
A PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP WORKBOOK

The No Excuses Starting Line

Name one excuse.
Retire it this week.

Seven questions to move from explanation to ownership.
One small action to begin today.

“The distance between where you are and where you’re called to be is crossed one owned decision at a time.”

FARSHAD ASL

BECOME. LEAD. DEVELOP. MULTIPLY.

BEGIN HERE

Own your next move.

You do not need to solve your whole life this week. Choose one situation and move it forward.

An unanswered conversation. A commitment you keep postponing. A goal that receives your attention only when you feel motivated. The situation may be different. The pattern is familiar: you explain the delay, feel temporary relief, and remain in the same place.

The No Excuses Mindset asks you to interrupt that pattern. Tell the truth about the obstacle. Identify your responsibility. Take the next available step.

Ownership is not accepting blame for everything. It is accepting responsibility for the response you can choose.

USE THIS WORKBOOK IN THREE MOVES

1. Choose one situation. Give the seven questions 20-30 quiet minutes. Use the same situation throughout. Honest answers matter more than impressive answers.
2. Act within 24 hours. Choose a step small enough to complete, meaningful enough to move the situation, and specific enough to verify.
3. Review for seven days. Use the tracker. Ask someone to check in. At the end of the week, evaluate what changed and choose your next step.

Real constraints include health, safety, money, time, and responsibilities to others. Naming them is honest. Ownership may mean asking for help, setting a boundary, resting, or changing the plan.

The one situation I will work on:

QUESTION 1 OF 7

What result do I want?

Choose a result you can recognize.

“I want things to improve” gives you a feeling, but little direction. Define what progress would look like in one situation by the end of this week. Separate the outcome you hope for from the action you can control.

If another person must decide, your commitment is to make the request, prepare the conversation, or deliver your part. Their response remains theirs.

IN PRACTICE

Instead of “I want a stronger team,” try “By Friday, I will hold a 20-minute coaching conversation with one team member and agree on a next step.”

What specific result would make this week meaningful?

What action or evidence would show progress?

YOUR MICRO-ACTION

Write the result in one sentence. Give it a date.

QUESTION 2 OF 7

What excuse do I keep repeating?

Name the sentence that keeps you still.

Listen to what you say when the moment to act arrives. “I am too busy.” “I need more confidence.” “They will not understand.” Write your sentence exactly as you repeat it. Do not polish it into something more respectable.

A constraint describes a condition you must work with. An excuse turns that condition into a reason to stop looking for a responsible choice. You may have a real obstacle and still have a next step.

IN PRACTICE

“My calendar is full” may be true. “So I cannot spend ten minutes preparing the conversation” is the conclusion to examine.

What exact excuse do I keep repeating?

What is true about it, and what conclusion am I adding?

YOUR MICRO-ACTION

Notice the sentence once today. Replace it with a question: “What is still possible?”

QUESTION 3 OF 7

What is this excuse protecting me from?

Look beneath the delay.

An excuse can protect you from discomfort: rejection, criticism, uncertainty, embarrassment, or the possibility that your first attempt will be imperfect. Naming that discomfort helps you choose a better response.

Be curious with yourself. Harsh self-talk can become another distraction. You are looking for useful truth. You do not have to eliminate fear before you take a safe, proportionate step.

IN PRACTICE

"I need more research" may be protecting you from hearing "no." A useful next step could be asking one person for feedback before making a larger commitment.

What feeling or consequence am I avoiding?

What would help me face it responsibly?

YOUR MICRO-ACTION

Name the discomfort. Then choose a small step that respects real risks.

QUESTION 4 OF 7

What part of this situation is mine to own?

Separate responsibility from control.

You cannot control another person's attitude, the market, the past, or every condition around you. You can examine your preparation, communication, follow-through, boundaries, and willingness to seek support.

Owning your part does not excuse someone else's harmful behavior. It helps you identify where your agency begins. In an unsafe situation, the responsible action may be getting protection or professional help.

IN PRACTICE

If a teammate missed a deadline, their commitment is theirs. Your part may be clarifying expectations, addressing the missed agreement, and deciding how to proceed.

What is outside my control?

What responsibility is mine to act on now?

YOUR MICRO-ACTION

Circle one responsibility you have been waiting for someone else to address.

QUESTION 5 OF 7

What choice is available to me now?

Find the next workable option.

When the ideal option is unavailable, look for a useful one. You may be able to ask, practice, simplify, schedule, delegate, decline, repair, or begin. Waiting is also a choice; make it deliberate, with a reason and a review date.

List a few options before deciding. Then choose the one that fits your responsibilities and resources. A smaller action completed today can teach you more than a perfect plan left untouched.

IN PRACTICE

If you cannot launch the full program, you might interview one potential participant, outline the first lesson, or test a short exercise with a small group.

What are three responsible choices available to me?

Which choice will I make, and why?

YOUR MICRO-ACTION

Choose one option. Reduce it until you can begin with the resources you have.

QUESTION 6 OF 7

Who can challenge, coach, or support me?

Make accountability specific.

Choose someone who can tell you the truth with respect. They do not need to solve the problem. They need to understand your commitment, ask a direct question, and help you notice whether your actions match your words.

Ask for a defined check-in rather than general encouragement. Share only what is appropriate. Accountability is an agreement you invite, not a burden you place on someone without asking.

IN PRACTICE

“Will you check in with me Friday at 3 p.m.? I plan to have the conversation by Thursday. Please ask whether I did it and what I learned.”

Who will I ask, and what support do I need?

When will we check in, and what evidence will I share?

YOUR MICRO-ACTION

Send the request today. Confirm that the person agrees to the check-in.

QUESTION 7 OF 7

What will I do in the next 24 hours?

Put ownership on the calendar.

Your next action needs a verb, a time, and a clear finish. “Work on my goal” is difficult to verify. “Draft and send the meeting request tomorrow at 9 a.m.” creates a commitment you can keep.

Plan for the obstacle you already expect. Decide your smaller fallback step in advance. If circumstances change, communicate and reschedule deliberately. Do not quietly turn a missed commitment into another explanation.

IN PRACTICE

“Tomorrow at 9 a.m., I will spend ten minutes drafting the request and send it. If an urgent meeting intervenes, I will do it at 12:30 p.m.”

What exactly will I do, by when, and how will I know it is done?

What could interfere, and what is my fallback plan?

YOUR MICRO-ACTION

Reserve the time now. Complete any preparation that takes less than two minutes.

YOUR DECISION

My no-excuses commitment.

Bring your seven answers together. Make one promise you can act on and verify.

The result I am working toward:

The excuse I am retiring this week:

My responsibility and the next action I choose:

I will act by [date / time / place]:

If the expected obstacle appears, I will:

My accountability partner and check-in time:

My commitment is to act honestly, seek support when needed, and learn from the result. If I miss the step, I will name what happened and choose a new time.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

SEVEN DAYS OF OWNERSHIP

Keep the promise visible.

Track evidence of action. A busy day and a productive step are not always the same thing.

Use one short entry each day. Record what you actually did. If you did not act, name the barrier without attacking yourself, then schedule the next responsible step.

DAY 1 | Begin the 24-hour action.

Action / evidence: _____

Next step / time: _____

DAY 2 | Notice the excuse when it returns.

Action / evidence: _____

Next step / time: _____

DAY 3 | Adjust one part of your approach.

Action / evidence: _____

Next step / time: _____

DAY 4 | Ask for feedback or support.

Action / evidence: _____

Next step / time: _____

DAY 5 | Follow through on the next step.

Action / evidence: _____

Next step / time: _____

DAY 6 | Record what changed.

Action / evidence: _____

Next step / time: _____

DAY 7 | Review and choose what comes next.

Action / evidence: _____

Next step / time: _____

A missed day is information. Use it to improve the next decision.

What changed because you acted?

Progress begins when explanation ends and action starts. Review the evidence, then decide what comes next.

What did I do, and what changed? Include one concrete example.

Where did the excuse return? What did I learn about the pattern?

What will I continue, adjust, or stop?

Who benefited from my action? Who could grow from what I learned?

My next owned decision, with a date:

Leadership begins in the commitments you keep. It grows when your example helps another person take responsibility for their next step.

We never arrive. We continually become.

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