	Rung 8: Make it happen	"This is my plan."	DEVELOP THE EDGE ROUZ HOURS GARE STOKE
TOR	Rung 7: Find a solution	"A better approach would be to"	
TO VIC	Rung 6: Embrace it	"I will own this and wont make the same mistake again	."
TIMIT	Rung 5: Acknowledge Reality	"These are the facts"	VICTOR MIND-SET
M	Rung 4: Wait and Hope	"I'll see how it goes"	VICTIM MIND-SET
CLIMB FROM VICTIM TO VICTOR	Rung 3: Excuses	"It's not my job!"	
	Rung 2: Blame Others	"It's their fault I feel like this!"	

This Guidebook belongs to: _____

Date: _____

The Ladder of Accountability is a tool we use at Develop The Edge to help people understand whether they are in a Victim mind-set or the powerful Victor mind-set. Whilst we did not create this valuable tool, we use if often as a way to help people take back control of their life.

We have written an article about the Ladder of Accountability on our website, this guidebook can be used as an accompanying tool or as a standalone guide. We discuss tools and techniques you can use alongside the Ladder of Accountability to help get you through each stage.

Thank you for letting us be part of your journey and thank you for taking control of who you want to

become. If you want to connect with us, here's how: @DevelopTheEdge - Twitter www.DevelopTheEdge.com - Website Connect@DevelopTheEdge.com - Client support and coaching



Highly accountable people are often:

- More vigilant problem solvers
- Better decision makers
- Continually high performers
- Highly motivated people
- Highly satisfied people

Why do you think this is?

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"...accountability is a motivational state in which there is an increased sense of self-relevance... This means that individuals come to see their actions or behaviours as salient, important, or consequential. Accountability increases self-awareness..."

- Arti Trivedi A Study of Literature Review on Individual Accountability

Write about how the below 2 statements make you feel: Scenario: You witness a person fall over, they are clearly hurt and struggling to get back up. Statement 1: "Someone should help them." How does this statement make you feel?

Statement 2: "I am going to help that person!"
How does this statement make you feel?
Write about how the below 2 statements make you feel:
Scenario: You look around your house and see job after
job, piling on top of each other
Statement 1: "There is so much to do, why am I the only
one that does anything around here?"
How does this statement make you feel?
riow does this statement make you reer:

Statement 2: "I'm going to make a list, get it done, ask
for help and set a game-plan so we stay on top of things
next time."
How does this statement make you feel?

The likelihood is that the 1st statements made you feel:

- A victim, helpless, a bystander, uninterested or detached.
- Like life happens to you and that you are overwhelmed and stressed.

Whereas the 2nd statements probably helped you to feel:

- Motivated, empowered, in control, resourceful and relieved.
- Like you knew what needed to be done.

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"Accountability is about SILENCING the thoughts that life is happening TO YOU and EMBRACING the fact that life is happening BECAUSE OF YOU."

- Simon Tickner

The Ladder of Accountability has 8 rungs, 4 of which are Victim mind-sets:

- 1. "I don't know"
- 2. "Blame others"
- 3. "Excuses"
- 4. "Wait & hope."

The last 4 are Accountable mind-sets:

- 1. "Acknowledge reality"
- 2. "Own it"
- 3. "Find solutions"
- 4. "Make it happen"

As you climb up the ladder, you become more accountable and begin to power your way through to success. We call this moving from Victim to Victor.

Lets look at each rung in more detail, starting at the bottom rung and working our way to the top:

Rung 1- "I don't know"

At the bottom rung of accountability is 'I don't know!" at this stage people simply don't know that there is a problem. They are completely unaware that the problem exists or that something needs attention. We are surrounded by topics and situations we don't know about - if we knew about them all we would likely have information overload. It makes sense then that we are all at this rung in some aspect of our lives - it's up to you to identify it and decide if you want to take action.

This stage could be something simple as using an old process at work and saying "I did it because it's what we've always done!" - when in reality the process is no longer fit for purpose. You may not have known it was an issue at the time, because you simply hadn't taken a step back to consider the risks of taking the actions you did, or if there were any opportunities to improve.

How many times have couples said to each other "How am I meant to know unless you tell me?"

Write down a time or situation where you were at the 'I don't know!" stage. What happened and why?

There are 3 quick ways that we can become more aware of the world around us and our levels of accountability:

- a) Mindfulness and reflection
- b) Risk assessments
- c) Conversations

<u>Mindfulness</u> is the state of being in the present and paying attention to the moment. When you are in the moment, you feel calmer and pay more attention to yourself and the world around you. This, alongside reflection may help you become more aware of the situations and problems you have been overlooking such as a partners body language, troubling situations or habit changes.

Take 5 minutes now to pay attention to the environment around yourself. Consider: lights, shadows, sounds, feelings, body language, textures, heat and so on.
Write down everything that you noticed that you were
not paying attention to before:

What benefits are there to paying attention to the world around you more deeply?
How can this help you with accountability?

Risk assessments aren't just for businesses. Have you thought about what would happen if giant ants from space came to enslave the earth? What would your emergency plans be for yourself and your loved ones? Yes - we got a bit crazy there but there is nothing wrong with creating an emergency plan in case of; natural disasters, burglaries, redundancy and so on. These are all things people can have a Victim Mind-Set about with questions such as "How was I meant to know?" or "What can I do about it?"

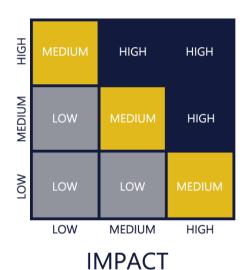
In reality though, there's a simple answer: Risk assess and plan. Ideally do this proactively and before the event occurs but occasionally things happen and we have to react. The best way forward once you have a plan in place is to figure out how to stop similar situations occurring in the future.

Consider a simple 9 point Risk Assessment - Impact /Probability grid that may help you identify what risks you are best placed to focus on.

The 9 Point Grid - Probability and Impact Assessments

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Prioritise your risks with the probability and impact grid.

Step 1 - Identify the probability of the risk event occuring. Is it low, medium or high? Draw a horizontal line across that row. For example, a low probability event would have a line across the bottom 3 squares.

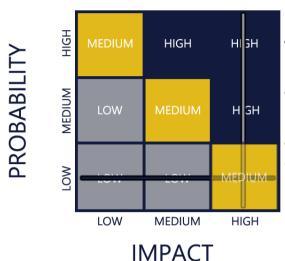
Step 2 - Identify the impacts of the risk event should it happen. Draw a vertical line up on the grid based on it beind low, medium or high.

Step 3 - Find the grid where the 2 lines meet, this is your risk level.

For example, if you were assessing the risk of being made redundant and you are in a secure job where it is unlikely you will be let go, you would start at the 'Low Probability' row in the above image. If that job was well paying and you have lots of financial commitments, we can agree that the impact of redundancy would be high and so you would need to go to the grid point: Low Probability/High Impact. This Grid axis takes us to a "Medium" risk level as outlined on the next page:

The 9 Point Grid - Probability and Impact Assessments

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The probability of redundancy is low and is shown by the blue horizontal line.

The impact of the redundancy is high and is shown by the grey vertical line.

The point where both lines meet is the Risk level - in this case, the lines cross on the Medium grid.

Draw your own 9 point grid below and run a few quick Risk Assessments through it.

What are the benefits of Risk Assessments?	
	_
How can they help you build knowledge about a situation?	

<u>Conversations</u> are essential in life, they work wonders for accountability too. By talking to others, you are understanding their perspectives and they will likely talk to you about potential situations you were not aware of. You will also be able to pick up where you both are on the Accountability Ladder by the words being used.

Take time out to speak to someone, listen to what they are saying and see if you learn anything new.

Did you learn something new?	

Next time you hear yourself say: "I had no idea!" or "How was I supposed to know?" - recognise where you are and figure out WHY you didn't know and how you could ensure you positioned yourself in a place of knowledge going forward.

With a good understanding on how to combat the 'I don't know' rung of the ladder, we can begin to climb the ladder and get to the next Victim stage: Rung 2 - Blame Others.

Rung 2 - "Blame Others"

This is the phase where people want to shift the uncomfortable spotlight from themselves onto someone else. Whilst this can temporarily ease the pressure, it doesn't make you feel better in the long run, it doesn't get us to a solution faster, it damages relationships and it can make us feel guilty and ashamed later on.

In the words of Extreme Ownership Authors Jocko Willink and Leif Babin:

"Once people stop making excuses, stop blaming others, and take ownership...they are compelled to take action to solve their problems. They are better leaders, better followers, more dependable and actively contributing team members, and more skilled in aggressively driving toward mission accomplishment."

- Jocko Willink, Leif Babin Extreme Ownership

So how do we stop blaming others and start being more accountable? Here are 6 quick steps:

- 1) Recognise
- 2) Refocus
- 3) Review
- 4) Rescue
- 5) Reflect
- 6) Recommend

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You have to be aware of yourself when you are mentally or verbally placing the blame on someone else. Catch yourself doing it and stop the behaviour.

What are you thinking when blaming others?
What are you feeling when blaming others?

What is your body language saying when placing blame?
Eg - arms folded is a defence posture, pointing a finger is an attack posture.
Step 2: Refocus
You are now aware that you were about to cast blame on someone else. Take a breath and quickly scan why you were about to do that, you might find the reason you are responsible for the issue.
Why did you / do you cast blame?

How do you feel when getting blamed?
How do you feel when blaming others?
How do you feel when blaming others?
How do you feel when blaming others?
How do you feel when blaming others?
How do you feel when blaming others?
How do you feel when blaming others?
How do you feel when blaming others?
How do you feel when blaming others?

Step 3: Review

What were you or are you accountable for? Find a way to be accountable for what's happened.

• A colleague had 100% responsibility for a project but didn't deliver, How could you have changed that? What support could you have offered? Could you have offered support in a different way? There are countless ways to make yourself accountable for something that at first doesn't seem like it should be your responsibility.

Find out what you were accountable for, own it and be vocal about it. Chances are, this mind-set and mentality will help others become accountable too.

Write down how you are responsible for a situation you had previously thought was 100% someone else's fault:

How can you make yourself accountable for the below scenarios:

The weather report said it was a sunny day and you decided to go on a 3 hour walk with your friend.
Your friend said "don't waste time packing waterproofs, there's no chance it could rain! I can't be bothered carrying anything more!"
You get halfway round your walk and torrential rain pours down. You are both soaked. Your friend says "I can't believe you didn't pack water proofs!"

Your manager at work asks you to go into a last minute meeting for them. You ask if they have any updates you need to deliver for the meeting. They say "no." In the meeting, the chair asks you directly for your manager's updates and looks frustrated when you don't have any.	

You have an appointment at 11am. It normally takes you 30 minutes to get there on the motorway.	
You set off an hour earlier, giving you plenty of time to get there and wait.	
However, there was a large traffic jam on the motorway and you ended up being late by over an hour.	

Step 4: Rescue

There is no point in placing the blame anywhere, even on yourself if you are not going to do anything about it. Work on fixing the immediate issue at hand. This level of ownership and responsibility will likely be admired by your peers and people up the chain of command as well.

Using your personal scenario or the above fictional ones, write down how you could rescue the situation.

Step 5: Reflect

We have fixed the issue at hand, all that's left to do is reflect on why mistakes were made, how to improve ourselves, processes and teams to make us more efficient in the future.

What could you do differently in the future?	

Step 6: Recommend

All that's left now is to make recommendations so that this doesn't happen again. Up your accountability here and take some time to do a wider risk analysis to see if there is anything else that could benefit from being reviewed. This is where great learning opportunities come from, put processes in place to ensure your success in the future. Working with a team here helps build future accountability so consider facilitating a session on the best way forward.

How could you involve others in the solution?	

Why is this process better than blaming someone else?

Here are 3 common reasons people pass blame, why they don't work and what you can do about it:







someone that is only out for the blame as a way to protect yourself themselves. People will see through lamaging relationships and lessening eoples opinions ot you.

resentment isn't going to make you feel better or fix the solution. People will see earning to be more successful and resourcefu ourself what's better: protecting your ego or

likely do wonders for your image).

because they simply don't know better or weren ou don't like the person, are they acting that wa Consider the reasons

Why it wont work: The easy road rarely ays off. You aren't building the tools

What you can do about it: Embrace the hard road on't make things unnecessarily complicated or

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3 key reasons people blame others and why they dont work.

Rung 3 - "Excuses"

As coaches, we hear excuses all of the time, such as:

- "I can't!"
- "I don't have the time!"
- "No one is supporting me! What if I fail?"
- "I cannot do this on my own!"
- "This is too difficult, nobody could do this!"
- "Of course THEY did it, they had support!"

People that say these kinds of things don't tend to recognise them as excuses, they think they're legitimately unmovable obstacles. As coaches we tend to call them 'Limiting Beliefs' and it's something we are very good at challenging, reframing and helping people overcome.

A limiting belief is an assumption you hold about yourself or your situation that isn't actually true. It's our job as coaches to challenge this thought process through questioning and curiosity. We know that Limiting Beliefs often come from 3 main places: fear, uncertainty and self-doubt.

Once you have identified where these excuses or limiting beliefs are coming from, you can start to question your thought process on them.

Write down 3 - 5 Limiting beliefs or excuses you hold about vourself or vour situation.

For each limiting belief, identify if they come from: fear, uncertainty and/or self-doubt

Limiting Belief	Where does it come from?

Write down some questions to challenge each of your limiting beliefs:

Limiting Belief	Question

It's important to listen out for limiting beliefs and excuses. By effectively challenging them you open up the door to accountability and success. Once we have successfully navigated the excuses and limiting beliefs, the next rung on the ladder is Wait and hope.

Rung 4 - "Wait and Hope"

This is the last of the Victim mind-sets on the Ladder of Accountability. Whilst it isn't blaming others, making excuses or being unaware of the situation, there is still a clear lack of accountability that needs addressing.

Do not waste your time and energy falling back down the ladder. Here are 3 quick and simple ways to get passed Wait and Hope:

- 1) Do it yourself.
- 2) Explain to someone why you cannot do it and ask for help.
- 3) Offer to take work from someone else so they will have the time to do it.

How empowered do you feel when waiting for someone else to act?

What could happen if no one took ownership?			



With strategies in place to deal with the 4 Victim mind-sets, it's time to begin the climb into the Accountable mind-set. Give yourself a pat on the back here, celebrate and enjoy the moment. Accountability is hard but it is worth it. Ensure you celebrate and reward yourself for taking accountable actions.

Rung 5 - "Acknowledge Reality"

Acknowledging reality is where we are able to put all of the petty and unhelpful Victim mind-sets to one side. This can be a difficult step for our ego to take but it's a necessary one to become an accountable and successful person. When you acknowledge reality you strip away all of the noise, beliefs and assumptions that were gathering on the first 4 rungs. You look at the facts of the situation, where you are, the facts that led to the problem and understand that something needs to change.

Why do you think acknowledging reality is important?

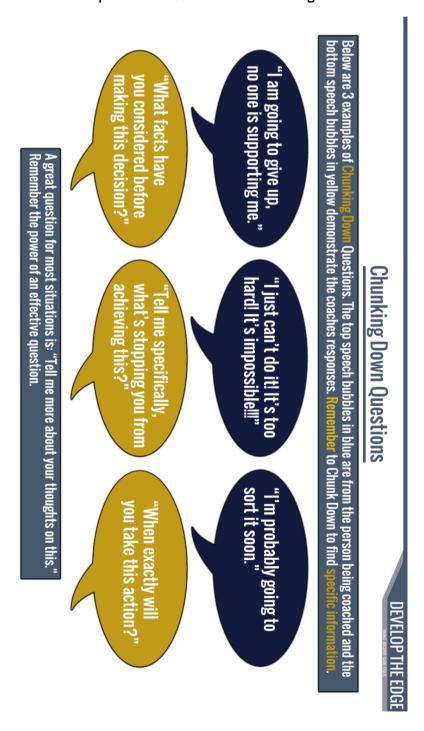
Let's understand why acknowledging reality is important:

- Reality gives you an honest view on what's happened and why
- This lets you get to the root cause of the problem instead of fixing symptoms
- Often the sting of acknowledging short comings can stop you from making the same mistake twice
- People around you will see you truly want to understand and fix the problem

Once we understand how important acknowledging reality is, we need to establish how much of what we are seeing is raw factual data and how much of it has been interpreted by ourselves through our beliefs and assumptions.

Living in the facts and acknowledging reality is a powerful skill to develop. Keep working on it every time you feel your emotions getting the better of you.

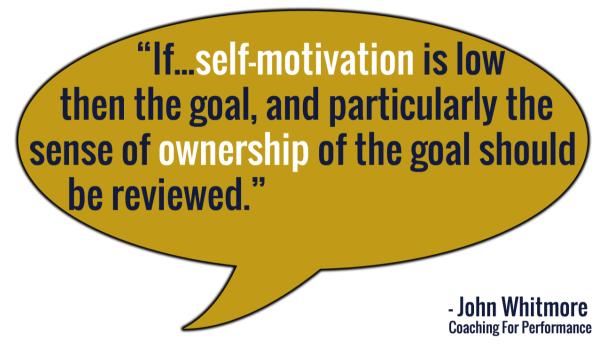
Here are 3 more great questions we have highlighted in our previous article on the GROW model. They use a method called 'Chunking down', which is when you take an emotive statement and ask a question designed to break the emotional pattern and focus on a factual and logical answer.



What questions can you ask yourself to challenge your beliefs / assumptions and help you see reality?
Write down the facts of your personal scenario:

Rung 6 - "Embrace it"

This is the stage that can be quite difficult as you now have the facts, it's time to embrace your responsibility for what happened. When you own the mistake or problem. You are more determined to solve it. This stage is a constant battle with your ego as it pushes back from taking blame and wants to shout about all the things it has done not the 1 thing it hasn't. The problem is, the 1 thing you didn't do is the cause of the problem. There is no point running a 100m race and stopping at the 99th meter.



As Whitmore said, ownership leads to motivation and thus results. If you take ownership of the problem, you will be driven to find a solution.

Think back to a time where you felt like there was no-way you could have been accountable for a problem or situation - when it was 100% someone else's fault. Take a different perspective on it now and think about what you could do to change that - what could you make yourself accountable for in that situation?

Now that we have embraced our accountability of the problem, the next step is vital - Find a Solution.

Rung 7 - "Find a solution"

It's pointless just taking ownership of a mistake, you have to learn from it and try to fix it. Consider the immediate way forward for the problem or situation and how you will take responsibility for it.

We also need to learn from our mistakes, so with your clear view on what went wrong from the Embrace it stage, start to come up with solutions that will stop it happening again.

Ariana Glantz has a TED talk about finding solutions where she acknowledges how scary it can be to start looking for solutions, especially if we don't initially think we have the tools or confidence to do it. To help overcome this, she has created a simple 5 step process for generating the way forward.:

1) Mindset

Make being solutions minded part of your identity. Before sitting down, remind yourself that you are a person that is focused on finding solutions. If you brain keeps drifting back to the problem, redirect it to the solution.

2) Structure

Create your own process for problem solving, whether it's a start to finish approach or is more about idea generation, know what works for you and make tweaks to it along the way.

3) Question

Clarify the problem by asking questions about it - there's no point creating a solution if you haven't explored the problem - your solution may be wrong! Question colleagues, friends and subject matter experts for their opinions and ideas.

4) Practice

Finding Solutions is a skill that takes time and practice, so use every problem as an opportunity to try out your new process.

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Be kind to yourself and others, learning a new skill or just navigating through problems can be a challenging time. Support yourself and others.

Write down your process for finding solutions:

Rung 8 - "Make it happen"

You've done the hard work, you have put your ego to the side, admitted accountability, embraced the feelings and consequences that come with making mistakes and you have generated a way forward. Now all you need to do, is take action.

As you have made the decision to be accountable, this step should be fairly easy. People who feel accountable are much more likely to take appropriate action to get the desired results. Take time to celebrate what you have achieved here, taking ownership is not an easy road but it is one that will see you succeed, it is one where you will become a leader and inspire others to be more accountable.

What steps can you take immediately to become more accountable?

Why is accountability important?			
In a paragraph, write down why you want to be a Victor			
In a paragraph, write down why you want to be a Victor			
In a paragraph, write down why you want to be a Victor instead of a Victim.			

The lines below are blank, allowing for your own reflection and questions.

Congratulations for completing Develop The Edge's Ladder of Accountability Guidebook.

We thrive on helping people develop by sharing our knowledge of Learning Theory, Coaching tools
and Leadership models with people as passionate about development as we are. We have taken
time researching theories and utilising our coaching experience to build this Guidebook and
provide you with as much value as possible. Consider taking a few minutes to think about and
write down the most valuable thing you will take away from completing the Ladder of
Accountability Guidebook:

Based on completing this Guidebook and Article, take a few minutes to think about what you will STOP doing, what you will START doing and what you will CONTINUE to do:

STOP	START	CONTINUE

We love to hear your feedback, so if you want to let us know what you liked or what you thought could have been better, write to us at: Connect@DevelopTheEdge.com

