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April 2013 Awfully Absent Accountability



Awfully Absent: Five Failures in Accountability

"It wasn't my fault! It just slipped out of my hands!" Imagine a toddler looking at her mother with giant cute eyes after breaking a precious family heirloom the child knew she was forbidden to touch. Shades of the Garden of Eden. It's never our fault, right? My mentor Mike Donahue likes to say "as we get older and smarter, our excuses get smarter as well." We're good at tricking people and ourselves when we are not accountable. In our project management workshops, one of the largest complaints about projects is that people just don't do what they say they will do.

No surprise, we play a role in the lack of accountability in others. Below are five ways we each fail in driving accountability.

1. When someone on your team is perceived as not accountable, it spreads like cancer through a team. On my team, we often say the words "we just can't trust them to do that". If you know someone is likely to not help you the way you want to be helped, it's easier, with a GIANT sigh, to do it yourself then it is to hold them accountable. That is awkward, and we like to brush it off by saying it takes too long. The plague spreads. Be clear and reinforce your expectation. If you don't get what you want, have the difficult conversation as

Where's RMA Next?



Click on the links below to get more information about open events or email bhelt@russellmartin.com with questions.

April 1 Project Management for Museum Professionals | IUPUI

April 2 Project Management for Learning Pros | [Online Series](#)

April 9 Project Management for Learning Professionals | Volvo

April 9 Project Management for Learning Pros | [Online Series](#)

April 16 Leading with Emotions Children's Museum of Indianapolis
[Register!](#)

April 22 Project Management for Learning Professionals | [Alexandria](#)

April 23 TMN Webinar: Methodology Madness | [Register](#)

April 24 Understanding Behaviors & Motivators | Connor Painting

April 25 PM Consulting | FM Global

soon as possible.

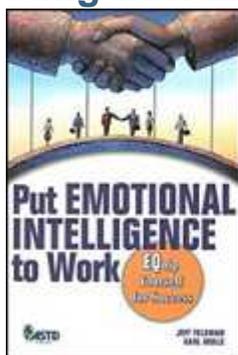
2. I recently shared some feedback with an organization we partner with. This was feedback no one asked for. As one of their key vendors, I thought they'd want to know how we could make our hand-offs on both sides clearer. But I never asked them what they thought about the issues, or even if they thought there were issues. The response I got was respectful, carefully written and clearly 'proved' that they had done everything correctly on their end.

3. Projects create a great breeding ground for avoiding accountability. Both the Project Sponsor and Project Manager can have accountability issues. Executive Project Sponsors are often unclear what their role is on a project. Depending on their personality, he or she may either micromanage the project or disappear until the end with the famous words "Make it SO!" The project manager may think of the sponsor as a dumping ground for unsolvable problems, as in "Wa-wah I don't know what to do...". A great executive sponsor, as a great leader, knows how to hold the PM accountable to the role they play, while coaching and providing governance. A good project manager is looking for coaching, mentoring and political support.

4. From the recent studies of Emotional Intelligence (see April workshop with author, Karl Mulle, below), we know that stress can drive brain protecting fight, flight and freeze behaviors. Today's organizations create an environment that, if you CHOOSE, you can be constantly busy and never done. "We should do something about that..." is a meeting statement that seems like you are accountable, but you're really hoping it's someone else that gets the actual work. Lack of explicit action with names and dates becomes a comfortable way to pretend to collaborate without any accountability. Choose to manage your work. First calm your brain, then be real.

5. What the heck are you doing? Do you know what your base is - your vision, mission, value? Map your personal to your business strategy, which maps to tasks and projects. Use your base and strategy to prioritize your attention. Remember the basic Covey Quadrants - focus on what matters. Be accountable to yourself.

Leading with Emotions



To grow focus and accountability, consider attending **Karl Mulle's** two day workshop at the Indianapolis Children's Museum April 16th and 17th. There are a few seats left to learn from the co-author of

April 25 Growth Curve Training with TTI
Success Insights

April 26 Future Learning: Flourish!
[New England ASTD Chapters
Conference](#)

April 29 Understanding Systems
Thinking | BOSE



It's likely that you have already met the Kid President. If not, check this Pep Talk out. <http://www.wimp.com/peptalk/> - You were made to be awesome.



[ZebraZapps](#) has partnered with the [eLearning Brothers](#) to produce high quality photographic character packs available in the Gadget Shopp.

Conveniently integrated in the ZebraZapps cloud, these new character packs help authors instantly connect with their audience. Starting at just \$3.50 you can choose from several multi-pose sets of unique characters. In addition, these same brothers have just released some amazing game and interaction templates to use with Articulate Storyline, Flash and HTML5. Check them out [here](#).



Seven Effective Traits and Behaviors of an Effective Mindset

the ASTD book [Put Emotional Intelligence to Work](#). Leave with a solid base. This workshop includes the new TriMetrix EQ assessment, just released on 2/15/13. Be the first on your block to learn how your behaviors, motivators and EQ work together to create success or challenge.

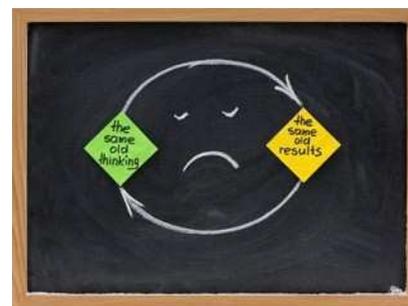
Are You an Optimist or a Pessimist?

What is optimism? It is a belief that things in our past were good for us, even if that means they were hard and taught us lessons. It is also the belief that things will be better in the future.

- Optimism breathes life into you each day
 - Pessimism drains you
-
- Optimism helps you to take needed risks
 - Pessimism plays it safe and never accomplishes much
-
- Optimism improves those around you
 - Pessimism drags them down
-
- Optimism inspires people to great heights
 - Pessimism deflates people to new lows



Both self-fulfilling. If you are an optimist, you will generally find good things happen to you. As a pessimist, you will find yourself in the not-so-good situations more often than not. We can choose to look at the world and think the worst, or we can tell ourselves the good things about each situation. Taken from Chris Widener <http://www.chriswidener.com/>.



An effective mindset is one that makes the best use of available resources - your time, energy and efforts - and uses them to create positive change.

1. *Enjoys and appreciates the present moment.* The greater part of your happiness or misery depends solely upon your attitude towards any given moment, regardless of the events contained within.
2. *Connects inner purpose with outer effort.* Your purpose in life is to find your purpose and give yourself to it.
3. *Accepts and embraces great challenges.* Great demands drive the growth of great virtues. Contending with great challenges forms the foundation of greatness.
4. *Self-disciplined.* Discipline is choosing to do what you know must be done, as often and as long as required. It's doing the thing you have to do whether you like it or not.
5. *Remains positive and focused through failure.* It's focused resilience that eventually leads you to your desired result.
6. *Filters and channels anger effectively.* Direct your anger towards specific problems that can be solved, not people or generalized situations.
7. *Willingness and drive to help others.* The most curing work is found in the challenge of helping someone who has less than you do. It's one of life's great paradoxes; when you serve others you end up benefiting as much if not more than those you serve.

From the Mental Health Association of Indianapolis

April Contest

Happy Easter!
Since many of you have an extra day off this week or you may even be on Spring Break, this one is a little



Story Telling made Easy

Whether to drive e-learning, write white papers or teach others, Glenn Hughes has created a simple template for a **Seven Sentence Story**. Here is all you need to get started:

- Identify the MIP (Most Important Point) of your story: moral, call to action, etc.
- Apply his seven sentence template
- Add emotion, logic and data and VOILA!

Check it out at <http://smartashell.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Seven-Sentence-Stories.pdf>

Happiness is a Bus



There are two dozen platforms ... from each of which several different bus lines depart. Thereafter, for a kilometre or more, all the lines leaving from any one platform take the same route out of the city, making identical stops. "Each bus stop represents one year in the life of a photographer," Minkkinen says. You pick a career direction - maybe you focus on making platinum prints of nudes - and set off. Three stops later, you've got a nascent body of work. "You take those three years of work on the nude to [a gallery], and the curator asks if you are familiar with the nudes of Irving Penn." Penn's bus, it turns out, was on the same route. Annoyed to have been following someone else's path, "you hop off the bus, grab a cab... and head straight back to the bus station, looking for another platform". Three years later, something similar happens. "This goes on all your creative life: always showing new work, always being compared to others." What's the answer? "It's simple. Stay on the bus."

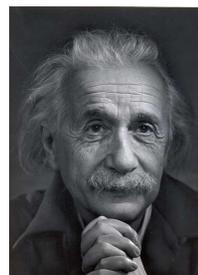
Oliver Burkeman, author of [The Antidote: Happiness for People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking](#)

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bit tricky. Here's the problem...

The Easter bunny realized he was getting too much work so he decided to train some bunny helpers. One hundred bunnies showed up the first day of training. They were to put eggs in the baskets and take them out. There were 100 baskets lined up, each with an egg. The first bunny hopped along and took an egg out of every basket. The second bunny hopped along and put back every second egg. The third bunny hopped along and moved the egg for every third basket. (if the egg was out of the basket, the bunny put it in. If the egg was in the basket the bunny took it out.) The fourth bunny hopped along and moved the egg for every fourth basket. The fifth bunny did the same thing to every fifth basket, and so on until the hundredth bunny had his turn. After each bunny had his or her turn, how many baskets did not have eggs in them?

Send your answers and your Easter candy to us at pm@russellmartin.com.



"I do not mind that you are a girl, but the main thing is that you yourself do not mind. There is no reason for it." [A letter from Einstein](#) to a little girl who wanted to be a scientist but was concerned that her gender held her back.

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