# Accountability Protocol

### Overview

The Accountability Protocol is designed to provide a framework for having difficult conversations, and holding people at your company (and in other areas of life) accountable for their actions (or lack thereof).

It has three levels:

* Level 1: Accountability Question (used frequently)
* Level 2: Accountability Check (hopefully rare)
* Level 3: Accountability Challenge (very rare, and with substantial consequences)

You are encouraged to modify the protocol for your company.

### Level 1: Accountability Question

Used when there is not a charge or strong negative judgment; it is a question for clarification or a gentle reminder to focus on agreements and deliverables.

Make the statement: “I have an Accountability Question for you” followed by:

* “Do you think you failed to meet your commitment on this issue”? or
* “Do you think you were out of integrity on this issue?” or
* “Do you think you performed at your best in this instance?” or
* “Do you think you met your end of the bargain / agreement this time, or
* “Is there something you would do different the next time?”

### Level 2: Accountability Check

This is used when there is need for a follow-up or stronger question. The language is more direct.

Make the statement: “I want to complete an Accountability Check with you”, followed by:

* “I think you were out of integrity with this issue” or
* “It appears to me that you failed to make your commitment on this matter”, or
* “It seems to me that you failed to be responsible in this matter” or
* “I don’t think you are holding up your side of the agreement”

Followed by: “Do you see how I might have come to that conclusion?”

And “Do you agree?” or “What do you think?”

If so, then ask good questions such as:

* “Why did this happen?”
* “What can you do to make sure it doesn’t happen again, and how can I support you in that?”
* “What are you going to do to come back into integrity on this issue?”

### Level 3: Accountability Challenge

This is the highest level of the protocol, and requires a meeting between the challenger, the person being challenged and the executive team. The goal is to come to resolution, correct the behavior once and for all, and move one.

A special meeting is called, and the following process completed:

1. The challenge is described (e.g., Sue is challenging John on his behavior at the XYZ meeting)
2. The steps in the process are reviewed.
3. Each person is asked: “Are you prepared to accept some or complete responsibility for this issue?” Unless both parties agree, then the process can be halted, or can continue at the discretion of the facilitator.
4. Each person is asked: “Are you willing to believe that there is a chance for a resolution such that both parties can agree that the issue has been settled and both parties can move on without regret, resentment, or judgment?”
5. The person issuing the challenge states their case in response to the facilitator’s question, and the other party repeats the statements.
   1. What are the facts?
   2. What are your feelings and concerns?
   3. What are your judgments? (e.g., your criticisms)
   4. What are your requests? What would you like to see happen?
6. The person being challenged is asked to do the same and the challenging party repeats the statements.
   1. What are the facts?
   2. What are your feelings and concerns?
   3. What are your judgments? (e.g., your criticisms)
   4. What are your requests? What would you like to see happen?
7. The process facilitator offers the executives team members each an opportunity to express their feelings and concerns, their judgments, and their requests.
8. The facilitator invites the parties to come back into integrity through actions, pledges, apologies, and forgiveness.