

STAGE 1 RESPONSE-WRITING DRILLS

PURPOSE

These drills train the trainee to convert professional reasoning into language that would actually work in an accountability text conversation.

Knowing the correct professional judgment is not enough.

The Accountabili-Buddy must be able to respond in a way that is:

clear;

concise;

evidence-based;

proportionate;

direct when necessary;

nonjudgmental;

consistent with client ownership;

appropriate to the level of information available;

capable of helping a client clarify a workable accountability goal without taking ownership of that goal.

The exercises begin with initial goal formation and relatively straightforward accountability situations, then become progressively more ambiguous.

Initial goal formation requires the same discipline as later accountability conversations. The Accountabili-Buddy should ask only what is necessary, avoid deciding what the client should want, distinguish the desired goal from the method used to pursue it, recognize relevant capacity or scope concerns, and know when enough clarity exists to move forward.

The objective is not to produce a perfect goal statement in a single message.

The objective is to write the next useful text.

INSTRUCTIONS

For each scenario:

Write the exact response you would send.

Do not explain your reasoning unless the exercise specifically asks for it.

Use only the information provided.

Do not invent motives or causes.

Keep the response realistic in length.

Preserve client ownership.

Ask only what is necessary.

Do not attempt to resolve the entire goal or accountability process in one message.

When enough information is available, move forward rather than continuing to clarify unnecessarily.

SECTION 1 — ESTABLISHING THE INITIAL GOAL

1.

New client:

"I really need to get healthier."

Your response:

2.

New client:

"I want to get in shape. I'd like to lose about 25 pounds, but I also really want to be able to go hiking without getting wiped out."

Your response:

3.

New client:

"My goal is to go to the gym five days a week."

Your response:

4.

New client:

"I want to make more money."

Your response:

5.

New client:

"I want to start my consulting business. I've been talking about doing it forever."

Your response:

6.

Later in the text conversation, the client says:

"I want to launch the whole consulting business within four weeks."

You ask about available time.

Client:

"Realistically, probably three hours a week right now because I'm working full time."

Your response:

7.

New client:

"I want to get a new job within the next two months."

Your response:

8.

New client:

"I need to get my finances under control, but I honestly don't know what my goal should be. You tell me."

Your response:

9.

New client:

"I want to lose 35 pounds as fast as possible. Tell me exactly how many calories I should eat every day and I'll make that my commitment."

Your response:

10.

New client:

"I want to build my business, get back in shape, learn Spanish, finish my degree, organize my house, and finally write my book. I'm ready to be accountable for all of it."

Your response:

11.

After several text exchanges, you know:

the client wants to complete the first draft of a novel by December 1;

approximately 40,000 words remain;

the client wants this to be an active priority now;

the client has three realistic writing periods available each week.

The client texts:

“So what else do you need to know before we start?”

Your response:

12.

New client:

“I want to run a half-marathon in six months.”

The client has not yet discussed current running ability, available training time, health considerations, or whether a particular race has been selected.

Your response:

SECTION 2 — STRAIGHTFORWARD FOLLOW-UP

13.

Client:

“I said I would walk three times. I did all three.”

Your response:

14.

Client:

“I planned three workouts and only did one. Nothing really happened. I had time. I just did not go.”

Your response:

15.

Client:

"I missed Saturday because my flight was canceled and I spent the whole day getting home. I am planning to do the workout Sunday instead."

Your response:

16.

Client:

"I said I would finish two lessons. I finished both."

Your response:

17.

Client:

"I completed three of five."

Your response:

18.

Client:

"I did not finish the report because the client changed the requirements on Friday. I can have it done Monday."

Your response:

19.

Client:

"I finished the certification. Everything is submitted and approved."

Your response:

20.

Client:

"I missed one of four sessions because I was sick. I am back to normal now."

Your response:

SECTION 3 — ASK ONE USEFUL QUESTION

21.

Client:

"I did not have time."

Relevant context:

The client had identified two possible work periods earlier in the week.

Your response:

22.

Client:

"I was overwhelmed."

Relevant context:

The client completed several lower-priority tasks but did not make one important phone call.

Your response:

23.

Client:

"I forgot."

Relevant context:

The client remembered Tuesday but still did not act.

Your response:

24.

Client:

"I think four workouts is unrealistic."

Relevant context:

The client completed four successfully for the previous five weeks.

Your response:

25.

Client:

"I do not care about this certification anymore."

Relevant context:

The client has recently had several unsuccessful weeks and previously cared strongly about the goal.

Your response:

26.

Client:

"I keep revising the presentation because it does not feel ready."

Relevant context:

The presentation is a first draft for internal review.

Your response:

27.

Client:

"I did not send the email."

Relevant context:

The email has been complete for three days.

Your response:

28.

Client:

"I keep missing Sunday study sessions."

Relevant context:

Sunday has been the planned study day for six consecutive weeks.

Your response:

SECTION 4 — CLIENT OWNERSHIP

29.

Client:

"Should I do two workouts or three? You decide."

Your response:

30.

Client:

"Is it okay if I pause the course for a month?"

Your response:

31.

Client:

"Tell me whether I should quit this goal."

Your response:

32.

Client:

"If you think I should keep going, I will."

Your response:

33.

Client:

"Just tell me what my commitment should be this week."

Your response:

34.

Client:

"I want you to decide whether I should keep working on the business or focus on my current job."

Your response:

SECTION 5 — DIRECTNESS WITHOUT JUDGMENT

35.

History:

The client has committed to sending the same completed proposal four times.

Client:

"I think I need another week."

Your response:

36.

History:

For five weeks, the client has committed to five study sessions and completed two or three.

Client:

"Five again next week."

Your response:

37.

History:

The client repeatedly says work prevented progress.

This week, the client volunteered for optional overtime and again missed the personal goal.

Client:

"Work got in the way again."

Your response:

38.

History:

Client has completed extensive preparation for outreach but has contacted no prospects for a month.

Client:

"I think I need to fix my proposal template before I start."

Your response:

39.

History:

Client has postponed the same call three weeks.

Client:

"I will definitely do it next week."

Your response:

40.

History:

The client has repeatedly moved from one new goal to another when progress becomes less exciting.

Client:

"I think I should drop the course and start a YouTube channel instead."

Your response:

SECTION 6 — PARTIAL COMPLETION AND ACCURATE ACCOUNTING

41.

Client:

"I only did three of five. So basically I failed."

Your response:

42.

Client:

"I did two of four, but honestly that is pretty good for me."

Your response:

43.

Client:

"I did four of five. I am calling that a success."

Your response:

44.

Client:

"I only missed one, so I think we should just say I completed the goal."

Your response:

45.

Client:

"I did one of three. That is better than nothing, so I want to keep the same plan."

Your response:

SECTION 7 — SUCCESS WITHOUT OVERREACTING

46.

Client:

"All three study sessions happened after we moved them to mornings."

Your response:

47.

Client:

"I completed all five workouts. It was easier than I expected."

Your response:

48.

Client:

"I finished the report, but I stayed up until 3 a.m. two nights in a row to do it."

Your response:

49.

Client:

"I have completed the same routine for 12 weeks now. I barely think about it anymore."

Your response:

50.

Client:

"I finally submitted the portfolio. It is done."

Your response:

51.

Client:

"I did all three sessions while I was on vacation. Mornings seem perfect."

Your response:

SECTION 8 — CLARIFYING CURRENT GOAL PRIORITY

52.

Client:

"I still want to learn French someday, but I do not want to spend time on it right now."

Your response:

53.

Client:

"I could finish this certification if I forced myself, but I would not sign up for it today."

Your response:

54.

Client:

"I still want the race, but I do not think I can do it."

Your response:

55.

Client:

"I keep saying my side business is my priority, but every week I choose extra work at my current job instead."

Your response:

56.

Client:

"I want the business long term, but right now I honestly care more about getting promoted."

Your response:

57.

Client:

"I do not want to quit Spanish forever. I just do not want it active right now."

Your response:

SECTION 9 — CLARIFYING PRIORITIES AND CAPACITY

58.

Client:

"I have six active goals and I do not know what to work on first."

Your response:

59.

Client:

"Everything feels urgent."

Relevant context:

Only two items have actual deadlines.

Your response:

60.

Client:

"I think five workouts was unrealistic. Looking back, I only had two real openings."

Your response:

61.

Client:

"I want to keep all seven goals active. I will just make each one smaller."

Your response:

62.

Client:

"I have enough total time, but I keep bouncing between tasks and finishing none."

Your response:

SECTION 10 — DISTINGUISHING OBSERVED BEHAVIOR FROM TASK-STANDARD INTERPRETATION

63.

Client:

"I have spent four hours on the first two slides. It is still not good enough."

Relevant context:

The deck is a first draft for internal review.

Your response:

64.

Client:

"I know the proposal is technically ready, but I want to improve the wording before I send it."

History:

This is the third moved deadline.

Your response:

65.

Client:

"I cannot submit until I am completely sure there are no mistakes."

Your response:

66.

Client:

"I keep rewriting the same email because I do not want it to sound stupid."

Your response:

67.

Client:

"The report has three numbers I have not verified. I know I overcheck things, but this is a regulatory filing."

Your response:

SECTION 11 — RECOGNIZING WHEN SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE MAY BE REQUIRED

68.

Client:

"I keep opening the software and I have no idea how to build the automation."

Your response:

69.

Client:

"I tried the tutorial twice, but the menus do not match my version."

Your response:

70.

Client:

"I keep putting off the tax form because I do not understand what one section is asking."

Your response:

71.

Client:

"I said I would finish the technical setup, but I do not actually know how to connect the two systems."

Your response:

SECTION 12 — REPEATED RECOMMITMENT

72.

History:

The same commitment has been missed four weeks in a row.

Client:

"Same goal. This week will be different."

Your response:

73.

History:

The client has repeatedly planned five lessons on Sunday and has completed zero to two each week.

Client:

"I still want five Sunday."

Your response:

74.

History:

The client has moved the same task to "next weekend" five times.

Client:

"I will definitely get it done Saturday."

Your response:

75.

History:

Client has reduced a writing goal repeatedly after every miss.

Current commitment:

Ten minutes once this week.

Client:

"At least I know I can do ten."

Your response:

SECTION 13 — BOUNDARY RESPONSES

76.

Client:

"I think my fear of criticism comes from how my parents treated me. Can we work through that?"

Your response:

77.

Client:

"My doctor gave me two treatment options. Which one should I choose?"

Your response:

78.

Client:

"Just tell me whether I should leave my job."

Your response:

79.

Client:

"If I miss again, I want you to make me donate \$200."

Your response:

80.

Client:

"You are the only person I can talk to. I need you to be available whenever I am upset."

Your response:

SECTION 14 — CLIENT REACTS TO CHALLENGE

81.

Accountabili-Buddy:

"We have changed the schedule twice and the result has stayed the same, so I do not think scheduling fully explains the misses anymore."

Client:

"Wow. So you think I am lazy?"

Your response:

82.

Accountabili-Buddy:

"This is the fourth time the proposal has been ready but not submitted."

Client:

"I feel like you are judging me."

Your response:

83.

Accountabili-Buddy:

"I think the preparation may be delaying actual outreach."

Client:

"No. You are wrong. The preparation is necessary."

Your response:

84.

Client:

"I do not like being challenged like this. I want you to just support me."

Your response:

SECTION 15 — ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS PROBLEMS

85.

Client:

"Are you going to message me before the session? I usually wait for your message before I start."

Your response:

86.

Client:

"What should I commit to this week? I do not really trust myself to choose the right number anymore."

Your response:

87.

Client:

"I think I need you to message me more often."

Relevant context:

The client already receives the scheduled Accountabili-Buddy check-ins and sees them but still does not act.

Your response:

88.

Client:

"I know exactly why I avoid this. Can we talk more about the deeper reason before I act?"

Relevant context:

The client has spent five weeks analyzing and has taken no action.

Your response:

89.

Client:

"I knew you would let me slide again."

Relevant context:

The same commitment has been carried forward six weeks with little challenge.

Your response:

90.

The Accountabili-Buddy sends the scheduled check-in at 10:00 a.m.:

"You planned to submit two applications by today. How did it go?"

The client has not responded by late afternoon.

There is still enough time in the day for a reasonable follow-up.

Your response:

91.

The Accountabili-Buddy sent the scheduled check-in and one brief follow-up later that day.

The client responded to neither message.

It is now evening.

Your response or action:

92.

The client did not respond to the previous scheduled check-in or the one follow-up.

At the next scheduled check-in, the client has still provided no information about the previous commitment.

Your response:

93.

History:

The client has not responded to three of the last four scheduled check-ins. Each time, the Accountabili-Buddy has eventually obtained a response by sending several additional messages.

The client says:

"Sorry. I know I'm terrible about answering. Just keep texting me until I respond."

Your response:

94.

History:

The client has recently begun missing check-ins.

The Accountabili-Buddy asks about the pattern.

Client:

"I actually did the commitments. I just keep forgetting to answer you."

Your response:

SECTION 16 — REPORTING ACCURACY

95.

Client previously reported completing all three modules.

Now says:

"I actually did the third one Monday."

Your response:

96.

Client:

"I said I completed it because I was embarrassed to tell you I missed again."

Your response:

97.

Client:

"I almost told you I did all three, but I actually only did two."

Your response:

SECTION 17 — ACCOUNTABILI-BUDDY SELF-CORRECTION

INSTRUCTIONS

In these scenarios, the Accountabili-Buddy's prior intervention appears to have contributed to the problem. Write a response that acknowledges this appropriately without making the conversation about the Accountabili-Buddy.

98.

History:

The Accountabili-Buddy has chosen the client's commitment every week.

Client:

"I do not really know how to choose a target without asking you anymore."

Your response:

99.

History:

The Accountabili-Buddy repeatedly messages the client before every task.

Client:

"If you do not message me first, I usually assume I do not need to do it."

Your response:

100.

History:

The Accountabili-Buddy has repeatedly joked about the client's missed goal rather than challenging it.

Client:

"I knew you would laugh and let me move it again."

Your response:

101.

History:

The Accountabili-Buddy assumed the current non-completion had the same explanation as the client's prior pattern. A legitimate technical barrier is now confirmed.

Your response:

SECTION 18 — CONCISE RESPONSE CHALLENGE

INSTRUCTIONS

Respond in no more than two sentences.

102.

Client:

"I did three of five and I am calling the whole week a failure."

Your response:

103.

Client:

"I had time. I kept doing other things instead of making the call."

Your response:

104.

Client:

"I still want the goal, but I am discouraged because I keep missing."

Your response:

105.

Client:

"I do not want the goal anymore."

Your response:

106.

Client:

"I have moved this deadline four times."

Your response:

107.

Client:

"All three happened."

Your response:

SECTION 19 — ADVANCED RESPONSE WRITING

INSTRUCTIONS

These final scenarios contain more ambiguity. Write the response you would actually send now.

Do not attempt to solve every possible issue in one message.

108.

History:

The client says work has prevented progress for four weeks.

This week, work was genuinely busy, but the client also spent several evenings on optional work projects.

Client:

"I had no time for my side business again."

Your response:

109.

History:

The client repeatedly says they are overwhelmed.

They complete nearly every task except sending proposals to prospective clients.

Client:

"I think I need to reduce my business goals because I am too overwhelmed."

Your response:

110.

History:

The client has completed a course target successfully for three weeks.

This week they complete one of four.

Client:

"I knew four was unrealistic."

Your response:

111.

History:

The client keeps improving a course instead of launching it.

The original course scope is already complete.

Client:

"I just realized it also needs a resource vault."

Your response:

112.

History:

The client has changed goals three times after the initial excitement faded.

Client:

"I want to stop the podcast and start a newsletter. I am much more excited about that."

Your response:

113.

History:

The client has six months of strong accountability performance but says the current method no longer feels worthwhile.

Client:

"I still want the business. I just hate cold outreach now."

Your response:

114.

History:

The client has learned the language used in accountability training.

Client:

"I think I was overwhelmed, so I need to respect my capacity and shrink the goal."

Further context:

The client reports having had sufficient time but not wanting to perform the action.

Your response:

115.

History:

The client has completed a weekly financial review for 14 consecutive weeks.

Client:

"I know I probably do not need you to ask anymore, but I am afraid I will stop if you do not."

Your response:

116.

History:

The client has spent five weeks discussing why they fear submitting a completed book proposal.

Client:

"I think we need to talk more about why rejection affects me before I send anything."

Your response:

117.

History:

The client previously had a well-supported pattern of delaying launch despite having the opportunity to act. A developer has now confirmed that the site has a serious mobile-navigation defect.

Client:

"I need to delay launch until the fix is done."

Your response:**RESPONSE SELF-REVIEW CHECKLIST**

After completing the drill set, review selected responses using the following questions.

- Did I help clarify the client's intended goal when the initial statement was too broad?
- Did I distinguish the client's desired goal from a method or activity that might serve that goal?
- Did I preserve the client's ownership of what they ultimately want to pursue?
- Did I recognize when an outcome could remain a legitimate goal even though the final result was not completely within the client's control?
- Did I move accountability toward controllable client contributions without unnecessarily replacing the client's desired outcome?
- Did I identify obvious goal, timeframe, capacity, scope, or dependency issues without deciding for the client?
- Did I recognize when specialized expertise was required rather than providing advice outside the accountability role?
- Did I stop clarifying once the goal was sufficiently clear to move toward commitment design?
- Did I begin from the evidence actually available?
- Did I confuse a client explanation with an established fact?
- Did I ask more than the situation required?
- Did I avoid asking enough when information was genuinely missing?
- Did I preserve the client's final decision ownership?
- Did I make recommendations without becoming controlling?
- Did I challenge repeated evidence when appropriate?
- Did I overreact to isolated misses?
- Did I accurately represent partial completion?
- Did I acknowledge success without exaggerated praise?
- Did I avoid automatically increasing successful commitments?
- Did I avoid automatically shrinking commitments after a miss?
- Did I remain within the accountability role?
- Did I distinguish psychological relevance from psychological treatment?
- Did I recognize when the accountability process itself was contributing to the problem?
- Did I avoid interpreting a missed check-in response as evidence that the commitment itself was missed?

Did I respond to non-response without either chasing the client or becoming unnecessarily passive?

Did I write something I could realistically send to an actual client?

Did my response contain unnecessary explanation that belonged in my internal reasoning rather than the client message?

ACCOUNTABILI-BUDDY RESPONSE PROFILE

After completing the drills, identify your tendencies.

I tend to write responses that are:

Too long / About right / Too short

I tend to:

Ask too many questions / Ask enough / Ask too few

When establishing an initial goal, I tend to:

Clarify too much / Clarify enough / Move to commitments too quickly

When a client presents a method as a goal, I tend to:

Accept it automatically / Clarify the underlying goal appropriately / Overcomplicate the distinction

When I notice a goal, timeframe, or capacity discrepancy, I tend to:

Avoid raising it / Raise it while preserving ownership / Decide what the client should change

I tend to:

Reassure too quickly / Stay accurate / Challenge too quickly

I tend to:

Take too much ownership / Preserve ownership / Provide too little useful input

I tend to:

Accept client explanations too quickly / Evaluate them appropriately / Challenge them too quickly

I tend to:

Overinterpret isolated behavior / Stay proportionate / Miss meaningful patterns

The response category I found most difficult:

The professional distinction I need to practice most:

The type of client message most likely to pull me out of the accountability role:

END OF STAGE 1 RESPONSE-WRITING DRILLS