



Accountability Authority Paradox

A number of clients over the past while have asked to focus on ACCOUNTABILITY. I remember Michael Jordan, in the series *The Last Dance*, giving one of the best definitions of that word I've ever heard. Jordan stated it in the form of a question:

Can I count on you?

Can people to whom I'm responsible count on me? It's one thing to pose that question. It's quite another to live it out in a way that the overwhelming response would be **YES!**

How does one end up with a YES that is authentic and impactful? For me, a few thoughts/questions come to mind:

- A "Mark-centric" universe is a universe too small.
- Does anyone have AUTHORITY in my life that would cause my behavior (at least from time-to-time) to be different because of that authority?
- The recognition that, while I am "free" to make my own choices, I am NOT free to choose the consequences to my choices.
- If people around me are counting on me, somehow they (and therefore we) are "less" if I don't deliver.
- *It's not about me...*
- Is it possible that my life is somehow "better" when I "lay it down" "in love" for the sake of those around me?
- Instead of turning the world upside down, can I be a part of turning it right-side up?
- If I don't deliver, how does that impact my team and the individuals on my team?
- Might my accountability motivate accountability in others?

As I am "graced" with year after additional year (I could have ended up in a box much sooner...), I'm beginning to realize that it's more what I DO than what I SAY... As a leader, people are impacted in a lasting way more by the actions they observe in us than by the "sermons" we preach. Mark, if you want to have IMPACT, then ACT, don't just talk about acting... Actions do speak louder than words. It's not *Do as I say...* I just heard of a great acronym attributed to Anne Lamott:

W.A.I.T.: Why Am I Talking?

Could it be that my talking less produces more good in others? Could listening bear more fruit than my "preaching"?

Is it possible that when I'm weak, I'm strong? Is it possible that less is more?

Some of these thoughts might be foreign to us/me. Somewhere in here is the idea of PARADOX. *Para* – alongside, beside... *Dox* – opinion... Two "opinions" side-by-side; both of which are true, but our minds often cannot understand how that's possible. An example... Light is described as BOTH a wave and a particle. How can that be? How can both be true? My wife and I have been around several deaths lately. We cry and we laugh. How can the two co-exist? Some things that don't seem like they can co-exist, do. And, some things that "shouldn't be" are... For example, how can I let go of an opinion I've held dearly and "staked my life on" and actually end up in a better position? If I "die" to an opinion, might there be new "life" the other side of that death? A seed falls into the ground and literally dies. Come back 40 years later and you have a huge tree, alive and growing, literally "birthing" more trees around it.

Here is one way these things have played out in my own life, I daresay paradoxically. My avoidance of conflict (going down one path) in my own life has, in many ways, led me to the work I do with family businesses (going down a different path). And, comedically (I guess...) I'm faced with a sort of accountability – even an "authority" in my life.

Are you just going to tell others what's good for them, or are you going to take your own medicine, Mark?

I'm now, bit by bit, becoming less conflict-averse in my own relationships. What was unimaginable can become real and valuable.

Maybe the way up is down...