Accountability Ladder

LADDER OF SELF-RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

MAKE IT HAPPEN
FIND SOLUTIONS
"OWN IT"
ACKNOWLEDGE REALITY
WAIT AND HOPE
"I CAN'T" EXCUSE
BLAME OTHERS
UNAWARE UNCONSCIOUS

ACCOUNTABLE
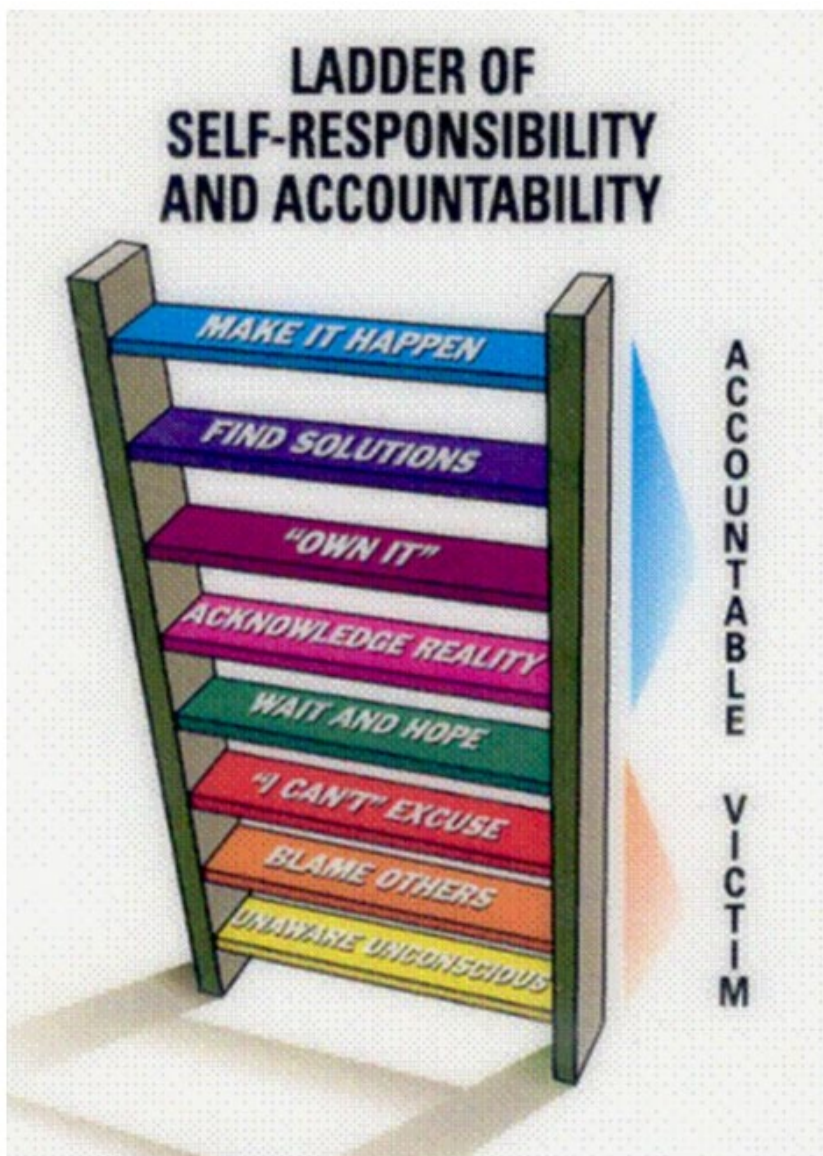VICTIM

Where do you stand?

Accountable Behaviours
Things happen because of you

Victim Behaviours
Things happen to you

Climbing the Accountability Ladder

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Knowledge is the only resource that multiplies when used

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Accountability is a curious thing. Many times it is confused with responsibility. Therefore it helps to define the latter to improve our understanding of the first term. Responsibility is a very fundamental construct in a world that so much relies on contracts and the liabilities defined in them. Responsibility can be transferred in many cases and it can be assigned to people. A person that is responsible for some task can be held accountable for reaching/completing it. Isn't she/he accountable if she/he is responsible? - not quite.

Accountability is very different - not only as a concept but also with respect to its characteristics. It cannot be assigned or delegated because it stems from intrinsic motivation. It is not common and impossible to enforce. However, when seen it is easily recognized. Accountability is very closely linked to action whereas responsibility is more like a designation which marks a place where to go to in case something goes wrong. Accountability denotes a state of mind and is best illustrated by a ladder symbolizing different levels of accountability.

There is a qualitative shift in accountability when a medium level is reached. Climbing the ladder, this shift goes from passive behaviour to proactive behaviour. Passive or victim behaviour is shown by a person whose mindset builds on the conviction that events happen and one can only react to them. A proactive mindset thrives on activity to make things happen. Along these two extreme endpoints of the accountability scale a number of qualitative levels are differentiated.

Which accountability levels do you observe every day? Where do you stand? What do you do to motivate your peers/colleagues to show high levels of accountability?