

AI-04458 Responsibility Assumption Wishing Deciding

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Relationship between responsibility assumption and willing (that is, wishing and deciding),

and I need pause only briefly here to note that when one in full awareness wishes and decides, one is confronted with responsibility. The

central thesis of this chapter is that one creates oneself; the central thesis of the next is that wishing and deciding are the building blocks of

creation. As Sartre has often told us, an individual's life is constituted

by his or her choices. An individual wills himself into being what he

is. If one is terrified by self-constitution (and by the groundlessness inherent in such knowledge), then one may avoid willing by, for example, deadening oneself to wishing or feeling, by abdicating choice, or

by transferring one's choice to other individuals, institutions, or external events.

Explain, list the pillars, list 22 examples

What it means? Deep dive and provide the psychological pillars.

Describe how a person typically thinks, behaves, and makes decisions.

Provide 22 concrete examples demonstrating these traits in real-life situations.

Then create a 22-point guidelines from the discussion.

This passage—drawn from Irvin Yalom's seminal work *Existential Psychotherapy*—touches on one of the most profound truths of human psychology: **you are the ultimate author of your own life, character, and choices.**

1. Deep Dive: What It Actually Means

At its core, this passage explains the psychological bridge between **desire**, **action**, and **existential anxiety**.

[Wishing] --> [Deciding] --> [Responsibility Assumption] --> [Existential Anxiety]
(Awareness) (Action) (Ownership) (Groundlessness)

1. **Wishing is Awareness:** Wishing is getting in touch with what you actually feel and want. It is the raw affective material of life.
2. **Deciding is Action:** Deciding is the bridge that converts a wish into reality by choosing one path and relinquishing all others.
3. **Responsibility Assumption is the Consequence:** Once you consciously wish and decide, you can no longer blame your parents, spouse, boss, or fate for how your life turns out. You own the result completely.

Why People Flee from Freedom

Owning your life reveals a terrifying reality that existentialists call **groundlessness**: the realization that there is no cosmic safety net, parent figure, or pre-scripted destiny protecting you from failure.

To cope with this terror, people develop defensive strategies to **evade willing**:

- **Emotional Numbing:** Pretending they don't know what they want ("I don't care," "Whatever you think").
- **Abdicating Choice:** Acting as if they have no options ("I *had* to do it").
- **Transferring Agency:** Handing their life steering wheel over to authority figures, institutions, partners, or "fate."

2. The 5 Psychological Pillars

1. **Responsibility Assumption:** Recognizing that one's choices, attitudes, and reactions construct one's subjective world and life trajectory.
2. **Wishing (Affective Contact):** The ability to access genuine internal desires, feelings, and values without immediate self-censorship.

3. **Deciding (Commitment & Renunciation):** The executive act of choosing one option, which inherently requires mourning and letting go of the unchosen alternatives.
4. **Groundlessness (Existential Dread):** The terrifying realization that human existence lacks an inherent safety net, forcing the individual to create their own meaning.
5. **Evasive Defenses (Agency Flight):** The psychological coping mechanisms used to deny authorship—such as victimhood, compulsivity, or blind obedience.

3. How a Person Thinks, Behaves, and Makes Decisions

Dimension	The Authentic Mode (Responsibility Assumed)	The Evasive Mode (Responsibility Denied)
Thinking Patterns	<i>"I am shaping this situation. Even in hard circumstances, I choose how I respond."</i>	<i>"I am trapped. Circumstances and other people leave me with zero options."</i>
Behavioral Habits	Direct communication, risk-taking, emotional honesty, acknowledging errors without defensiveness.	Passivity, complaining, emotional numbing, procrastination, relying on groupthink.
Decision-Making Style	Weighs trade-offs, accepts that no choice is perfect, acts, and accepts consequences.	Paralyzed by fear of regret; lets time, fate, or other people make the choice for them.

4. 22 Concrete Examples in Real Life

1. **The Career Martyr:** Staying in a toxic corporate job for 15 years while claiming, *"I have no choice because of the market,"* avoiding the terror of interviewing.
2. **Relationship Paralysis:** Remaining in an unhappy relationship hoping the partner breaks up first, avoiding the guilt of making the choice.

3. **The "Whatever You Want" Trap:** Repeatedly telling a partner *"I don't care where we eat/live,"* so if the outcome is bad, it can't be blamed on them.
4. **Parental Career Script:** Enrolling in law school because one's parents desired it, then spending middle age blaming them for one's unhappiness.
5. **Bureaucratic Hiding:** A manager refusing a reasonable employee request by hiding behind *"It's company policy,"* abdicating personal moral choice.
6. **Impulsive Blame Shift:** Yelling at a spouse and saying, *"You made me lose my temper!"* rather than owning one's emotional dysregulation.
7. **Protective Procrastination:** Waiting until the night before an exam to study so that if one fails, one can blame *"lack of time"* rather than lack of ability.
8. **Institutional Devotion:** Unquestioningly adopting every rule of a religious or political group to avoid ever making an independent ethical judgment.
9. **Active Career Pivot:** Quitting a stable job to start a business, fully accepting financial risk without blaming external markets if it falls short.
10. **Boundary Setting:** Politely declining a family holiday event that causes severe distress, accepting that family members may be temporarily upset.
11. **Victimhood Identity:** Framing every life setback as a targeted conspiracy by universe/colleagues, bypassing the pressure to adapt or change.
12. **Analysis Paralysis:** Spending three years researching gym routines without ever working out, protecting oneself from the risk of actual failure.
13. **Fatalistic Escape:** Blaming a string of bad dates on *"astrology"* or *"bad karma"* rather than reflecting on personal relationship habits.
14. **Clean Apology:** Stating, *"I made a poor decision that hurt you, and I own that,"* without adding *"...but you pushed me."*
15. **Passive Aggression:** Expressing dissatisfaction through quiet sabotage rather than stating directly, *"I am uncomfortable with this agreement."*
16. **Financial Avoidance:** Leaving unopened bank statements on the desk to avoid the discomfort of confronting one's actual financial state.
17. **Lifestyle Ownership:** Choosing an unconventional lifestyle (e.g., child-free, solo living) and comfortably owning it despite heavy social pressure.

18. **Delegated Discipline:** One parent letting the other handle all child discipline so they can remain the "popular parent" and avoid being disliked.
19. **Medical Non-Compliance:** Disregarding physical therapy exercises and then blaming the doctor for *"not fixing"* the injury.
20. **Creative Vulnerability:** Publishing a piece of writing or art knowing it may be criticized, rather than keeping it safely hidden in a notebook.
21. **Outsourced Deciding:** Polling ten friends on whether to break up with someone, hoping the majority vote makes the painful choice for them.
22. **Radical Acceptance of Illness:** Facing a serious diagnosis by asking, *"Given this reality I didn't choose, how do I want to choose to live today?"*

5. 22-Point Guidelines for Existential Ownership

1. **Acknowledge Full Authorship:** Recognize that you are the primary author of your reactions, life trajectory, and character.
2. **Uncouple Wishing from Deciding:** First give yourself permission to feel what you want without worrying yet about how to execute it.
3. **Catch Evasive Language:** Eliminate phrases like *"I had no choice," "I must,"* or *"They made me"* from your vocabulary.
4. **Befriend Groundlessness:** Accept that feeling anxious or unsupported is the natural price of human freedom.
5. **Stop Outsourcing Decisions:** Resist the urge to poll everyone you know before making personal choices.
6. **Mourn Unchosen Paths:** Accept that choosing one option means letting go of others—grief is a normal part of decision-making.
7. **Shift from Passive to Active:** Reframe *"This is happening to me"* into *"How am I choosing to relate to this?"*
8. **Honor Inner Affect:** Do not deaden your emotions; your true feelings are the raw material for authentic choices.
9. **Own Errors Promptly:** Apologize directly for mistakes without attaching rationalizations or shifting blame.

10. **Question Groupthink:** Never let an institution, boss, or group perform your personal moral thinking for you.
11. **Exercise Daily Agency:** Build your decision-making strength by making small, intentional choices daily without hesitation.
12. **Differentiate Want vs. Should:** Audit your goals to see if they are your true wishes or internalizations of societal expectations.
13. **Accept Risk as Unavoidable:** Recognize that trying to avoid all risk is itself a choice with massive hidden costs.
14. **Fire the Expected Rescuer:** Realize that no partner, mentor, or authority figure is coming to fix your life for you.
15. **Expose Procrastination:** Treat procrastination as what it usually is—a defense against the fear of being judged on your full attempt.
16. **Own Your Stance on Constraints:** When external facts cannot be changed, take ownership of the attitude you bring to them.
17. **Relinquish Victimhood:** Shift your focal question from *"Why did they do this to me?"* to *"What am I going to do next?"*
18. **Bridge Intent with Action:** Remember that wishing without deciding is merely day-dreaming; choice requires physical movement.
19. **Increase Discomfort Tolerance:** Develop the capacity to sit with short-term discomfort in service of long-term alignment.
20. **Set Unapologetic Boundaries:** Recognize that saying *"no"* to others is often the only way to say *"yes"* to your own direction.
21. **Audit Your Life Periodically:** Pause regularly to check whether your daily actions align with the life you wish to construct.
22. **Reframe Responsibility as Freedom:** View total responsibility not as a heavy burden, but as the ultimate doorway to personal sovereignty.