

RESPONSIBILITY – INDISPENSABLE IN COACHING

Distinction from guilt

Responsibility is a high priority in coaching; it is actually a prerequisite for it. Clients take responsibility for their current situation. It does not matter who was involved in its creation. It is important to distinguish between responsibility and guilt. Clients decide to respond to a certain situation, even if from a common view of causation or guilt, another person could just as well respond. Coaching is therefore about acknowledging one's own part in the situation and changing something about it. This approach is in contrast to the behavior of people who wait for others to do something. Or they wait and see if the situation improves by itself. By taking on responsibility, people say goodbye to a victim role. They feel self-effective and powerful in the true sense of the word. This brings real change and also strengthens their self-confidence.

When should I take responsibility?

But it is not always appropriate to take responsibility. I am happy to illustrate this with two situations that I often encounter in coaching. In the first situation, employees suffer from management deficits of their superiors. They expect their superiors to behave differently. This expectation is understandable, but unrealistic. In this constellation, I advise coachees to take responsibility. By changing their own behavior, they can influence the behavior of their superiors and thus improve their situation. In the second constellation, superiors do not fully perform their duties. Responsible employees then jump into the breach. They take on additional tasks outside their job description, often without realizing it. In this situation, I advise against taking responsibility. After all, it is often a reason for burnout when employees take on tasks for which they do not have positional power and for which they do not receive recognition if they succeed.