Chapter 6

Shift Accountability

- Shift to Support from Shame

- Apply the Workable Integrity Checklist

- Sip Truth Serum

- Clarify Character and Competency Expectations

- Teach Your Team the Peer Accountability Imperative

- Explain How to Change

- Know When to Stop Investing in an Employee

- Define Your Deal Breakers

- Checklist, Results and Takeaways

- Deep Dive Discussion Guide

Supervisor   **Co-workers**   **Impact**   **Organizational Support**   **Organizational Fit**

"It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad."

—C.S. Lewis, novelist and poet

Accountability is key to an extraordinary workplace culture. Holding people accountable means witnessing both when someone is being successful and when they are struggling. When you see success, follow up with meaningful appreciation and recognition as outlined in the last chapter. When you see struggle, check in to see how you can support, coach or guide.

A. Shift to Support from Shame

Shift your team's thinking about accountability from "place blame for wrongdoing" to the "ability to count." What does that mean? It means having your team members feel their efforts make a difference and an impact. For an individual's work to be impactful, the work has to be done well. If everyone on the team is committed to one another's success, as well as to the team's success, standing by and saying nothing as a co-worker slips, flails, or drowns wouldn't be an option. Team members would step in and find out how they can help.

Remember: If someone isn't pulling their weight or isn't being kind and there's no reaction, things get wonky fast. As a leader, when you say nothing, you implicitly give permission perpetuating bad behaviors. Subpar behavior or performance becomes normal, accepted. A new, low standard is set. Identity is questioned and pride is lost.

Mini-Mantra: Accountability is a question of workability, not morality.

B. Apply the Workable Integrity Check List

Who is someone on your team who is struggling?

_____

Walk through each item on the Workable Integrity Checklist below. Where is the main disconnect for members of your team? Then help those individuals figure out how to address or repair it.

Inspired by a quote from Landmark Worldwide:

The Workable Integrity Checklist:

☐ Nothing hidden.

☐ Being truthful and honest.

☐ Doing complete work.

☐ Working from an empowering context.

☐ Doing well what you do.

☐ Doing the work as it was meant to be done or better without cutting corners.

☐ Honoring your word.

☐ Doing what you know to do.

☐ Doing what you said on time.

☐ Doing what others expect you to do even if you haven't said you would do it.

☐ Speaking up immediately when you realize you won't be doing this as expected or won't be doing it at all.

Remember: Empowering context refers to actively choosing and taking on a task, enjoyable or not, because you know the value and impact it brings to the work. If you are aware someone has expectations of you, unless you negotiate changes, you are responsible for meeting them.

C. Sip Truth Serum

Can you name a promise or commitment you've been making to the team and never fulfilled?

_____

If the truth is you're not going to fulfill that promise, no matter how good your intentions, talk to your team and sip some truth serum now.

Continuous lack of integrity chips away at your credibility. Clay feet become quicksand. Have the humility to pivot when needed. Be less committed to looking good.

Swallow some still warm crow and wash it town with truth serum.

Or, if you're still committed, you have to fulfill your promise in the next 30 days. Mark a big RED finish line X in your calendar now.

If that's not possible, sip. If another month goes by and you haven't fulfilled your promise, your credibility will suffer another blow. That warm crow is now bitterly cold.

D. Clarify Character and Competency Expectations

Remember: High expectations lead to high performance.

What does it take to be a member of your team?

On the character side:

- What attitudes and behaviors are expected?
- What values and principles for working together need to be practiced?

_____

_____

_____

_____

On the competency side:

- What skills and expertise are needed to be successful in each position?
- What does excellence look like? What does subpar performance look like?

Position #1: _____

_____

_____

Position #2 _____

_____

_____

Position #3 _____

_____

_____

On a scale of zero to three evaluate each team member for character
and competency:

Exemplary—3, Meets Expectations—2, Needs Improvement—1,
Unacceptable—0

Name	Character	Competency
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____

What do you notice? Do you have someone whose character is delight-
ful but whose competence is subpar? How can you support them in
improving their skills? Or do you have someone whose competence
is amazing and their character is annoying or dreadful? How can
you support them in shifting their attitude or behavior? Do you have

someone who excels at both? Go acknowledge them. Do you have some who struggles with both? Start the process to set them free.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are three bite-size steps you will take in the next 10 business days to activate your character and competency expectations? How will you support team members in reaching those goals?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Schedule these in your calendar now.

A. Teach Your Team the Peer Accountability Imperative

If your team struggles to hold one another accountable, avoids confrontation or kvetches to co-workers about their frustrations with other team members, this is the *first* of several dialogues to have with your team. (More to come in Chapter 8.)

Schedule 30 minutes with your team.

First, comunicate your expectations.

- Speak to the importance of both character and competency.

- Share that one of your character expectations is to kindly, candidly and constructively communicate concerns directly to one another.

- Explain triangulation and why it must stop. Triangulation creates gossip. Gossip is not tolerated.

- Caution your team about the "sneaky sounding boards" on page 101 of the *Culture Works* book.

- Let them know if they come to you about another team member, you will always ask if they have spoken to the other team member

directly first. If they haven't, in most cases, you will ask them to do so. Later, you will check in to see how it went.

- Another expectation is for each team member to receive a co-worker's courageous willingness to bring up a concern with graciousness.

Then rhetorically ask: Have you ever failed to hold a co-worker accountable because you wanted to be nice and didn't want to hurt their feelings?

Be empathetic: Welcome to the world of humanity. We like to be liked. The fear of being disliked is at the root of why peer accountability is rare.

Then ask: In an instance where your co-worker delivered subpar performance:

- Did you go ahead and do the work yourself, making assumptions about why your co-worker didn't complete it?
- Did you then feel resentful?
- Did you then make comments about that person's inability to do their work to your spouse, co-workers, or supervisor?

Or perhaps, if it had to do with character or attitude:

- Did you avoid your co-worker?
- Did you make comments about that person to your spouse, co-workers or supervisor?

If you did, *consider your co-worker never had the chance to correct their behavior because you didn't speak up.* **And** if you spoke to others, you started destructive gossip.

Be empathetic: We've all been there. We have avoided, couched, lied, placated, agreed and then turned and told someone else what we really think, seeking validation for our feelings - all in the name of not wanting to hurt someone's feelings.

Require: As a team, we must renounce unkind niceness. We must be a stand for one another's success.

We often think people won't like us if we hold them accountable. Yet, we all have stories of someone who was brave enough to bring a blind spot to our attention, an act that changed how we acted, leading us to success, self-actualization or richer relationships.

When you're truly committed to someone else's success, you hold them accountable. Holding someone accountable tells them you value their contribution and that their work makes a difference. If they don't do their work, or don't do it well, it matters. They matter.

Help your co-worker be the best they can be by communicating when something is amiss. To not say anything is to sit quietly by and watch as their reputation deteriorates. When done with the intent to support someone in their success, reaching out to your fellow team member and making them aware of a blind spot is the real kindness.

Ask: What do you think of what I just shared? Can we all commit to being a stand for one another's success and communicating our concerns directly?

Mini-Mantra: Renounce unkind niceness.

Mini-Mantra: Be a stand for one another's success.

Mini-Mantra: No death by triangulation.

B. Explain How to Change

Obstacle Obliterator: Ever notice how when you meet with an employee about a concern, they agree, apologize and then nothing changes? Chances are you only shared **what** needs to change, not **how** to change it.

Name someone on your team who is struggling and their specific challenge. Then name three tangible action items they could take to improve the character or competency.

Name: _____

Challenge: _____

Three tangible actions items: (learn, understand, practice, try on, gain, inquire)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Go share these with this individual now.

Keep in mind you can also ask this employee to do their own research to find answers. Just make sure to circle back to find out what they uncover.
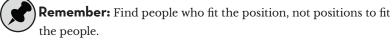
C. Know When to Stop Investing in an Employee

If you have an employee who is struggling and you're wondering if it's time to move on, work through the questions below. The first set focuses on those who have a skills gap or performance issue. The second set focuses on those who have a challenging behavior or attitude.

Skills Gap or Performance Issue:

If you have an employee with a skills gap or a performance issue and you're not completely sure if the time has come to stop investing in their development, ask the following:

1. Is the missing skill a need to have or a nice to have? _____

2. Have you **clearly, directly and honestly** communicated how they do and do not meet expectations? _____

   ○ Did you provide specific examples? _____

   ○ Did you recommend how to change or ask them to research how to change? _____

   ○ Have you given them a real opportunity to improve? _____

   ○ If the gap is a "need to have", have you let them know the gap is job-threatening? _____

3. Once approached, has the employee sought ways to address this gap? _____

4. How long has this person not been a good fit? _____

5. Have you tried to change the position to accommodate this team member? _____

Remember: Find people who fit the position, not positions to fit the people.

6. Are there other areas in your organization where you could leverage their skills? _____

7. How much time, energy and resources have you put toward trying to transform this individual? What are the concrete measurable outcomes of these efforts? What long-term changes or lack of changes have you witnessed?

_____

_____

8. On days when this person is giving you their best, is their performance at the level you need for this position? _____

If you answered no, this person is not the right person for the position. Unfortunately a square peg can have the best intentions to fit into a round hole. They can try really hard. They might even find a way to wedge in a bit. But if they don't fit, they don't fit.

Toxic Character, Behavior or Attitude Issue:

If you have an employee with a character, behavior or attitude issue and you're not completely sure if the time has come to remove them from the team, ask the following:

1. How much time and energy have you spent contemplating this situation, talking about this individual to others to get clarity?

_____

2. Because behavior can fluctuate on their worst days how toxic are they? What is their behavior/ way of being that's destructive?

_____

_____

3. How often do these days occur? _____
   (Track them if you haven't.)

4. Now triple that cadence, because those are only the days and moments that you know about. _____

5. How long have you allowed this person to be on your team with this behavior? _____

6. Who does this behavior or attitude impact? How does it impact them?

_____

_____

7. What's the impact on overall team morale, productivity, collaboration, communication, sense of pride and shared identity?

   _____

   _____

8. Have you clearly, directly and honestly communicated to the individual the impact of their behavior or attitude? _____

   ○ Have you clearly, directly and honestly communicated that this behavior is unacceptable and won't be tolerated? _____

   ○ Did you provide specific examples? _____

   ○ Did you recommend how to change or ask them to research how to change? _____

   ○ Have you given them a real opportunity to improve? _____

   ○ Did you let them know it was job-threatening? _____

9. Once approached, has the employee sought ways to address this gap? _____

10. What would you tell a co-manager to do if this was their situation?

   _____

   _____

Obstacle Obliterator: If this person is highly valuable to the organization because of their knowledge, connections, or sales production, you can be confident:

● If this person were gone tomorrow, you and your team would rally and figure it out. You're successful because you're resourceful.

● The negative impact this individual has on the rest of your employees' productivity, loyalty and morale is far more expensive than any financial gain they create.

● If this has been going on for a while, you don't even know the half of it. People stopped coming to you with their concerns long ago.

● They are not nearly as fabulous and valuable as you think they are.

D. Define Your Deal Breakers

Define what you're a stand against and what's intolerable and unacceptable in your organization. (Examples provided on pages 73 and 74 of Culture Works.) Consider including workplace bullying.

List eight items you won't tolerate:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Now, share these with your team. This not only sets clear expectations, but also creates for team members a feeling of safety, belonging and pride.

Check List:
Check those action items you've completed.

A. _____ Shift to Support from Shame

B. _____ Apply the Workable Integrity Checklist

C. _____ Sip Truth Serum

D. _____ Clarify Character and Competency Expectations

E. _____ Teach Your Team the Peer Accountability Imperative

F. _____ Explain How to Change

G. _____ Know When to Stop Investing in an Employee

H. _____ Define Your Deal Breakers

🚀 Results or Shifts

What's one meaningful positive shift, outcome or result you've noticed due to these efforts?

_____

_____

_____

🔄 Now go share your success with someone and celebrate ☺

💡 Your Top Three Takeaways:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Deep Dive Discussion Guide

Bring your leadership and/or management team together and discuss:

What was your #1 takeaway or insight from Chapter Six?

_____

_____

_____

What did you take on or try on with your team? How did that go? What was harder than you expected? What was easier than you expected?

_____

_____

_____

What's one meaningful positive shift, outcome or result that came out of your efforts? (Pause to celebrate!) If applicable, what are you going to do to maintain, sustain and continue to nurture that outcome?

_____

_____

_____

What support or help would you like to request from this team? Advice? Best practices? Lessons learned? Being held accountable for following through on a commitment or making a habit stick?

_____

_____

_____