

Radical Accountability

By Cheri DeMoss

Radical accountability is only radical because, in the adult world, finding people who are accountable for their behavior, without having to be trapped by some sort of evidence, is uncommon. Finding someone who can own their behavior & the feelings & intentions behind them is even more unusual. Finding someone who understands the rise in self-esteem & increase in self-acceptance that comes from being able to genuinely own their behavior is just plain rare.

Couples who have been together for years will, more often than not, deny their behavior to each other unless the partner has "proof". Taking ownership of our behavior with any-

As kids we learn to believe that not being accountable will prevent us from being disliked - which of course never works

one, but especially with the person we love most, is perceived as emotionally dangerous. We're afraid that if we are initially accountable for what we do without first launching into our reasons & intentions we will be seen as bad &



There is an emotional freedom & permanent rise in our self-esteem & especially our self-acceptance, when we learn to own our behavior without shaming, blaming or believing ourselves to be bad & wrong.

Breaking Free Self-Esteem Groups

As infants & toddlers we felt good about ourselves. We didn't worry if people liked us. In fact, we had every confidence that we were completely lovable and likeable. We didn't try to hide what we felt or who we were from others.

We easily shared our feelings, thoughts & accomplishments. As we grew up we were given the message that what we felt, did or thought was not okay.

Our self-esteem affect all

aspects of our lives and our relationships. By learning how our childhood self-esteem turned into adulthood self-doubt we can easily reverse the process.

You'll learn to:

- Turn obstacles into options
- Expand your self-esteem
- Enhance your relationships
- Recognize your strengths
- Change fear patterns
- Feel consistently confident
- Experience the innovation

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wrong. Since childhood you have been taught to avoid being bad & wrong - even if that means you have to deny your actions, your feelings or your thoughts. Even if that means being emotionally abusive by creating a crazy-making feeling in others.

Ever notice that children under the age of about 4 yrs. easily own their behavior. If they dropped the pudding on the floor & you ask them if they did it. They will say yes.

We perceive being accountable for our behavior as dangerously close to emotional suicide.

Not because they trying to have integrity or be honest, but because, to them, that is simply what happened. A child will continue to own their behavior until they learn they can be disliked for having their behavior known, for owning their behavior or for talking about the actual behavior of those around them.

As small children we learn to disavow our behavior to try to avoid feeling disliked by our parents, other family members, teachers & playmates. When a child feels

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What We Learn as Children - We Believe as Adults

By Cheri DeMoss

What we are taught as a child is what we will grow up to believe as an adult. We cling to these beliefs with unequivocal devotion & nearly always, unconscious repetition.

From how we hang the toilet paper to how we behave in a romantic relationship to how we parent our children; we make decisions & take actions on beliefs that were taught to us as children with no thought to why we, almost religiously, believe these things to be true.

As adults we emotionally cling to what we were taught to be true as children. Whether it works for us or not we will act on it little conscious awareness.

We are born with high levels of self & other acceptance. This makes us curious explorers filled with an abundant desire to try new things in a fearless, almost courageous manner. By the time we hit adulthood the majority of us are filled with more fear than curiosity; more doubt in ourselves than belief in our abilities.

For example: we may grow up to believe that interrupting others is alright to do while at the same time being unaware that it makes us feel important & the other person feel unimportant. In fact, if this behavior is

pointed out to us our most likely response will be to explain our good intentions & not calmly look at our behavior & be accountable for the impact it has on others.

What we learn as children does not have to be directly taught & the majority of the time is not. It is how our parents behave around & towards us that slowly craft what we believe.

For example: Twins raised in a home with a physically violent alcoholic father. They see Dad beat up Mom. One twin sees Dad's violent behavior as a powerful way



to express anger & get what he wants. That twin grows up with a deep belief that hitting his partner is powerful & a normal thing to do when they are angry.

The other twin sees Dad's violent behavior as powerless way to express anger & an unfair way to treat Mom. This twin grows up with a deep belief that hitting his partner is wrong & makes a

conscious decision to never hit his partner. In fact, this twin may be attracted to an abusive partner who they can become co-dependent with for fear of being seen as abusive like the Dad.

As adults, it is likely that neither twin will be consciously aware of these beliefs but will act on them.

These closely held beliefs carry with them a fear of objectively looking at what we believe & an anxiety of not doing what the belief dictates. The healthier we strive for the more courageous we need to be in looking at our behavior, what it says about what we believe & how we learned it.

Checklist : What It Looks Like To Be Accountable

Learning how to be accountable keeps you connected to those in your life; makes others feel safe with and around you; raises your self-acceptance, self-esteem more importantly eliminates the ability of others to shame or blame you.

_____ When someone points out your behavior you feel fascinated if you were not aware of it & excited to own it if you were aware of it.

_____ When someone talks to you about your behavior your first thought is how to own it instead of deny or explain it.

_____ When someone talks about your behavior you are very aware of how scared they are that you will deny what they are describing.

_____ You easily own what you did without demanding proof because you are an adult who makes a point to be consciously aware of your behavior the majority of the time.

_____ If someone is upset or hurt by your actions you are accountable for the impact your behavior have had on them.

_____ You are able to not react and jump to defending your behavior or explaining your intentions until after you have owned your actions & the emotional impact.

_____ When someone is talking about your behavior you don't make it about yourself or your feelings - you keep the focus on them.

_____ The thought of owning your behavior and the emotional impact it had on someone fascinates and esteems you

_____ You look for opportunities to own your behavior because you know this keeps you connected to those in your life.

_____ The majority of the time you are not surprised by a description of your behavior because you put a significant amount of energy into being self aware.

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disliked they feel bad & wrong. This feeling of being bad & wrong is reinforced by the messages adults give us that say: if we make them emotionally uncomfortable we're bad, wrong & unlikeable.

It is emotionally too expensive for a child to be accountable at the cost of being disliked - so we learn to deny what we do & who we are.

Since a child is too young to understand that parents love them while acting as if they don't like them; feeling liked becomes a hard wired priority for our emotional survival.

The way we're treated when we do something our parents are uncomfortable with teaches us that when we're disliked it's because we are & have done something bad & wrong. Feeling liked by parents determines whether the child feels okay about who they are & what they do through their entire adult life.

Accountability, because it feels emotionally expensive, takes on the appearance of being radical simply because it's so uncommon in the adult world.

Parents seldom role model accountability by owning their behavior to their child like: "When I told you, you didn't care about me because you were loud while

I have a headache. That is not true. I was being crabby & blaming you for how my head feels. You weren't



doing anything wrong."

Couples often end up in counseling because they spend most of the relationship denying the things they do & the subsequent impact it has in the relationship.

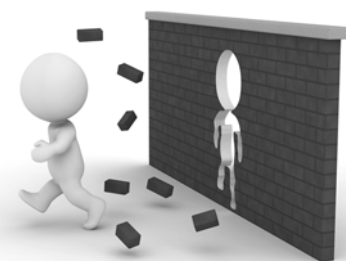
We're born feeling good about what we do & who we are. But childhood teaches us that the choice between the fear of being known & disliked or the

courage of easily admitting our behavior is emotionally dangerous. Being accountable takes more emotional courage than we're capable of as children.

The fear of being accountable is internalized & becomes a key component of our adult belief system. This means we become adults who need to hide, defend or explain our normal human behavior.

Growing up in a black or white - good or bad world causes us to fear accountability. For example: most of us are taught (*by our parents*) that our parents are good. So when a friend points out that our father is an alcoholic. We automatically defend our father & argue with our friend. Do we view this as valuable data then stop & objectively ask ourselves: does

our father do alcoholic behavior? Of course we don't because we're all taught to deny our behavior or the behavior of those we care about if those behavior are considered negative.



Self-esteem, & especially self-acceptance, can be regained by breaking through the wall of fear & belief that if someone is uncomfortable with our behavior then we're bad & wrong. By understanding the emotionally logical reasons why we do what we do we can be radically accountable without fear of being bad or wrong.

Checklist For Fear of Accountability

Below is a list of behaviors we do when we are afraid to own how we behave and the impact it has on others. Notice if either of your parents/siblings do these things also?

- ☐ When someone points out your behavior you immediately explain the understandable reasons why and the good intentions you had for doing it.
- ☐ You typically own what you did only if the other person has "proof".
- ☐ If someone is upset or hurt with your actions you're only accountable for the impact if you meant to hurt or upset them.
- ☐ If someone is upset with your behavior, you feel a knee-jerk need to defend and explain so they know you are not bad or wrong.
- ☐ When someone is talking about your behavior you make it about you by explaining how you didn't mean it.
- ☐ If someone is accountable for their behavioral impact on you, you often don't notice and continue to "prove" they "did it" & that they are bad & wrong.
- ☐ The thought of owning your behavior and the emotional impact it had on someone doesn't excite or esteem you.
- ☐ You typically do not look for opportunities to own your behavior, the intentions behind them or the feelings fueling them.

We Are Attached To What We Know

by Cheri DeMoss

Most of us live our lives filled with the very real fear of being accountable for what we do. We operate as if what we do, if noticed or pointed out, will make us bad or wrong. We act as if we are walking an emotional tightrope with someone else holding one end, controlling how we feel about ourselves.

In our twenties, the majority of what we know is what we were taught to believe. At this age we are so attached to what we believe that we will we argue, debate and defend without any grounded self-awareness of why we are so convinced.

We act as if we believe someone else controls how we feel about ourselves.

As we get older we have the ability to become aware of repeated patterns in our lives. We can figure out how we became so attached to the beliefs that run our actions.

But there is a huge difference between having the mental ability to figure out how our lives run the way they do and having the sense of emotional safety that would motivate such conscious insight.

The majority of adults live the definition of insanity by doing the same things, based on the same beliefs and expecting different results. They stay attached to



what they were taught to believe even in the face of their lives not going the way they would like.

By being too scared to look at the knowledge base that we are building our lives on and why we are so attached to the beliefs underneath it, we are doomed to do what most people do: blame and shame ourselves for the normal human trial & error actions of our lives.

About Empowering Options - Counseling Innovations

Empowering Options Counseling Innovations is remarkably effective because our philosophy is to be on the side of the client. We concentrate on helping you learn, explore & create your options; your life adventure. The adventure is in the perspective – the beliefs that you view yourself & the world through.

Empowering Options uses a unique combination of information, observation & awareness to help you view yourself & your life differently. That's what our individual, couple's & group sessions, workshops & trainings are all about – being on the side of the client & giving you more accurate observation, insights & effective, innovative options. There is no assumption that what you are doing or feeling is wrong. We don't presume that you need to be fixed. Our goal is for you to feel empowered, esteemed & effective in your own life.

We strive to keep you interested & interactive; energized & supported. The goal is that you leave each session with a new, more powerful way of looking at things. We focus on a collaboration of our expertise combined with your concerns, feelings, behavior & thoughts. We fit people's lives by providing options that make it possible for you to create the changes you want at the pace you're most comfortable with.

Empowering Options brings an original, distinctively refreshing approach to the counseling experience. The focus is always on empowering the client & teaching clients how to empower themselves. Using a unique combination of insight, perspective, & objective observation clients are given the information, tools & self-belief to permanently change their lives.

We provide unique feedback, concrete options, clarity & increased self esteem. Sessions are filled with interactive conversations not empty stares, silence or rhetorical questions. You don't have to assume we understand your feelings or concerns because we consistently demonstrate our understanding. If you ask a question you can expect a direct & straightforward answer. We don't believe you should spend your valuable time & money with a therapist that responds "What do YOU think?" or "How does that make YOU feel?" when you ask for their input. We teach you how to create options that will empower you throughout your life. Our innovative style, along with a fun & thought-provoking manner is distinctively client positive & client empowering. We present new ways to look at old beliefs & behavior that will enhance your life & give you extremely effective tools to help you with the changes you want to make. We help you create life innovations, insights, esteem & options. You can get more information about our approach, services & download our newsletters at www.EmpoweringOptions.com.

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