

Bridges of Trust: Making Accountability Authentic

by David Irvine & Jim Reger

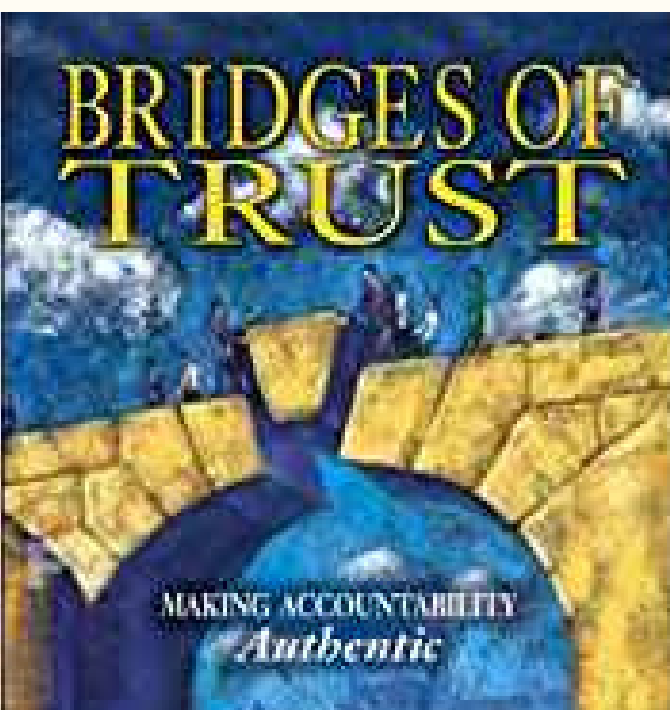
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jim Reger

Jim is the founder of The Reger Group and Global Learning Opportunities Ltd., which are learning and entrepreneurial development organizations focused on providing the key leadership skills required for success in business and in life. Jim is an internationally experienced speaker and leadership mentor with a unique and varied background- including over 25 years in the information industry, both in senior executive positions with large multi-nationals as well as a number of technology start-ups.

David Irvine

David Irvine is sought after internationally as a speaker, author, and trusted leadership advisor. His work has contributed to the building of accountable, dynamic and engaged organizations across North America. As one of Canada's most respected voices on leadership, organizational culture, and personal development, David has dedicated his life to creating workplaces, communities, and families that foster accountability, authenticity, and caring.



Authors' Aims and Perspectives

Accountability is a keystone of both labor and life. It is important for leaders to connect them with those who they serve to be successful. The authors aim to give readers insights into the link between accountability and authenticity that can be applied to every area of our life through a proven and practical method. Accountability is the beginning of authenticity. Being accountable means our actions match our core values; we are honest with others and true to ourselves. In order to achieve authentic leadership and unleash people's greatness, the book gives guidance on how to build an accountability philosophy that helps to unleash human potential, build trust, and find people's meaning and significance in their lives.

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Twelve Tenets about Authentic Accountability

1. Accountability is the ability to be counted on.
2. Accountability is not about perfection; it is about ownership.
3. Authentic accountability is about making promises that are aligned with your values.
4. Accountability, when understood and practiced, is energizing.
5. There is no such thing as an accountable organization; there are only accountable people.
6. Accountability includes responsibility. (David & Jim, p.1-5)

"If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at will change."

Albert Einstein

7. Accountability agreements don't make people accountable.
8. Accountability is learned.
9. The best way to build an accountable culture is to hire accountable people.
10. It's easier to see a lack of accountability in others than to see it in ourselves.
11. Accountable leadership starts with you.
12. Accountability is about service. (David & Jim, p.5-9)

"We all need to avoid the self-righteous preaching, and instead frequently remind ourselves that we are no experts in living accountably all the time either-- just fellow travellers on the journey."

David (p. 8)

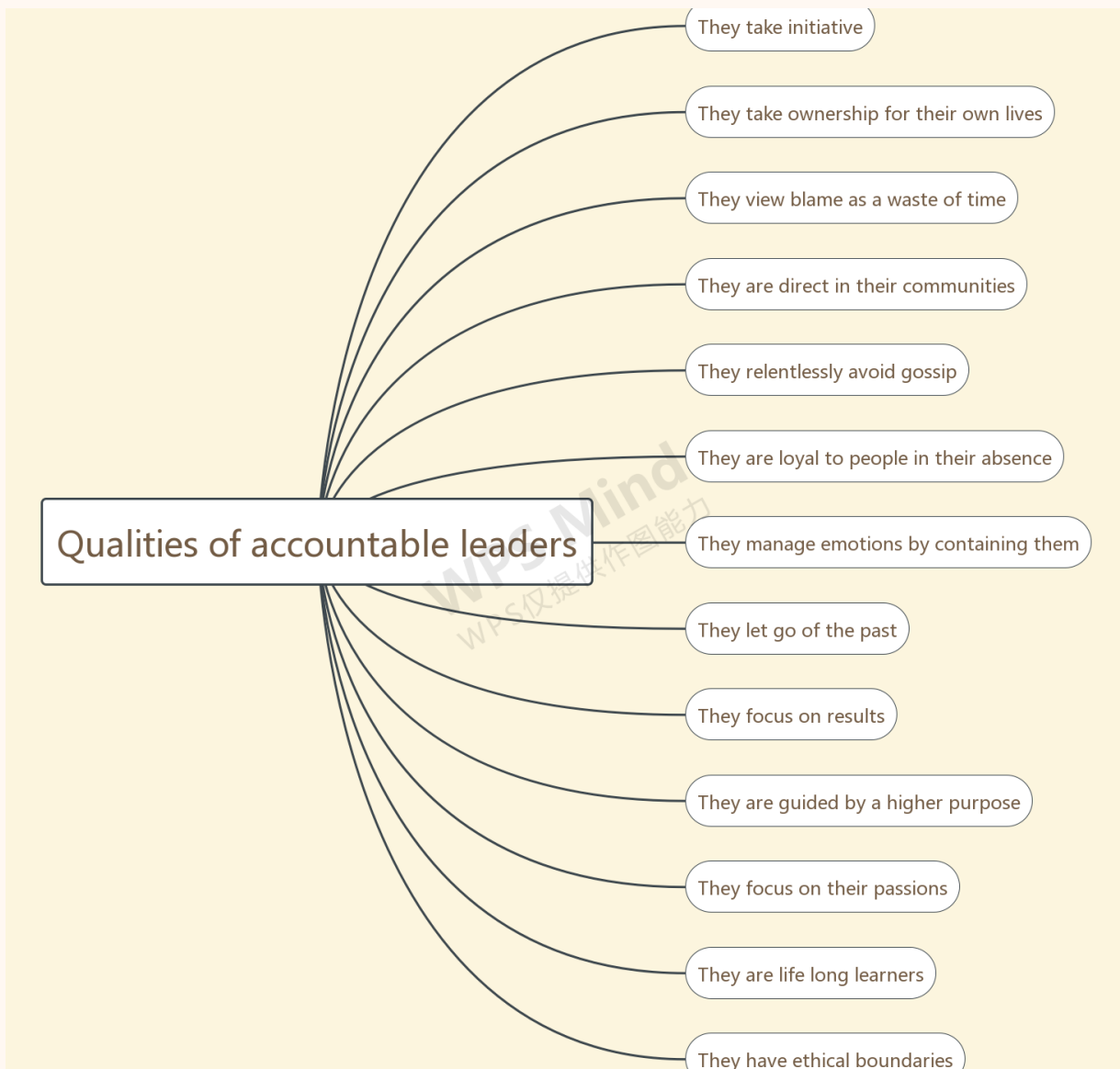
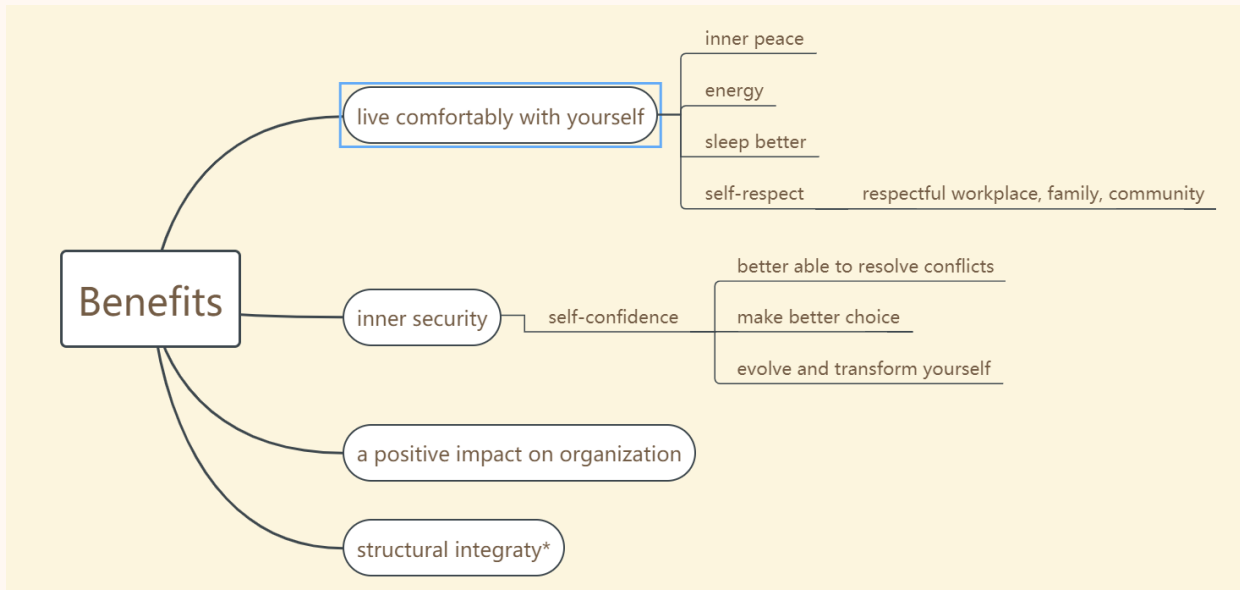
Accountability Ladder

Where do you stand?



the Benefits and Qualities of Being Accountable

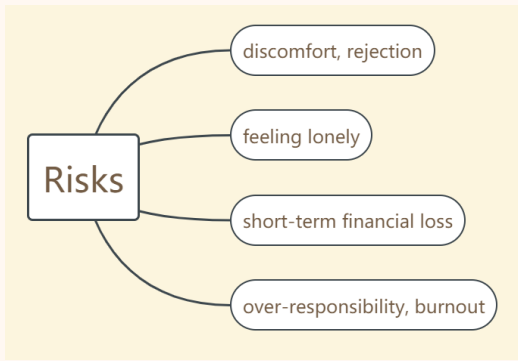
(p.11-30)



*Structural integrity: the margin between safety and disaster in the engineering world

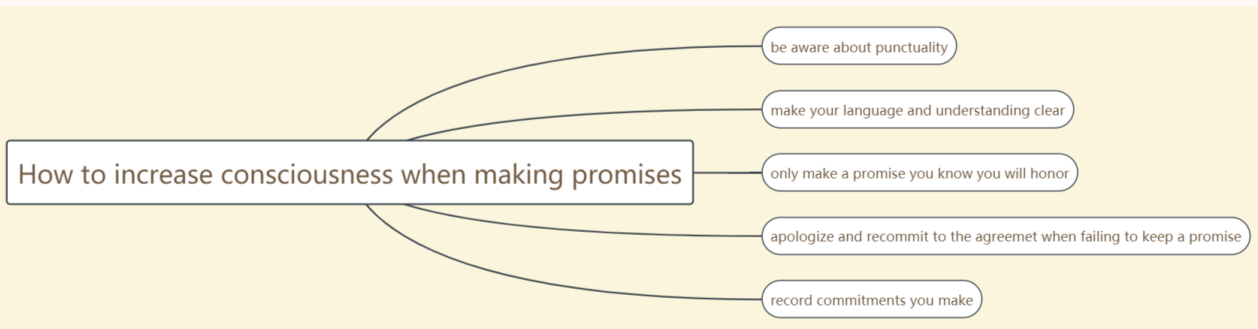
the Risks of Being Accountable

(p.30-32)



"Keeping promise to ourselves is the beginning of accountability."

(p. xvi)



7 Steps that Help You to be Accountable in Your Life

(p.33-52)

Step 1: Stop blaming others; focus on yourself.

Blame has attendant negativity. If you keep blaming others, it will make you avoid facing change and stay stuck. If you want to create space for something new, you should depend on yourself to change instead of waiting for others to change. Focus on yourself and learn yourself. Accountable people are harder on themselves than on others; they see difficulty as challenge and opportunity to learn; they always do the right things, because they don't need others' approval or living up to their expectations to gain self-esteem.

Step 2: Increase self-awareness.



Pay more attention to your authentic desires. Try to manage time efficiently and give ourselves more tranquil moments to reflect upon ourselves to understand our true desires within. Understand our core values, beliefs and how you formed them by asking ourselves questions. For instance, think about some important people and in what way they have influenced you; think of passions and dreams you have for various periods.

Step 3: Connect with the important people in your life.

Share your insights with important people and get to know other people's value systems. Be careful with promise you decide to make to others. Make sure to make specific agreements so you could have solid relationships with others and also self-respect.



Step 4: Do daily reflection.

Listen to the voice within yourself. Think about the person you want to become and the life you are trying to create.



Step 5: Focus on important things rather than urgent ones.

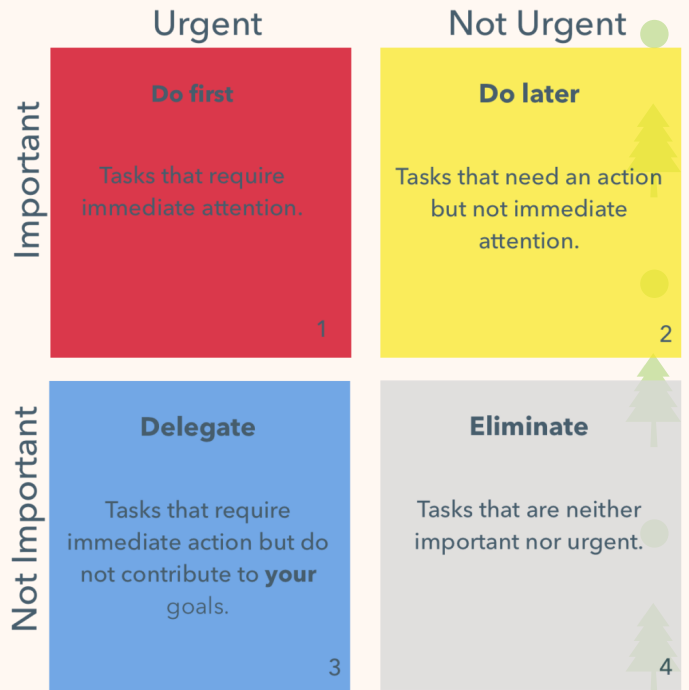
In this part, the authors clarify the distinction between

“important ” and “urgent” .

“Urgency demands from others intrude upon you and insist on your immediate attention” ,while “important things go beyond the pressing needs of the day and are aligned with overall direction” . (p.44-45). Now the world is

getting more and more demanding, people soon will become the slaves to the tyranny of the urgent since they tend to do urgent things first. (Hummel, 1967).

However, we should focus on important things.



Step 6: Record your commitments.

Connect yourself to your center and try to discover the deepest vulnerability and the greatest strength. Stop to think for some time before making any agreement. True integrity is determined by our choices. It may not gain world’ s approval, but will lead to self-respect and peace. Keep track of every commitment you make then turn it into a task with deadline. It will make you more conscious of your agreements and reduce the burden off your head and also help to do follow-ups.



Who looks beyond my possessions and my roles, my successes and my failures, to who I really am? Who am I accountable to for becoming all I can be ?



Step 7: Create an authentic community and connect to it

Think of people who care about your growth and support you to be more fully who you are meant to be. Start by making a list of your needs from a community.

How to Deal with Unaccountable People ?

(p.53-62)

Be accountable in your part in relationships. We should not expect others to be different, which namely is those people need to change for their good and those who around them.

Exit bad situations where you work with unaccountable people. Cut your losses and leave these relationships because you have responsible for your own life.

Don't compromise your values and principles that form the foundation of your own life when you are dealing with unaccountable people. Be conscious and brave.

"When you are in a bad mood, don't make everyone around you in a bad mood"

Hayley Irvine

Find an ally who open up to, confide in, and trust. Rather than giving answers, allies help guide you to your own truth and hold you accountable for living honorably in your current life.

Deal directly with accountable people. Take personal accountability first. Clarify your expectations.

Summary

In short, accountability is the foundation of trust, which is a big challenge facing the world. David Irvine and Jim Reger give a insight into accountability and help readers learn how to inspire and achieve authentic accountability. First, accountability is about honoring your own values. You don't change for anyone else but for yourself. Second, accountability is the keystone of strong character, which takes courage and commitment. Finally, accountability is a must for citizens in order to build an ideal environment for their organizations and communities. The authors come to a conclusion that there are eight strategies for improving authentic accountability: 1)seek self-awareness; 2)maintain attentiveness; 3)find solitude; 4)seek clarity; 5) discover a higher purpose; 6)commit to service; 7) foster community; 8)maintain gratitude.

Critical Evaluation

When I was reading the strategies for dealing with unaccountable people in this book, I was impressed by the strategy “always start with yourself” , which tells readers not to expect others to change but first change yourself. Many people always wait for others to change when there are problems in their relationship, namely “for the good of themselves” . it reminds me of a story of a friend who has divorced. Once I talked to him and he brought up his past marriage. He told me that back in the day he was young and reckless and he thought everything could be changed, but one day he got to know that someone couldn't be changed suddenly. I felt more than distressed for him at that time. On the one hand, I felt sorry for his unfortunate experience; on the other hand, I thought it is regrettable that he hasn't realized that things would have been different if then he had changed himself. I've recently read a book named *The Courage to Be Disliked*. It is about how to get the courage to change and achieve real happiness. The authors of this book come up with a concept of “separation of tasks” , which means a person can only change themselves, so requiring other people to change is an act of intruding on their tasks. Consequently, we are supposed to do the separation of tasks and discard other people's tasks. (Kishimi & Koga, 2018) .

References

Irvine, D., & Reger, J. (2009). *Bridges of Trust: Making Accountability Authentic*. DC Press.

Kishimi, I., & Koga, F. (2018). *The Courage To Be Disliked: How to free yourself, change your life and achieve real happiness*. Atlantic Books.