The Six Conversations that Matter
Every employee, every day, has the choice
To create an organization of their own choosing
Or
Adapt to a workplace where the
Spirit, heart and mind belong to others.

Choosing the workplace as our own,
In the face of caution, doubt and
Natural anxiety, is
The real meaning of accountability.

To be accountable is
To care for the whole and do it for its own sake.
If a key function of leadership is to initiate change, then it requires a capacity to connect people with their peers in service of something greater than themselves with the overall goal to increase organizational capacity and sustainability.

This aspect of leadership is more about engagement than role modeling, motivating others or directing and controlling people. The leadership of engagement and convening requires a shift in thinking about cause and effect and about problem-solving versus co-creating the future. At the most concrete and practical level, this is about language.

Transformation occurs when we engage people in particular conversations that have the capacity to create an alternative future.

This is leadership language in action. *Leadership Language in Action: Six Conversations that Matter* is a workshop developed by Peter Block based on his best-selling books, “The Answer to How is Yes” and “Community: The Structure of Belonging”. This workshop invites participants to experience these new conversations in real time and understand how, as leaders, they can help to transform their organization.
The Concepts

Changing Your Way of Thinking
For many of us, our normal way of thinking is that the leader must be in control and on top of all things at all times. As an employee, we think that if we behave as desired, we will be recognized and rewarded. In reality, choosing to be accountable means that each employee chooses to commit to the success of the organization with no proof or promise of reward. The choice makes us owners and partners, pursuing the vision that we have helped to create. It is this leap of faith that frees us from cycles of dominance and dependence.

Clarifying the Destination
It is up to each employee to create a different future by becoming clear on their intentions and to understand their contribution to the difficulties they face. This requires that they state their choice for accountability and how they would like their partnerships to be in the future. Then, they must invite others to join them on this journey to accountability. The invitation is a clear offer about what they will personally do to help others make this choice and then carefully listening to the reactions.

Developing Business Literacy
To build capacity we must give people the knowledge and information to make sound business decisions. Without such literacy the company’s capacity remains limited to those few who have the knowledge and information to make decisions. People should be educated about the economics of the business and have access to accurate information that affects them and their work. With this new literacy, people will have the knowledge to make decisions in a responsible manner.

Changing Your Conversation
When the conversations change — the culture changes. Too often in conversations, the boss assumes control, sets the expectation and in obvious and subtle ways, reinforces the idea that they are there to hold the employee accountable. This framework changes the moment our language changes. The workshop helps participants create language that builds the capacity of others to choose accountability. When the language changes, we move from being parents to being partners.

Embracing Doubt
When encouraging others to choose accountability, we must allow room for doubt and concern, otherwise the choice for partnership is simply cosmetic. Expressing our doubts is the first step to commitment. If we cannot say ‘no’, then our ‘yes’ has no meaning. Supporting people’s doubts, without necessarily agreeing with them, creates the conditions which makes widely shared partnership possible.
**Changing the Architecture**

Changing the architecture means not only changing how you do the work but also changing the structure, relationships, roles, and rewards within which the work is done. The goal is to simultaneously:

- Create better and unique ways to serve the customer
- Provide an environment where individuals experience accountability
- Create more value for the customer than what is consumed as expense
- Integrate new knowledge and learning.

These goals require us to rethink the way we integrate the “doing” and the “managing” of the work. They often lead us to create staff groups that move beyond a controlling and auditing function to one of education and service. They also move us to provide as much local choice as possible.

**The Need for Courage**

There is no way around it — choosing accountability requires courage due to the simple fact that this change will not always be embraced by others. In fact, it often is at odds with the existing culture. If courage is not necessary, then we are probably not working to change anything of value. The participants in the workshop learn that courage is not about bravery or rebellion. It is about acting on our intentions and being willing to take responsibility to create the culture we live in. If we are serious about creating a culture of accountability, then courage is always required.

**The Promises**

The objectives of Creating a Culture of Accountability are to shift how participants think about accountability, open them to the possibility of creating a different future, develop the skills of business literacy and change the nature of their conversations — all in service of effective partnerships which support better organizational performance.

**Targeted outcomes include:**

- Understand the impact of a personal choice for accountability
- Develop the road map for creating a culture of accountability
- Create business literacy and an understanding of the playing field
- Develop the skills to change your conversations
- Develop and identify methods to change management practices and architecture
- Learn how to deal with cynics, victims and bystanders
- Develop skills to negotiate for exemptions from others outside your unit
- Develop a plan to begin the implementation in your own community.
The Participants

This workshop is for leaders, managers and individuals interested in creating more powerful partnerships with the people around them. It is not just for the business world but for any organization or community where accountability and citizenship are important to its health and success.

This workshop is about caring for the whole, where the whole may be a ...

- Business
- Community
- Company
- Family
- Government
- Non-profit
- Volunteer association

Workshop size
Up to 24 participants and may vary based on your specific requirements

Pre-assignment
Complete Creating Business Literacy provided by Designed Learning

Materials provided
A Participant’s Workbook and a copy of Stewardship by Peter Block

Methodology
Creating A Culture of Accountability: Leading Through Stewardship and Empowerment, like all Designed Learning workshops, is highly interactive. Brief lectures are used to present initial key concepts. You will become deeply immersed in the materials through interactive simulations with other attendees. The workshop also includes written exercises to apply key concepts to your own unique situation. You will leave with a specific plan to bring these ideas to your organization.

The Days

Day 1 (8:30-5:00 p.m.)
- Welcome — Four Powerful Questions
- Changing Your Way of Thinking — Choosing Accountability
- Intentions and Crossroads
- Creating Business Literacy
- Changing Management Practices

Day 2 (8:30-5:00 p.m.)
- Changing the Conversations
- Dealing With Cynics, Victims and Bystanders
- Conversations Outside the Unit
- Redesigning the Architecture
- Embracing Courage
- Closing
Designed Learning Affiliates

All workshops are led by Designed Learning affiliates. These experienced consultants have a wide range of experiences within organizations providing them with the unique ability to understand and relate to the perspectives of internal consultants like yourself. Many of Designed Learning affiliates utilized Designed Learning's services before actually starting their own consulting businesses. With affiliates throughout the United States and Europe, Designed Learning can match affiliates with your specific needs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
We want to talk with you. Give us a call or visit our website www.designedlearning.com to see how others, like yourself, decided to attend these workshops, the only one's designed and continually developed by Peter Block. Join others who have captured the experience of consulting flawlessly in their organizations.

CONTACT US
(513) 524-2227
1 (866) 770-2227 (toll-free)
Info@DesignedLearning.com
www.DesignedLearning.com

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