

# SPARK

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## Chapter 4 Exercises:

**BECOMING AN ACCOUNTABLE LEADER**

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### EXERCISE 1: ACCOUNTABILITY GRID

A Spark resists the powerful human instinct to place blame. Sparks seek to identify how their actions — or inaction — have contributed to mistakes, missteps, problems, or any other less-than-best outcome they are responsible for, or associated with.

Sparks break down challenges into aspects of the challenge that they can control, and aspects of the challenge they cannot control. By focusing their time, effort, and energy on the aspects they can control, Sparks slowly, but surely, build influence over the aspects of their challenges that they do not control. Practicing and leading with individual accountability inspires team accountability.

① Identify three professional challenges you face in your environment.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

② When you further examine the challenge, you begin to understand your role in addressing it. Identify aspects of those challenges that you can control and that you can't.

	CONTROL	DON'T CONTROL
CHALLENGE 1	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

	CONTROL	DON'T CONTROL
CHALLENGE 2		
CHALLENGE 3		

3 Identify two actions you can take to demonstrate accountability to these challenges and to promote a culture of accountability.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE 2: TEAM ACCOUNTABILITY

Are there consistent problems or challenges that are impacting your team/colleagues? Could your group benefit from a conversation related to accountability? As a Spark, use these questions to start a conversation with your team about how to create a culture of accountability.

You can host this conversation over coffee or lunch. Share with them that you're reading a book on leadership and you'd like to discuss some of what you're learning. Plan at least 45–60 minutes for the conversation.

When you finish the discussion, ask your colleagues to share actions they're going to take to help bring a greater sense of accountability to the organization.

- 1 How do you define accountability?
- 2 The authors of **SPARK** describe accountability as our ability to respond to problems or challenges by first understanding how our own actions (or inactions) have contributed to the situation we find ourselves in. Does their description reflect our description of accountability? Share your thoughts.
- 3 Is accountability hard to demonstrate when there are problems or challenges? Describe why or why not.
- 4 Can you remember a time in your career when you observed a leader demonstrate accountability towards a situation that was very difficult? How did that change your impression of her or him?
- 5 Can you remember a time in your career when you observed a leader who didn't demonstrate accountability during a situation when it was obvious they were at fault? Without sharing names, how did that change your impression of her or him?
- 6 Can you recall a problem or challenge that you encountered recently where it was difficult to be accountable to it? Why?
- 7 What challenges does our team face where we need to be more accountable?
- 8 How can we create an environment where it's safe for people to admit their mistakes and missteps?
- 9 What is one thing you can commit to that will help us further create a culture of accountability?