

JWC'S CULTURAL CONCEPTS

ACCOUNTABILITY



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AT ITS CORE, the focus of the JWC "One Team" programme is to improve the quality of the interactions we have with each other so that we continue to build an even more healthy and high performing organisation. One of the concepts of this programme, and indeed one of our core values, is accountability. It could be argued that the JWC already has a strong reputation of being accountable. Over the decade, the Centre has shown it can deal with an ever-increasing tempo comprised of exercises that continue to become more complex and challenging. However, for JWC to remain accountable it must rely on the sum of its parts: its human capital. So, how do we, as an organisation, ensure that we are each individually

the house you bought was more of a renovator's dream than a dream house, or your boss informed you that you would be working the next three weekends.

Now, look at the ladder, and ask yourself which step were you on in that situation? If we are honest, we often find ourselves starting low down on the ladder. Have you sometimes begun blaming others? "It was their fault, not mine! They did this on purpose!" Or, perhaps the situation appeared so bad that you chose to simply wait and hope for someone else to step in and fix it? "I am sure someone else will deal with that, why should I?"

All of these reactions are normal, but are not without consequence, particularly if

accountable for our actions? It is an important question particularly since we could probably all find examples of when we were not always accountable, be it in our personal or working lives. One tool we can use is the concept of the "Accountability Ladder" (illustrated left). The concept is simple to understand. Each rung (or step) on the ladder represents a different way of responding to any situation. To demonstrate how it can be used, take a moment and think of a situation in your past that did not end the way you wanted it to: you were overlooked for a position you knew should have been yours,

we dwell on these reactions for long periods of time. By examining the image more closely, you will see that the lower rungs (from "wait and hope" and below) put the person in a state of powerlessness. While these lower rungs may be comfortable, especially to give away responsibility to someone else, the main consequence is that we give away our ability to take action. This is why it is so important to remember that complaining and whining about the situations we find ourselves in can over time wear us down.

The antidote? If we look to the ladder again, the solution lies in the upper rungs. If we scan up the image, we discover that the act of *acknowledging reality* is the essential first step, one which we intuitively know is important. By acknowledging the reality of the situation, ("Ok, I didn't get the job, so what can I do now?") we can then move up the ladder to a more powerful position where we can take control of our reaction to the situation and move forward. We can then begin to take responsibility for the situation and own it. Owning the situation allows us to start looking for solutions rather than dwelling on problems. From here we can then get on with it. And, that is exactly what we are known for at the JWC. We are known for asking the question, "What else can we do to make this work?"

The accountability ladder therefore serves as a simple metaphor to remind us to dwell less in the lower levels and move swiftly to the upper levels where we can be more engaged in finding new solutions, which is exactly where a transformational HQ, like the JWC, should be. ✦

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