

Leadership Reflections with Agevi



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LESSON ONE: ACCOUNTABILITY

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The standards you walk past are the standards you are willing to accept.” One of my coaches repeated this to us every session. In our case, these “standards” referred to errors such as a poor pass, lack of communication, a poor kick, or failing to get off the defensive line. However, he didn’t focus on the errors themselves. Instead, he emphasized our failure as a team to hold individuals accountable for their mistakes. By ignoring these lapses, we accepted lower standards.

Accountability is a term we frequently hear and use in both personal and professional contexts to address situations where standards are not met. But how often do we truly mean it? How often do we hold each other accountable? As leaders, how often do we take responsibility for our actions? As team members, how readily do we admit our mistakes?

How openly do we accept correction when our errors impact the team or organization?

When we began calling each other out for mistakes and admitting our own, we cultivated a culture that valued accountability. Trust blossomed in this environment of open communication, allowing individuals to share challenges, ask for help, and own up to errors. We set clear expectations where every team member understood their roles and responsibilities. As a result, holding each other accountable became the norm, and over time, team performance significantly improved.

A TWO-WAY STREET

Accountability is the cornerstone of effective leadership in sports teams and organizations. Leaders who are transparent about their commitments, accept constructive feedback, and follow through on promises empower their teams. This, in turn, inspires individuals to set and maintain high standards independently.

In such environments, standards become self-evident, eliminating the need for thick manuals or constant reminders. This culture organically sieves out individuals who do not align with the team’s values. It fosters ownership of duties, encourages problem-solving, and promotes decision-making within each member’s scope of influence. The workplace feels less like a school and more like a fair, collaborative space.

SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY

Implementing systems like performance reviews and regular one-on-one check-ins helps track progress and align expectations. Embracing difficult conversations constructively, with a focus on solutions rather than blame, enables growth. Consistency and fairness in applying consequences for both met and unmet expectations strengthen trust across the board. When accountability flows seamlessly from top to bottom and vice versa, teams move in the same direction, maintaining their shared standards. Such environments naturally self-correct when individuals deviate, ensuring leaders emerge in every department. In these teams, members feel empowered to tell each other the truth for the collective benefit.

THE PEOPLE MAKE THE TEAM

Organizations are made up of people. The best teams consist of skilled, dedicated individuals who embrace the shared vision and willingly hold themselves accountable. When each member takes ownership of their role—not just in success, but in setbacks as well—trust deepens, collaboration strengthens, and excellence becomes the standard. Accountability isn’t just a principle; it’s the foundation of a thriving culture. That’s the mark of a team that doesn’t just perform—it excels.