down each of these questions:

What did we do well? This is a progress assessment which allows everyone to open up on what they have accomplished in the past week, giving them the floor and also some authentic self-promotion time. Not everyone enjoys doing this, but under your watch if you encourage it, they will, which will raise their confidence and momentum when they hit roadblocks. They may, for example, discuss successful and productive meetings they had with people whom your group is dependent upon, or completion of projects, or approvals they retained, or purchases completed.

What can we do better? This gives everyone the opportunity to discuss things that didn't go well, people they couldn't reach, follow-ups that didn't happen, unexpected bottlenecks that occurred, deadlines that are slipping. Once again this should elicit a call to action where, for example, you recognize a need for an additional resource, additional training, a phone call or email which needs to happen.

What do we need to focus on this week? This is where accountability and commitment come into play. Now that we know what went well, what we could do better, what is most important for us to focus on? Everyone can verbally commit to what they will focus on in the current week. This should move quickly as you go around the group and take one to two minutes per person as everyone recaps their commitments.

A team will invest and contribute to this kind of conversation when they feel heard and are included in the co-creation process. People will always invest in what they co-create. Going roundtable can be motivating and inspiring to everyone to remain focused especially when facing project deadlines.



MARISA SANTORO, a former Wall Street IT executive with a 21-year career in Financial Services is the founder of the career leadership platform and Gutsy Leader community, In Our Shoes (InRShoes.com). She is a corporate leadership trainer, keynote speaker, career coach, diversity and inclusion consultant, and author of *Own Your Authority* (McGraw Hill). (OwnYourAuthorityBook.com). Her dynamic and relatable style engages audiences and leaves them with real, practical tools they can hit-the-ground-running with immediately. Her signature style invites participants to make ‘gutsy moves’ – take small incremental action that have the potential to increase their impact over time.

Her expertise in leadership and professional development, as well as effective business communication, has been brought in to support business leaders across industries at organizations such as Pfizer, Merck, American Express, UBS, Anheuser-Busch, Allianz Global Investors, Sony Music, S&P Global, State Farm, Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), New York Council of Nonprofits, Women in Tech International (WITI), Aetna Healthcare, New York University (NYU), NYU Langone Medical Center, New York and New Jersey municipalities and many more.

She is also a TEDx speaker, and honoree of the Woman of Influence award from New York Business Journal and BizWomen.com for her years of mentoring and coaching midcareer leaders, executives, healthcare professionals, and sales leaders to achieve higher levels of influence.

She also writes a career column for American City Business Journals, covering their how-to career and business strategy sections, with articles published across 44 cities in the United States. Her TED talk, “Speaking Without Apology,” guides on how to detach from language that feeds into the “Sorry Syndrome” and make subtle tweaks in your speech to springboard you from diluting your value to spotlighting your assets immediately.

She guides professionals how to reclaim their confidence, tap into their instincts and embrace their inner dialogue using proven tactical tools, and strategies in proven step-by-step career leadership programs coaching on ways to authentically build trust as leaders and advance in their careers.

In the world of leadership development, there’s no shortage of advice on what to do to drive career success—but very little is said about who to be and listening to your intuition. While leadership skills are important, self-trust is the foundation that great leadership is built upon—and developing it is a deeply personal process. In *Own Your Authority*, career leadership expert Marisa Santoro provides the knowledge, tools, and insights you need to understand and embrace your authentic personality and trust in your intuition.

“This is the heart of increasing confidence in any area,” she writes, “taking on risk in small increments, stepping into new territory, facing fears, learning, failing, growing, and circling back to take on more risk that will stretch but not freeze you.”

Great leaders communicate clearly, speak up when it matters most, and thrive on taking on measured risks. Through self-awareness, they embrace acts of discomfort every day—all in the name of learning, growing, and achieving higher levels of influence and leadership. And it all comes with self-trust and confidence.

