

## Who Owns The Hot Potato Ownership - claiming responsibility for thoughts and actions

Ownership is one of the most coveted attributes in our society - as in, people please just own your actions at all costs. Some set this standard for themselves. Some for others. Some for both. Why is it so important to humans and yet often not cultivated?

True, authentic ownership involves awareness. This awareness always begins with you before moving externally. There's a *level of discomfort in this awareness*. Often there's blame attached and where there's blame, there's a whole slew of dynamics.

These dynamics quickly percolate internally and depending on your default, you tend to either blame yourself or blame others. Goes something like this - that's on me or that's on him. It's usually about accepting blame or assigning blame. What's wrong with that, you might be wondering. Pretty much *everything*.

### **Blame blocks true ownership.**

Accepting blame almost sounds noble except it's not. Here's why - blame is about off-loading angst, anger, and overall pain. Whether you shove it on yourself or someone else you're shoving those very things. Why the need to shove at all?

Now you're thinking, *ok but*, as in a huge **BUT**, what about the need for personal responsibility and holding people accountable?! And that's the point. What happens in many organizations under the heading of responsibility and accountability is actually blame shifting. It doesn't have to be that way.

Once you see the difference you're able to cultivate true ownership. And that's what you *actually* desire anyway. It means you're able to develop an awareness of self and create a culture that celebrates awareness. It's about recognizing what's *actually* going on, not leaping to quick conclusions and solutions in an effort to shove everything.

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When you blame or are blamed, your full resources are off-line, unavailable. It's as if your brain got hijacked and you're in survival mode - default mode.

### **Knowing your default is key.**

Let's look at a few options...

- Do you tend to *over accept* blame or *under accept* blame?
- Do you tend to *over assign* blame or *under assign* blame?

Whatever your tendency, you can now call it what it is - your default. It's not you, it's your default in play - simply the habits you've developed over time thinking it would keep things safe for you. Any version of blame is never actually safe.

It worked for awhile, it's just not sustainable. And, it's not actually who you were created to be - *it's just been a role*. A role, a habit. Now let's discover your intended role - to cultivate deep awareness to promote genuine responsibility and legit accountability.

### **Responsibility asks questions like:**

- What really happened here?
- How (and where) did the system break down?
- What could have been done differently?

### **Accountability asks questions like:**

- What decision or series of decisions landed us here?
- What has veered off course? How and Why?
- Who needs to reconfigure our next steps? How and Why?

Responsibility and accountability are good friends. They want to know *WHAT, HOW, and WHY*. The *WHO* will show itself through the process of seeking to understand. *That's the big differentiator - seeking to actually understand, not just want it fixed.*

There's always a theme, a pattern, a root.

When there's freedom to ask and discover without fear of blame, people are much more 'resource filled' and able to think. Meaning, they have the ability to see what's going on, recognize the cause, and creatively construct a meaningful solution.

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Now, let's apply this to a recent situation where something went south. Ask yourself the questions *specifically* about this situation.

**Responsibility asks questions like:**

The situation gist is...

- What really happened here?
- How (and where) did the system break down?
- What could have been done differently?

**Accountability asks questions like:**

Starting to have some more clarity...

- What decision or series of decisions landed us here?
- What has veered off course? How and Why?
- Who needs to reconfigure our next steps? How and Why?

Now...

What was the above process like for you?

What thoughts and feelings arose?

What was surprising?

What was a sticking point?

What actions does it make you want to take?

This framework for evaluating situations is ongoing - wash, rinse, repeat.

It's a dynamic process where the questions can be refined along with:

- *When* do we engage like this?
- *With whom* do we engage like this?
- *How often* do we engage like this?

The purpose is to connect the *actual cause with a meaningful, connected solution*.

Connection is the sweet spot for you and your team to fully own and be accountable.