

Make contribution reliable, sustainable and transferable

Turn personal capacity toward a chosen contribution that others genuinely value. Distinguish responsibility from exploitation, define useful behaviours, build continuity and complete the five exercises while protecting consent, recovery and human worth.

4 lessons · approximately 9 hours, plus multi-day practice

How to use this workbook

Read the assigned manuscript first. This workbook contains accompanying teaching and invented cases, not a revision of the source. Attempt exercises before consulting the rubrics and explanations. Written work is self-assessed or discussed with a tutor; no secure examination, academic credit or certificate is implied. Use a clearly labelled fictional case when live practice or personal disclosure would be unsuitable. Links use the course's intended publication address; for offline review, open the supplied source PDF at the full-book page numbers shown.

- Define usefulness, responsibility, legacy and generativity with appropriate distinctions.
- Evaluate cultural and personal avoidance claims without shaming legitimate limits.
- Design a bounded role with observable actions, reviews and contingencies.
- Transfer skill and build durable artifacts without creating dependence.
- Complete and evaluate all five exercises across their distinct time horizons.

[Open the module and source reading links](#)

Lesson sequence

1. Connect personal capacity to chosen contribution
2. Distinguish chosen responsibility from exploitation and performance
3. Build reliable roles, transfer knowledge and remove single points of failure
4. Complete the responsibility exercises and test durable benefit

Connect personal capacity to chosen contribution

Allow approximately 110 minutes, plus any continuing activity.

Learning objectives

- Distinguish usefulness, sustained responsibility and durable legacy.
- Explain the chapter's outward turn and its philosophical accounts of contribution.
- Critically evaluate narrative and psychological claims without making human worth conditional on output.

Assigned source readings

The Weight You Choose and the Weight You Dodge; From Self-Mastery to Being Needed; You Were Not Built for a Private Paradise; Responsibility as Antidote to Weightlessness; Orwell case

Full-book PDF pages 362–372. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

Chapter 11 notes 286–288: Aristotle, meaning and responsibility

Full-book PDF pages 451–451. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

Chapter 11 notes 293–295: generativity and flourishing

Full-book PDF pages 451–451. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

Develop the argument

Read the two lives as a question about purpose

The opening compares two people with organised lives and developed skills. One protects a private programme of self-improvement from almost every claim by others. The other accepts recurring, inconvenient contributions to people and projects. The contrast asks what personal capacity is for. It does not establish that neat routines are selfish or that exhaustion proves generosity. A learner must distinguish the source's stylised portraits from actual lives, where invisible care, disability, poverty or recovery may explain a pattern an observer cannot see.

The chapter's outward turn reframes habits, strength, order and courage as capacities that can support something beyond personal display. Its central question is which part of a shared world the person will help sustain. That question can be valuable without adopting the opening's harsh judgments. Rest, pleasure and receiving care remain legitimate. A person's worth does not depend on being indispensable, and a period with few external obligations is not evidence that their existence lacks meaning.

Define the three terms precisely

Usefulness means contributing reliably to the wellbeing, stability or growth of people or worthwhile projects. Responsibility extends that contribution through an accepted, ongoing obligation with consequences. Legacy concerns effects that remain after the contributor leaves: learned skills, functioning institutions, accessible work or maintained practices. Feeling helpful can motivate contribution, but it is not identical to producing an effect. Equally, an effect may be quiet and hard to count, such as careful listening or preventing a foreseeable misunderstanding.

The distinction is not self versus others. The source explicitly rejects universal availability and says serious commitments often require declining additional demands. Chosen responsibility needs a defined role, sufficient competence, consent where relevant and an honest account of capacity. Do not adopt a major caregiving, family or professional role merely to complete a learning exercise. Begin by examining existing obligations and a modest contribution that the intended recipient actually values. Their needs and autonomy matter as much as the contributor's desire to feel useful.

Compare philosophical reasons and psychological proposals

The philosophical discussion connects Aristotle's common life and flourishing with virtues enacted in relationships and roles. Note 286 specifically locates the political-animal phrase in the Politics, while distinguishing related discussion in the Nicomachean Ethics. The author also interprets rational self-interest as producing values others can use and invokes generativity as concern for those who follow. These are interpretive links among different traditions. They should be compared on their reasons rather than presented as a single proven theory of the good life.

The psychological account proposes that sustained roles can provide meaning, continuity and a sense of agency. Its language about nervous-system change, despair and responsibility as a survival strategy goes beyond what this course has verified. Contribution can be meaningful, but it is not a guaranteed treatment for depression, addiction or suicidal distress, and guilt about others' dependence is not a treatment method. Keep the educational task focused on chosen roles and observable effects. A learner may challenge the author's causal claims while accurately explaining the proposed relationship between contribution and identity.

Evaluate the Orwell illustration

The Orwell scene imagines a writer removing decorative phrasing so the argument serves its reader. Its contribution theme is that craft becomes useful when the audience can understand and build on the work. The passage is a literary reconstruction, not a documented observation verified here. Clarity also does not require removing every distinctive or expressive feature; the test is whether a choice serves the work's purpose. Use the illustration to examine audience benefit, revise a small artifact and explain the tradeoff, rather than imitate the author's style or claim that plainness alone guarantees lasting value.

Original course example: A skill that helps the next organiser

Invented for this course.

In this invented case, Nico can run a community exhibition smoothly but wants to understand how that competence might benefit others without becoming permanently on call.

1. Define usefulness as helping the next organiser run an accessible, reliable event.
2. Accept a bounded responsibility: produce and test a setup guide over the next month.
3. Ask a willing organiser what information is missing before choosing the content.
4. Include a short practice session so the guide is tested rather than merely admired.
5. Describe legacy as usable knowledge and increased independence, not dependence on Nico.

Contribution can extend beyond the self through a limited, consent-based project. It does not require limitless availability or make personal worth conditional on the guide's success.

Practice and evidence

1. Compare contribution theories

Explain the chapter's accounts of virtue in common life, producing values and generativity. Identify a shared insight and one important distinction or uncertainty.

Deliverable: A three-part comparison and a 250-word critical conclusion.

1. Use the source's definitions rather than treating all theories as identical.
2. Distinguish philosophical claims from psychological predictions.
3. Explain the corrected Aristotle attribution in note 286.

Accuracy · 4 points

Represents all three accounts and the source attribution accurately.

Distinctions · 4 points

Separates normative reasons, interpretation and empirical claims.

Critique · 2 points

Offers a reasoned limit without making agreement a condition of credit.

2. Make an artifact useful to a reader

Create a short instruction for a harmless everyday process, then revise it using the Orwell illustration's audience-serving test.

Deliverable: An original 150-word instruction, revised version and change rationale.

1. Identify the intended reader and task.
2. Remove or explain wording that obstructs use.
3. Keep necessary nuance and test whether the steps can be followed.

Audience · 4 points

Defines the reader's need and produces usable instructions.

Revision · 4 points

Changes improve function rather than merely shorten the text.

Rationale · 2 points

Recognises the literary illustration as an example, not verified biography.

Reflection

What modest use of a skill could leave someone more capable while preserving both their autonomy and your limits?

Formative self-check

Choose an answer before looking at the answer key. These questions are open practice, not a secure assessment.

1. Which distinction best matches the chapter?

- A. Usefulness is praise; responsibility is popularity; legacy is fame.
- B. Usefulness is contribution; responsibility is sustained accepted obligation; legacy is durable effect.
- C. Usefulness requires exhaustion; responsibility requires universal availability.
- D. Legacy exists only when a project cannot function without its founder.

2. What is a defensible use of the chapter's meaning argument?

- A. Treat responsibility as a guaranteed treatment for depression.
- B. Judge a person's worth by how many people depend on them.
- C. Explore whether a chosen, sustainable contribution supports meaning in this case.
- D. Take a major caregiving role solely to prove maturity.

3. What does the Orwell illustration principally contribute?

- A. Proof of every detail of Orwell's writing routine.
- B. A requirement that all prose use the same style.
- C. A rule that shorter text is always better.
- D. An example of judging craft by service to the reader rather than display.

Answer explanations

1. B — Usefulness is contribution; responsibility is sustained accepted obligation; legacy is durable effect.

The three terms concern contribution, continuity and persistence. Praise, exhaustion and permanent dependency are not sufficient evidence.

2. C — Explore whether a chosen, sustainable contribution supports meaning in this case.

The educational application is bounded and contextual. The course does not verify clinical claims or condition worth on usefulness.

3. D — An example of judging craft by service to the reader rather than display.

The scene illustrates audience-serving revision. It is a literary reconstruction and does not establish that brevity alone produces value.

Distinguish chosen responsibility from exploitation and performance

Allow approximately 110 minutes, plus any continuing activity.

Learning objectives

- Explain the three cultural narratives and their legitimate cores.
- Distinguish noncommitment, protective boundaries and performative concern using evidence.
- Evaluate the source's indictment without endorsing shame or universal prescriptions.

Assigned source readings

[When Looking After Yourself Becomes Hiding; The Art of Never Quite Stepping In; The Price of Carrying Nothing](#)

Full-book PDF pages 373–378. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

[Chapter 11 notes 289–290: self-care critique and purposelessness](#)

Full-book PDF pages 451–451. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

Develop the argument

Preserve the legitimate core of boundaries

The diagnostic section begins by acknowledging that rest and refusal can be necessary responses to exploitation. Its target is self-care absolutism: treating every cost beyond immediate comfort as unacceptable. That distinction requires facts about the demand, the person's resources and the relationship. A boundary is not disproved by someone else finding it inconvenient. Conversely, calling an action self-care does not settle whether it evades an obligation already freely accepted. Review what was promised, what changed and what a fair renegotiation would involve.

The second cultural narrative treats commitment itself as a trap and celebrates permanent flexibility. The source criticises this as endless adolescence, while admitting that leaving harmful arrangements can be necessary. Do not convert its examples into a prescribed life path. Marriage, parenthood, home ownership or staying in one place are not course requirements or universal measures of maturity. The useful question is whether open options serve a considered purpose or indefinitely replace a chosen contribution the person actually wants to make.

Distinguish service from being used

The third narrative treats all service as exploitation. The chapter argues that real abuse does not make every responsibility abusive. Its working distinction emphasises choice, alignment with standards and the ability to refuse or leave a corrupt arrangement. This is a starting point, not a complete test: unequal power, economic necessity and manipulation can limit apparent choice. A sustainable plan should include boundaries, competence, support and a realistic route to renegotiate. It should not require someone to prove resilience by remaining in a harmful role.

Reciprocity also needs careful interpretation. A recipient may be unable to return comparable help, particularly in care or teaching. The issue is not a demand for equal exchange from every individual. Examine whether the wider arrangement recognises limits, distributes burdens fairly

where possible and respects the contributor's agency. Need alone does not authorise taking over someone's life, and willingness alone does not establish that a helper is qualified. Being useful includes declining work beyond competence and connecting the person with appropriate support.

Diagnose the personal evasions fairly

The source describes refusing commitment while preserving the appearance of helpfulness, postponing responsibility until an indefinitely perfect future and confusing present opportunities with earlier experiences of being used. It also criticises performative altruism: visible concern that substitutes for a concrete contribution. These patterns should be tested, not assumed. Advocacy, fundraising or information-sharing can produce real effects; local activity is not automatically more valuable. Ask what outcome the action is intended to support and whether there is evidence that it does so.

Preparation can be prudent when a role would otherwise harm the person relying on you. Waiting to acquire a necessary skill is different from using readiness as an endless excuse. Define the prerequisite and a review date. A past harmful experience may justify a cautious, supported trial rather than immediate commitment. If survival or recovery is currently the realistic priority, do not manufacture a new burden. The assessment asks whether the chosen response follows from the situation, not whether it looks sufficiently sacrificial.

Convert the indictment into a constructive audit

The Price of Carrying Nothing portrays a life disconnected from durable contribution and argues that unexpressed capacity can feel empty. Its sweeping statements about anxiety, therapy and pointlessness are not verified psychological facts. Human value does not disappear when someone needs care or lacks a formal role. Use a more precise audit: what worthwhile contribution is wanted, what is feasible, what prevents it and what small step would test the fit? A valid conclusion may be to improve an existing commitment, renegotiate an unfair one, obtain support or postpone a new role for stated reasons.

Original course example: The volunteer who is already overcommitted

Invented for this course.

In this invented case, Priya manages a weekly community reading group. When asked to add a second group, she worries that refusing would prove she is hiding behind boundaries. The current group already lacks preparation time.

1. Inventory the existing promise before evaluating the new request.
2. Estimate preparation and delivery time honestly, including recovery and other obligations.
3. Identify the likely consequence of acceptance: lower quality for both groups.
4. Decline the second group or offer a bounded handover resource, without promising more than capacity allows.
5. Improve the current group's preparation system and reassess only if circumstances change.

Refusal can protect genuine responsibility. The chapter's challenge to noncommitment does not require accepting every additional demand.

Practice and evidence

1. Test three cultural narratives

For each of the three narratives, write one case where its underlying concern is legitimate and one where it becomes an evasion.

Deliverable: Six short cases and a distinguishing evidence question for each pair.

1. Cover self-care, flexibility and service/exploitation.
2. Include actual resource limits and prior commitments.
3. Avoid treating a life choice or diagnosis as evidence of irresponsibility.

Coverage · 4 points

Accurately covers all three narratives and legitimate cores.

Evidence · 4 points

Distinguishes each pair using facts rather than labels.

Fairness · 2 points

Avoids universal life prescriptions or shaming genuine limits.

2. Evaluate a proposed responsibility

Use a fictional role offer to evaluate need, recipient preference, competence, capacity, support, reciprocity and exit or renegotiation conditions.

Deliverable: A one-page accept, modify or decline recommendation with reasons.

1. Identify the contribution and the person or project served.
2. Check whether existing obligations would be displaced.
3. Specify a bounded trial or prerequisite if uncertainty remains.

Analysis · 4 points

Evaluates all seven factors with concrete evidence or stated unknowns.

Decision · 4 points

Recommendation follows from the analysis and protects affected people.

Review · 2 points

Includes a meaningful review point rather than permanent vague postponement.

Reflection

Which responsibility would become more useful if you narrowed or renegotiated it rather than simply adding more effort?

Formative self-check

Choose an answer before looking at the answer key. These questions are open practice, not a secure assessment.

1. A person declines a new volunteer role because it would undermine a role already accepted. What is the best assessment?

- A. This necessarily proves self-care absolutism.
- B. The refusal may protect sustained usefulness and should be judged by the actual load.
- C. They must accept to show maturity.
- D. All volunteer service is exploitation.

2. Which fact best distinguishes prudent preparation from endless postponement?

- A. The person uses sophisticated language.
- B. The proposed role is prestigious.
- C. A concrete prerequisite and review date are defined.
- D. The person feels completely confident.

3. Which evaluation of public advocacy is most defensible?

- A. It is always performative because it is visible.
- B. It is always useful because it expresses concern.
- C. It matters only if the advocate also sacrifices sleep.
- D. Assess its intended effect and evidence of contribution rather than visibility alone.

Answer explanations

1. B — The refusal may protect sustained usefulness and should be judged by the actual load.

The source distinguishes serious responsibility from universal availability. Evidence about capacity and existing promises matters.

2. C — A concrete prerequisite and review date are defined.

A specific dependency and review point make preparation testable. Confidence or prestige does not establish readiness or evasion.

3. D — Assess its intended effect and evidence of contribution rather than visibility alone.

The source warns about substitution, not a reliable rule that public communication has no value. Outcomes and context are the relevant tests.

Build reliable roles, transfer knowledge and remove single points of failure

Allow approximately 110 minutes, plus any continuing activity.

Learning objectives

- Write an observable role description with routines, decisions and boundaries.
- Design check-ins, reviews, contingencies and knowledge transfer.
- Reconcile meaningful contribution with systems that remain functional during absence.

Assigned source readings

[Choosing What You Will Carry](#); [Useful Verbs](#); [Architecture of Carrying](#); [Teaching Humans](#); [Durable Structures](#); [Usefulness in the Ledger](#)

Full-book PDF pages 378–386. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

[Chapter 11 notes 291–296: chosen responsibility, mentoring, generativity and prosocial behaviour](#)

Full-book PDF pages 451–451. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

Develop the argument

Choose a domain and define useful verbs

The constructive sequence begins with one domain: family, work, craft or community. Responsibility becomes concrete when it names the people or process served, the relevant scope and the expected rhythm. A private declaration cannot create authority over others. Confirm the role with those affected where appropriate, respect existing roles and avoid taking over decisions that belong to someone else. The course exercise is a plan, not permission to contact people, change shared systems or accept commitments on their behalf.

Turn the domain into verbs. In mentoring, review work and give actionable feedback. In project ownership, maintain a plan, identify dependencies, surface blockers and clarify decisions. In a household role, coordinate agreed logistics rather than assume control over private information. Describe what regular presence looks like, what initiative is appropriate and how an observer could distinguish contribution from nominal involvement. The output is a short role description with limits, not a claim that one person must prevent every possible failure.

Create a rhythm that supports reliability

The source proposes standing touchpoints, reminders and protected time. Their purpose is to reduce dependence on memory or enthusiasm. A recurring meeting is useful only if it serves an agreed need; do not retain it merely to demonstrate seriousness. Add a weekly review, with fifteen minutes offered as a workable example, asking what is working, what is fraying, what conversation is avoided and what could worsen if ignored. Convert the answer into an action, owner or request for a decision.

Contingency planning asks what happens if the responsible person is late, mistaken or unavailable. The source explicitly warns against becoming a single point of failure. This qualifies its earlier language about indispensability: a contribution can be important because it built

capability, even when the system now operates without its author. Document procedures, identify backup roles and test a handover. For accounts or sensitive records, use authorised access and appropriate recovery arrangements; never put passwords, private records or unrestricted credentials in a course worksheet or shared manual.

Teach a willing person and build durable structures

The mentoring method offers structured attention to a willing learner: a regular slot, review of actual work, specific feedback and visibility into drafts or reasoning. Begin with the learner's goals and consent. Do not infer readiness from flattery, age or social similarity. Model reliable conduct while allowing the learner to question and adapt the method. A mentor's role is to build the other person's capability, not create dependence or require gratitude. Feedback should be clear and useful rather than deliberately hurtful.

Durable contribution also includes systems, institutions and artifacts. A checklist or template should be usable by someone besides its creator. An institutional norm should have a reason and an owner, rather than persist solely through personal authority. An artifact may be a tool, argument, dataset, design, curriculum or piece of art. Durability is not guaranteed by writing something down. Test discoverability, permissions, clarity, maintenance and whether someone actually wants to use it. A simple, maintained guide may contribute more than an elaborate abandoned repository.

Track contribution and revise the load

The ledger asks whether you showed up where expected, advanced work beyond the immediate week and left something clearer or more stable. Record the agreed behaviour and available evidence, not merely time spent or the helper's emotional satisfaction. Some effects are delayed or difficult to measure, so include recipient feedback and uncertainty without demanding disclosure of private experiences. A weekly comparison of calendar and priorities can reveal gaps, but necessary paid work, recovery and invisible care must not disappear from the account.

When the record reveals a miss, improve the arrangement: clarify the role, reduce excess promises, schedule the necessary step or ask for support. Do not compensate automatically with unpaid overtime or lost sleep. The source's responsibility ideal becomes stronger when it includes sustainable capacity and honest handover. The final test is whether the person or project is better supported, with less fragility and more shared competence, rather than whether the contributor looks indispensable or experiences the greatest personal cost.

Original course example: The only person who knows the room setup

Invented for this course.

In this invented case, a club depends on one volunteer to prepare its event room. Members praise the volunteer as indispensable, but every absence causes cancellation.

1. Define the useful outcome as reliable, accessible setup rather than the volunteer's personal presence.
2. Write an agreed checklist and identify which checks require qualified staff.
3. Invite a willing backup to practise the process during an ordinary session.

4. Test a planned handover while the original volunteer remains available for questions.
5. Track whether the next event works without emergency intervention and update unclear steps.

The volunteer's contribution grows when others can continue the work. Reduced dependency is evidence of responsible legacy, not reduced personal value.

Practice and evidence

1. Write a role operating sheet

Choose one harmless fictional or authorised existing role. Define purpose, recipients, scope, useful verbs, recurring touchpoints, a weekly review and boundaries.

Deliverable: A one-page operating sheet and a four-week calendar sketch.

1. State what is inside and outside the role.
2. Identify dependencies, decisions and escalation needs.
3. Include capacity, consent and review conditions.

Clarity · 4 points

The role has observable behaviours and meaningful limits.

Reliability · 4 points

Routines and reviews address actual dependencies and likely failure points.

Authority · 2 points

Respects others' decisions, consent and private information.

2. Create and test a handover

Design a simple process guide and a mentoring session that lets a willing fictional successor perform the task. Include an absence test.

Deliverable: A guide, session outline, test checklist and revision record.

1. Explain the process and common errors without secrets or sensitive data.
2. Give the learner an opportunity to try and ask questions.
3. Assess independent performance and revise unclear instructions.

Transfer · 4 points

Makes tacit knowledge visible and actionable.

Test · 4 points

Uses a realistic absence or independent-use scenario.

Durability · 2 points

Specifies access, maintenance and safe boundaries without credential sharing.

Reflection

What would still work during your absence because you had taught or documented it well?

Formative self-check

Choose an answer before looking at the answer key. These questions are open practice, not a secure assessment.

1. A process fails whenever its creator is absent. What does the constructive section recommend?

- A. Celebrate the creator's indispensability.
- B. Keep the knowledge private to preserve influence.
- C. Create appropriate documentation, backup capability and a tested handover.
- D. Stop the process permanently.

2. Which mentoring plan best fits the chapter?

- A. Offer unsolicited control over another person's career.
- B. Agree on a goal, review real work regularly and give specific feedback.
- C. Give one inspiring speech and require gratitude.
- D. Choose someone who always agrees with the mentor.

3. What should a course handover worksheet contain?

- A. Actual account passwords so everyone can help.
- B. Private medical records to prove responsibility.
- C. Unrestricted access instructions for any interested person.
- D. Process steps, authorised roles and a safe plan for access or recovery.

Answer explanations

1. C — Create appropriate documentation, backup capability and a tested handover.

The source explicitly identifies this as a single-point-of-failure problem. Responsible contribution includes making continuity possible.

2. B — Agree on a goal, review real work regularly and give specific feedback.

Structured, consent-based attention builds capability. Inspiration and agreement are not substitutes for useful shared work.

3. D — Process steps, authorised roles and a safe plan for access or recovery.

Continuity must preserve privacy and security. The source's casual password-sharing example is not adopted as a course instruction.

Complete the responsibility exercises and test durable benefit

Allow approximately 110 minutes, plus any continuing activity.

Learning objectives

- Complete the inventory, three-month role definition and four-week habit plan.
- Design a consent-based six-month mentoring offer and a seven-day first step.
- Evaluate a ten-year contribution across people, structures and work without measuring worth by dependency.

Assigned source readings

All five responsibility exercises; Closing Synthesis and Aphorism

Full-book PDF pages 386–391. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

Chapter 11 notes 292–296: mentoring, generativity and useful behaviour

Full-book PDF pages 451–451. Section links open the chapter at the relevant page.

Develop the argument

Inventory existing roles before adding a new one

The first exercise lists actual roles in family, work and community, then names what each presently requires. It asks the learner to identify one role being neglected. Use evidence of an accepted responsibility, not an assumption that every request creates an obligation. An inventory can reveal overload as well as neglect. If few roles appear, treat that as information about current circumstances and possible interests, never proof of worthlessness. Personal details can remain private or be replaced with a realistic fictional case.

The second exercise develops the selected role into a full-page picture of useful behaviour over the next three months. Cover regular presence, decisions, conversations and routine maintenance. The source's imagined film asks for observable scenes, such as an agreed weekly review, not a flattering identity description. Add what the intended recipients want and what is outside the role. A good design can be assessed without requiring the learner to share information about children, health, finances or confidential work.

Choose one four-week responsibility habit

The third exercise selects one recurring action, not an entire lifestyle overhaul. It must be small enough to repeat, concrete enough to verify and important enough to improve the role over time. The source asks for a repeating calendar entry, a ledger line and a written four-week commitment. In the course, prepare the schedule and perform it only within ordinary authority and consent. A plan involving other people is not a confirmed appointment until they agree where agreement is needed.

Match the record to the recurrence. A weekly habit does not fail on six days when it is not due. Track scheduled opportunities, completion evidence, justified reschedules and misses separately. If an occurrence is missed, record it and resume or redesign; do not invent completion or

automatically double the next load. After four weeks, review whether the behaviour improved the role, whether its cost was sustainable and whether recipients experienced it as helpful. The study period is an experiment in reliability, not a treatment or identity verdict.

Make mentoring an offer and legacy a first action

The fourth exercise identifies a potential learner and asks what can realistically be offered over six months. Its first step occurs within seven days and seeks interest in a bounded arrangement. Choose by relevant goals and willingness, not by assuming a person needs improvement. Respect refusal without pressure. The source suggests choosing another person if the first declines; that does not authorise unsolicited repeated outreach or require filling a mentoring quota. A role-played invitation can demonstrate the skill safely.

The fifth exercise asks what you would want to exist ten years from now because of your contribution, considering a person's development, a durable structure and a body of work. Its original mortality framing can be replaced by a future-absence or ten-year review prompt if that is more suitable. The learning goal is long-range contribution, not inducing distress. Choose one concrete first action within seven days, such as drafting an outline or documenting a harmless process, and identify any permission needed before sharing or contacting others.

Reconcile being missed with leaving capability behind

The closing asks what would be lost if the contributor were absent. Read that alongside the constructive section's warning against single points of failure. One question concerns whether the contribution mattered; the other concerns whether it was built responsibly. A successful mentor may be missed personally while the learner continues independently. A well-designed system may no longer need its founder. Deliberately making others helpless would contradict the chapter's own account of durable legacy.

The final evaluation should therefore examine both contribution and resilience: what improved, who wanted it, what evidence supports the improvement and what can continue without the contributor? Include limits and unintended effects. The chapter's rhetoric about costly effort and being needed is not a reason to sacrifice sleep, tolerate exploitation or make human worth conditional on productivity. Full credit comes from a complete, reasoned and sustainable plan with honest evidence, including a justified decision to narrow a role or seek support before taking on more.

Original course example: A four-week improvement that makes the role smaller

Invented for this course.

In this invented case, a volunteer manages a shared equipment cupboard. For four weeks, they use a short weekly inventory routine and teach two willing members how to update it. Emergency messages decrease.

1. Define the original need: members could not locate equipment or know what needed repair.
2. Track the weekly routine only when due, with a dated update as evidence.
3. Ask users whether the inventory is understandable and correct misleading labels.
4. Test a week led by another member and record what still depends on the original volunteer.

5. Conclude that a smaller emergency burden can indicate successful contribution rather than reduced usefulness.

A useful legacy can reduce dependence and effort. The evidence is the improved shared process, not the volunteer's exhaustion.

Practice and evidence

1. Complete the five-part responsibility packet

Prepare an actual low-stakes or simulated inventory, three-month role definition, four-week habit, six-month mentoring offer and ten-year legacy aim with first steps.

Deliverable: A five-part packet with dates, consent needs, evidence rules and adaptations.

1. Inventory existing roles before selecting one improvement.
2. Specify one recurring action and four weeks of due opportunities.
3. Make the mentoring offer optional and bounded.
4. Give mentoring and legacy first steps within seven days, without assuming external actions are authorised.

Completeness · 4 points

Includes all five exercises and correct horizons: three months, four weeks, six months, ten years and seven-day starts.

Operational quality · 4 points

Defines useful behaviours, due dates, evidence and needed consent.

Proportion · 2 points

Avoids overcommitment, privacy exposure and dependency creation.

2. Audit benefit and continuity

Evaluate the packet using either actual observations or clearly labelled simulated outcomes. Test whether contribution and resilience both improved.

Deliverable: A 500-word review, an absence test and a revised next-month plan.

1. Compare intended benefit with recipient needs and observed effects.
2. Identify what remains a single point of failure.
3. Revise workload, documentation or role scope based on evidence.

Evidence · 4 points

Distinguishes outcomes from effort, praise and invented results.

Continuity · 4 points

Tests whether useful work can continue without unhealthy dependence.

Revision · 2 points

Changes are justified and preserve the contributor's and recipients' agency.

Reflection

What could you help build that would remain useful even when nobody remembers who created it?

Formative self-check

Choose an answer before looking at the answer key. These questions are open practice, not a secure assessment.

1. A responsibility habit is due every Friday. How should Tuesday appear in the record?

- A. As failure because no action happened.
- B. As not due, distinct from a missed scheduled occurrence.
- C. As success to improve the total.
- D. As a reason to add another habit immediately.

2. A potential mentee declines an offer. What is the appropriate response?

- A. Pressure them to recognise the value.
- B. Treat refusal as ingratitude.
- C. Respect the decision and reconsider whether another mutually wanted arrangement is appropriate.
- D. Begin reviewing their work without permission.

3. A well-documented process continues smoothly after its creator leaves. How should the chapter's legacy aim be assessed?

- A. It failed because nothing collapsed.
- B. The creator was never useful.
- C. The successors should be made more dependent.
- D. It can be strong evidence of durable contribution and responsible continuity.

Answer explanations

1. B — As not due, distinct from a missed scheduled occurrence.

The recurrence defines the opportunity. Honest records separate not-due days from completion, rescheduling and misses.

2. C — Respect the decision and reconsider whether another mutually wanted arrangement is appropriate.

Mentoring is an offer that depends on willingness. The learner's autonomy is part of useful contribution.

3. D — It can be strong evidence of durable contribution and responsible continuity.

The source's warning against single points of failure qualifies the rhetoric of indispensability. Lasting capability is a legitimate legacy.

Module assessment

Build a contribution that can continue without you

A fictional local history group relies on one capable organiser. Requests are growing, documentation is poor and newer members want to help but do not know how. Design a sustainable contribution plan that improves the group while reducing its dependence on one person.

Required evidence

- An existing-responsibility inventory and a reasoned scope decision.
- A three-month useful-behaviour description and one four-week recurring habit.
- A consent-based mentoring offer with a six-month horizon and first step within seven days.
- A simple handover artifact, absence test and ten-year legacy aim with a seven-day first action.
- A 500-word review of benefits, burdens, evidence and revisions.

Assessment criteria

Conceptual synthesis · 5 points

Distinguishes contribution, obligation and durable effect while addressing exploitation and dependency.

Practical reliability · 5 points

Defines roles, routines, reviews, contingencies and realistic capacity.

Exercise completeness · 5 points

Includes all five exercises and their distinct horizons and consent requirements.

Evidence and care · 5 points

Evaluates actual benefit, protects privacy and rejects worth-by-output or exhaustion scoring.

Model response: consult after your attempt

A strong plan first narrows the organiser's accepted role and asks members which support is useful. It chooses one repeatable improvement, such as an agreed weekly task list, and records it only when due. A willing member learns one process through shared work and an independently tested guide. The six-month offer is bounded and can be declined; private records and credentials are excluded from the training artifact. The long-range aim is a functioning group with distributed capability. The review can conclude that fewer emergency demands and a successful absence test are progress, even though the organiser is less operationally indispensable. No learner must accept the author's claims that contribution is the sole route to meaning.

Source cautions and interpretation

- The book's rhetoric of indispensability and things falling during absence is in tension with its explicit warning against single points of failure. The course teaches meaningful contribution and resilient continuity together.
- Claims about contribution, nervous-system change, despair, addiction, suicide and therapy are not independently verified. Responsibility is not taught as clinical treatment, and human worth is not conditional on usefulness.
- The Orwell scene is treated as a literary reconstruction rather than a documented historical event. Note 286's distinction between Politics and Nicomachean Ethics is preserved.
- The source's suggestion that another person should know passwords is not adopted as an exercise. Handover work uses authorised roles and safe access/recovery planning without secrets or sensitive records.
- Mentoring and new roles require genuine willingness, appropriate competence and consent; course plans do not authorise contacting people or changing shared systems.
- No image blocks occur in the assigned chapter JSON. All substantive H2-H4 headings are covered, and disagreement with the philosophical claims can earn full credit.

Source coverage

Opening Narrative Scene

Analyzes the full optimiser/useful-person contrast, definitions, outward turn, Aristotle/Rand/generativity accounts, responsibility/meaning claims and the audience-serving Orwell reconstruction.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 363](#)

The Weight You Choose and the Weight You Dodge

Analyzes the full optimiser/useful-person contrast, definitions, outward turn, Aristotle/Rand/generativity accounts, responsibility/meaning claims and the audience-serving Orwell reconstruction.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 363](#)

Conceptual Frame — From Self-Mastery to Being Needed

Analyzes the full optimiser/useful-person contrast, definitions, outward turn, Aristotle/Rand/generativity accounts, responsibility/meaning claims and the audience-serving Orwell reconstruction.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 365](#)

Philosophical + Psychological Undercarriage

Analyzes the full optimiser/useful-person contrast, definitions, outward turn, Aristotle/Rand/generativity accounts, responsibility/meaning claims and the audience-serving Orwell reconstruction.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 367](#)

You Were Not Built for a Private Paradise

Analyzes the full optimiser/useful-person contrast, definitions, outward turn, Aristotle/Rand/generativity accounts, responsibility/meaning claims and the audience-serving Orwell reconstruction.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 367](#)

Responsibility as Antidote to Weightlessness

Analyzes the full optimiser/useful-person contrast, definitions, outward turn, Aristotle/Rand/generativity accounts, responsibility/meaning claims and the audience-serving Orwell reconstruction.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 369](#)

Case in Point: George Orwell and the Practice of Usefulness

Analyzes the full optimiser/useful-person contrast, definitions, outward turn, Aristotle/Rand/generativity accounts, responsibility/meaning claims and the audience-serving Orwell reconstruction.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 372](#)

Diagnostic Section: Cultural and Personal Sabotage

Covers all three cultural narratives, their legitimate cores, noncommitment, readiness postponement, being used versus useful, performative altruism and the complete indictment with contextual alternatives.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 373](#)

When “Looking After Yourself” Becomes Hiding

Covers all three cultural narratives, their legitimate cores, noncommitment, readiness postponement, being used versus useful, performative altruism and the complete indictment with contextual alternatives.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 373](#)

The Art of Never Quite Stepping In

Covers all three cultural narratives, their legitimate cores, noncommitment, readiness postponement, being used versus useful, performative altruism and the complete indictment with contextual alternatives.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 375](#)

The Price of Carrying Nothing

Covers all three cultural narratives, their legitimate cores, noncommitment, readiness postponement, being used versus useful, performative altruism and the complete indictment with contextual alternatives.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 376](#)

Constructive Section: Methods, Habits, Protocols

Teaches one-domain ownership, useful verbs, touchpoints, fifteen-minute weekly reviews, contingencies, boundaries, structured mentoring, systems/institutions/artifacts and evidence-based ledger review.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 378](#)

Choosing What You Will Carry

Teaches one-domain ownership, useful verbs, touchpoints, fifteen-minute weekly reviews, contingencies, boundaries, structured mentoring, systems/institutions/artifacts and evidence-based ledger review.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 378](#)

Turning “Being Useful” Into Verbs

Teaches one-domain ownership, useful verbs, touchpoints, fifteen-minute weekly reviews, contingencies, boundaries, structured mentoring, systems/institutions/artifacts and evidence-based ledger review.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 379](#)

The Boring Architecture of Carrying

Teaches one-domain ownership, useful verbs, touchpoints, fifteen-minute weekly reviews, contingencies, boundaries, structured mentoring, systems/institutions/artifacts and evidence-based ledger review.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 381](#)

Teaching Humans, Not Hoarding Talent

Teaches one-domain ownership, useful verbs, touchpoints, fifteen-minute weekly reviews, contingencies, boundaries, structured mentoring, systems/institutions/artifacts and evidence-based ledger review.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 382](#)

Building Things That Do Not Vanish With You

Teaches one-domain ownership, useful verbs, touchpoints, fifteen-minute weekly reviews, contingencies, boundaries, structured mentoring, systems/institutions/artifacts and evidence-based ledger review.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 383](#)

Putting Usefulness Into the Ledger

Teaches one-domain ownership, useful verbs, touchpoints, fifteen-minute weekly reviews, contingencies, boundaries, structured mentoring, systems/institutions/artifacts and evidence-based ledger review.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 384](#)

Exercise Set — Putting Weight on Your Shoulders On Purpose

Implements all five exercises with three-month, four-week, six-month, ten-year and seven-day horizons; reconciles the closing indispensability rhetoric with continuity and independent capability.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 386](#)

1. Responsibility Inventory

Implements all five exercises with three-month, four-week, six-month, ten-year and seven-day horizons; reconciles the closing indispensability rhetoric with continuity and independent capability.

[Read source section: full-book PDF page 386](#)

2. Useful Behaviour Definition

Implements all five exercises with three-month, four-week, six-month, ten-year and seven-day horizons; reconciles the closing indispensability rhetoric with continuity and independent capability.

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3. One New Responsibility Habit

Implements all five exercises with three-month, four-week, six-month, ten-year and seven-day horizons; reconciles the closing indispensability rhetoric with continuity and independent capability.

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4. Mentor Target

Implements all five exercises with three-month, four-week, six-month, ten-year and seven-day horizons; reconciles the closing indispensability rhetoric with continuity and independent capability.

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5. Legacy Question

Implements all five exercises with three-month, four-week, six-month, ten-year and seven-day horizons; reconciles the closing indispensability rhetoric with continuity and independent capability.

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Closing Synthesis + Aphorism

Implements all five exercises with three-month, four-week, six-month, ten-year and seven-day horizons; reconciles the closing indispensability rhetoric with continuity and independent capability.

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