



accountabili-buddy

CLARITY. COMMITMENT. FOLLOW THROUGH.



CASE
STUDIES

CASE STUDY 20

ALL-OR-NOTHING RESPONSE

1. TRAINING OBJECTIVE

Recognize inaccurate all-or-nothing evaluation in which a client treats partial deviation as equivalent to complete failure.

The trainee should restore accurate accounting without minimizing the actual miss.

2. CLIENT PROFILE

Client: David

Goal: Establish a consistent weekday writing practice

Current Commitment: Write for 30 minutes Monday through Friday.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

David has been developing the routine for three weeks.

The current week is his strongest performance so far.

4. CLIENT MESSAGE

Accountabili-Buddy: How did the five writing sessions go?

David: Terrible. I screwed up the week.

Accountabili-Buddy: How many happened?

David: Four.

Accountabili-Buddy: Which one didn't?

David: Wednesday. I got stuck at work.

David: Once I missed Wednesday, the streak was broken, so the week didn't count.

5. TRAINEE TASK

How should the result be characterized?

What part of David's interpretation should be challenged?

What should remain separate from that correction?

6. EVIDENCE ANALYSIS

FACTS

- David committed to five sessions.
- He completed four.
- Wednesday was missed.
- The full commitment was not completed.
- Four of the five planned sessions occurred.
- David resumed writing Thursday and Friday after Wednesday's miss.

CLIENT INTERPRETATION

David treats the broken streak as invalidating all completed sessions.

ACCOUNTABILITY-BUDDY INFERENCE

David's interpretation does not accurately represent the behavioral result.

One missed session did not erase four completed sessions.

The fact that he resumed Thursday and Friday is evidence that Wednesday's miss did not terminate the routine.

7. PRIMARY FORMULATION

Partial completion accompanied by all-or-nothing evaluation.

8. ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS

The missed Wednesday session may warrant separate examination if the circumstances are relevant to future follow-through.

That does not alter the central problem in David's evaluation of the week.

9. MISSING INFORMATION

No additional information is needed to correct David's evaluation of the week.

Whether the Wednesday work conflict requires further examination is a separate accountability question and depends on whether it is relevant to future follow-through.

10. RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

"The five-session commitment wasn't fully met. Four sessions were completed. Missing Wednesday doesn't erase Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday."

11. REASONING

The Accountability-Buddy neither declares the week a complete success nor accepts David's claim that it was a total failure.

Accurate accountability preserves both the completed behavior and the unmet portion of the commitment.

David's resumption on Thursday and Friday is particularly relevant because the lapse did not actually terminate the behavior.

The purpose is not to make David feel better about the result. It is to represent the result accurately.

12. PLAUSIBLE ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE

"You missed one of five. That's the discrepancy. The other four still count as completed behavior, including two after the streak was broken."

13. WEAK RESPONSE EXAMPLES

WEAK RESPONSE A

"Four out of five is basically perfect."

Problem: The response minimizes the actual discrepancy. Four sessions were completed, but the five-session commitment was not fully met.

WEAK RESPONSE B

"You're right. The streak is gone, so let's start over Monday."

Problem: The response validates the inaccurate premise that the completed behavior has been nullified by one miss.

WEAK RESPONSE C

"Don't be so hard on yourself."

Problem: The response addresses David's tone toward himself rather than correcting the inaccurate evaluation of what actually happened.

14. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

David does not need to treat the four completed sessions as erased or the routine as though it never began.

The next commitment should be decided normally based on what makes sense for the coming week.

If all-or-nothing evaluations recur, the pattern itself may become relevant to accountability because repeatedly treating partial misses as total failure could interfere with continued follow-through.

15. RECORD / UPDATE

Commitment: Five weekday writing sessions

Result: Four completed

Miss: Wednesday; David reports a work conflict

Current Formulation: Partial completion accompanied by all-or-nothing evaluation

Relevant Evidence: David resumed Thursday and Friday after the miss

Next Decision: Determine the next commitment without treating the prior week's completed behavior as erased

16. SCORING CRITERIA

Full-credit responses should:

- Preserve the unmet portion of the commitment
- Preserve completed behavior
- Correct inaccurate all-or-nothing accounting

- Avoid minimizing the missed session
- Avoid reassurance as a substitute for accurate accounting
- Recognize successful resumption after the miss
- Keep evaluation of the week's result separate from any later examination of the Wednesday miss
- Preserve David's ownership of the next commitment

