



### Call Teammates “Up”

Accountability is a dirty word for some individuals and teams. It means personal discomfort or hurt feelings, so we avoid it. This is a mistake. Not holding each other accountable ensures we will never reach our fullest potential.

Instead, understand that we hold our teammates accountable because we truly care about them and desperately want them to be the absolute best version of themselves. We aren't calling our teammates “out”, we are calling them “up”. And by doing so, we are helping ensure they achieve the greatest success possible. As teammates, if we all do this, we make our team the best version of itself and allow it to achieve its greatest success possible.

Accountability need not be negative. Challenging a teammate *to do*, or more importantly, *to be* better, will help us get and stay on the mountaintop. We must remember, though, that also recognizing a teammate when they *do* or *are* meeting the standard helps get us there fastest. Remember that. Look for and recognize teammates not just when they are falling short but, as importantly, when they are meeting and exceeding team standards. They often are. However, sometimes a teammate will behave at an unacceptable standard, and it is in everyone's best interest for them to be held accountable. Apart from sociopaths, this makes most people uncomfortable. No one actively enjoys the act of telling someone they are falling short, but we



still do it because we love them as teammates and want them to get better. When a teammate holds us accountable, they are signaling to us that our becoming the best possible version of ourselves is more important to them than the discomfort they feel while doing so. Show me a team that holds each other accountable, and I will show you a team that loves one another. Again, show me a team that holds each other accountable, and I will show you a team that loves one another.

Unfortunately, too many people don't do this. Their need to be well-liked or to be *nice* prevents it. Even though they have an opportunity to help a teammate get better, they choose not to. As a good friend of The Program and former Google VP of Leadership, Fred Kaufman, highlights, "nice is a form of laziness." Further, someone may think they are "protecting" a teammate or being a good friend by not holding them accountable. That depends on our personal definition of "friend." The Program believes that we go to the movies with friends, but we go to battle with great teammates. Some friends may "cover" for each other. A great teammate always makes us better.

Accountability is not just an issue in the board room and locker rooms. We struggle with it in the military as well. During a battle I was involved in, a unit had just returned from a mission, and one warrior didn't have a great day. He missed targets and made some mental mistakes. This happens to all of us. However, after the mission, he was understandably emotional. While his team debriefed their mission, they also cleaned their weapons. Upset and distracted, this warrior was waving his pistol around, thinking it was unloaded. Every teammate in that room knew what he was doing was wrong. He was violating every weapon safety rule, rules that had been drilled into us from our first time picking up a weapon in the military. Yet, none of his teammates said anything. They knew he was distraught and emotional, and having a bad day. They knew what he was doing was wrong but chose to stay quiet. Shortly thereafter, this warrior caught his thumb on the trigger of his pistol. The weapon fired, striking him in the chest and throwing him back over the chair in which he was sitting. His teammates rushed to him. He had just enough time to look at them and ask, "what happened?" Then, he died.

His teammates avoided holding him accountable for the exact same reasons everyone else does - discomfort, a desire to be well-liked, etc. They had an opportunity to call their teammate "up." In this case, it would have saved his life, but they let the opportunity pass. He shot himself, but ultimately it was a lack of courage to hold him accountable that killed him. Most of us will not be in situations where accountability, or a lack thereof, will have life or death consequences. However, if we do not hold ourselves first, and then our teammates, accountable, we will never reach our fullest potential on our chosen battlefield.



Instead, have courage, get uncomfortable, and be a great friend AND a great teammate. Call 'em up!

Attack!

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