

# The Oz Principle: Getting Results Through Individual and Organizational Accountability

The authors of *The Oz Principle: Getting Results Through Individual and Organizational Accountability* sound a sobering wake-up call with these words: *Regardless of the shape and texture of your organization's structure, the scope and sophistication of its systems, or the completeness and profoundness of its latest strategy, your organization will not succeed in the long run unless accountable people implement and sustain your organization's structures, systems, and strategies.* Fortunately, those hard-to-hear words are followed-up with a clear and practical pathway of how leaders can install a culture of accountability within their organization.

Check out these Book Notes to get a picture of the helpful handbook this could be for you.

Title: ***The Oz Principle: Getting Results Through Individual and Organizational Accountability***

Author: Roger Connors, Tom Smith, Craig Hickman

Copyright: 1994

## Book Description:

Since it was originally published in 1994, *The Oz Principle* has sold nearly 600,000 copies and become the worldwide bible on accountability. Through its practical and invaluable advice, thousands of companies have learned just how vital personal and organizational accountability is for a company to achieve and maintain its best results.

At the core of the authors' message is the idea that when people take personal ownership of their organization's goals and accept responsibility for their own performance, they become more invested and work at a higher level to ensure not only their own success, but everyone's. Now more than ever, *The Oz Principle* is vital to anyone charged with obtaining results. It is a must have, must read, and must apply classic business book.

## Book Quotes:

American enterprise may have lost much of its dominance in the world, but it retains the number one position when it comes to what could be considered the "cult" of victimization. 4

In his enlightening Book, *A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character*, author Charles Sykes captures this flaw in the American character: "Crisscrossing by invisible trip wires of emotional, racial, sexual, and psychological grievance, American life is increasingly characterized by the plaintive insistence, I am a victim." 5

The culture of victimization has weakened the American character, stressing ease over difficulty, feeling good

over being good, appearance over substance, saving face over solving problems, illusion over reality. It threatens to destroy the American corporate character by emphasizing quick fixes over long-term solutions, immediate gains over enduring progress, total quality programs over total quality attitudes, and process over results. If left unresolved, the accountability crisis can so erode productivity, competitiveness, morale, and well-being that “Made in America” will not refer to quality goods and services but to excuses for shoddy performance. 7

When you pull back the curtains you discover the “truth” and realize, as did the characters in Oz, that corporate success springs from the willingness of an organization’s people to embrace accountability. 9

Regardless of the shape and texture of your organization’s structure, the scope and sophistication of its systems, or the completeness and profoundness of its latest strategy, your organization will not succeed in the long run unless accountable people implement and sustain your organization’s structures, systems, and strategies. 9

A thin line separates success from failure, the great companies from the ordinary ones. Below that line lies excuse making, blaming others, confusion, and an attitude of helplessness, while above that line lies a sense of reality, ownership, commitment, solutions to problems, and determined action. While losers languish *Below The Line*, preparing stories that explain why past efforts went awry, winners reside *Above The Line*, powered by commitment and hard work. 14

While the victim cycle runs through many stages, we have identified six basic ones common to most people and organizations.

1. *Ignore/deny*
2. *It’s not my job*
3. *Finger-pointing*
4. *Confusion/tell me what to do*
5. *Cover your tail*
6. *Wait and see* 34-44

Accountability: An attitude of continually asking: “What else can I do to rise above my circumstances and achieve the results I desire?” It is the process of “seeing it, owning it, solving it, and doing it.” It requires a level of ownership that includes making, keeping, and proactively answering for personal commitments. It is a perspective that embraces both current and future efforts rather than reactive and historical explanations. 65

You can improve your own ability to remain *Above The Line* by watching for the following clues that indicate accountable attitudes and behavior:

- You invite candid feedback from everyone about your own performance.
- You never want anyone, including yourself, to hide the truth from you.
- You readily acknowledge reality, including all its problems and challenges.
- You don’t waste time or energy on things you cannot control or influence.
- You always commit yourself 100 percent to what you are doing, and if your commitment begins to wane, you strive to rekindle it.
- You “own” your circumstances and your results, even when they seem less than desirable.
- You recognize when you are dropping *Below The Line* and act quickly to avoid the

traps of the victim cycle.

- You delight in the daily opportunity to make things happen.
- You constantly ask yourself the question: “What else can I do to rise above my circumstances and get the results I want?” 85

Remember, accountable people seek feedback and feedback creates accountable people. 187

The following list identifies ways in which you can demonstrate the right touch to people in your organization:

- You constantly ask yourself the question, What else can I do to achieve the result I desire?
- You ask people to give you feedback on whether they perceive you operating *Above The Line* on a particular issue.
- You provide honest, yet encouraging, feedback to others when they drop *Below The Line*.
- You actively observe activities and offer coaching, rather than wait for others to report on their progress on any given project or assignment. You never wait to report progress to your own superiors.
- You focus your discussions around things that you and others can affect and do rather than on things that no one can either affect or do.
- You acknowledge when you fall *Below The Line* and do not react defensively when others point that fact out to you. 215

222

#### ABOVE THE LINE LEADERSHIP CHECKLIST

1. *I Do* model accountability and set an example. *I Don't* hold others accountable without holding myself equally responsible.
2. *I Do* allow people to drop *Below The Line* from time to time to vent their frustrations. *I Don't* let victim stories and *Below The Line* excuses go unchecked or unresolved.
3. *I Do* recognize victim stories and *Below The Line* excuses when I hear them. *I Don't* avoid my responsibility to hold people accountable and to expect *Above The Line* behavior.
4. *I Do* use accountability as a way to empower people toward results. *I Don't*

use accountability as a hammer to nail people when I catch them functioning

*Below The Line*

.

5. ***I Do expect people to coach me to get *Above The Line* when necessary. I Don't***  
expect people to coach me if I am not seeking their feedback.
6. ***I Do practice what I preach. I Don't***  
get caught thinking that accountability is something everyone else should work on.
7. ***I Do avoid focusing solely on accountability to the exclusion of everything else. Don't***  
hold everyone accountable for everything all the time—I do understand the uncontrollables.
8. ***I Do coach people *Above The Line* by listening, acknowledging, asking, coaching, and***  
***committing. I Don't***  
view accountability as a principle that people ought to immediately comprehend. 223

If you want accountability to become a lasting and important part of your own organization's evolution, you must consciously foster accountability throughout every aspect of your organization's culture. 238

In the end, when all is said and done, personal accountability means that people individually *See It*, decide to *Own It*, personally work to *Solve It*, and then individually commit to *Do It*. 243