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**FORM YOUR
SUPPORT
SQUAD**

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**FOSTER TRUE
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**THE AGONY OF
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**WE ASKED,
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ISSUE NO. 6 | AUGUST 2019

THE ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUE



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IT'S TIME TO APPLY!

happy august!

Summer is finally winding down, the kids will all be going back to school very soon, and with a new season right around the corner, it's a great time to start thinking about what you need to get yourself back on track.

One thing I've learned, especially when it comes to pursuing my biggest goals and dreams in life, is that nothing is more important or essential than accountability.

We all need it. We all crave it. In fact, that might even be why you joined Doing It Scared in the first place!

That's exactly why, in this month's issue, we're taking a deep dive into the importance of accountability—where to find it and how to foster it in order to make yourself better. Because, believe it or not, creating more true accountability in your life is one of the most powerful and transformative things you can do.

We'll start by reviewing four powerful steps you can take to strengthen your support system, even if you feel like you're all alone (page 4), and we'll also talk about what it actually looks like to foster accountability in your life and some practical tips for making it happen (page 14).

Sometimes as parents we need a little accountability too, so I also share a story about some of the hard but essential lessons learned from sending my kids off to summer camp (page 20).

The worksheets in our practical application section will help you determine how to find the right accountability partner to balance your own Fear Archetype (Page 28) as well as a tool to help you and your accountability partner stay on track.

If you have time, be sure to also check out this month's recommended reading—The Question Behind the Question by John G. Miller. This book is all about taking responsibility for one's actions, problems, and feelings, instead of blaming others, and shifting your thinking to a mindset of accountability. That said, if you don't have time to read the whole book right now, you can also catch our executive summary on page 12!

Here's to finding the accountability you need!

xoxo Ruth

FORM YOUR SUPPORT SQUAD

HOW TO FIND THE ENCOURAGEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY TO GO AFTER YOUR BIGGEST GOALS AND DREAMS (EVEN WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE ALL ALONE)

RUTH SOUKUP

Making friends is hard.

Finding people you can trust who will cheer you on and push you to be your best, those who will hold your feet to the fire as you go after your big goals and dreams?

Even harder.

In fact, sometimes it might feel downright impossible.

A recent study conducted by One Poll in conjunction with Evite[1] found the average adult has not made a friend in five years, and that for most people, popularity peaks at age 23. And the challenge for many adults is not just in breaking out of their shell, but in actually breaking in to different social circles that may seem closed.

In other words? The struggle is real.

And if you have ever felt lonely or unsupported, or even frustrated by the lack of real accountability in your life, especially as you work to make bigger changes or to pursue a passion or a big goal or dream, then you are definitely not alone.

But just because at times it feels impossible to make friends and find support and accountability, doesn't mean that it actually is.

And sometimes, I think our perception of being alone tends to cloud the opportunities for support and friendship that have actually been right in front of us all along.

I know that's certainly what happened to me.

In 2010 I started writing my blog Living Well Spending Less. And at the time, I was literally just looking for a new hobby, something to do that wasn't going to Target, which at the time was all I could think



to do with my two toddlers in tow. But then, as I started diving in to this whole new world of blogging, I suddenly realized that there was this whole other world out there, an online world full of possibilities that I had never even known existed until that point.

And what's more, I discovered that there were people out there who were making money through their blogs and online businesses, and I was convinced that if other people could do it, I could too.

And so I made the decision, that I was going to figure out how to make money from my blog. Not only that, I told my husband that I was going to make enough money blogging that he could quit his job.

His response? He told me it was the stupidest thing I have ever said.

It's a story that I've told lots of times. In fact, if you've been around for any amount of time, you've probably heard it before. Because it's a great story, right? Mostly because we know how it ends.

As it turns out, you CAN make money online. And not only that, I did make enough from my blog that my husband WAS able to quit his job, and then grew my business from a little blog about coupons to a full-blown media company.

I got to prove my husband wrong, and his eternal penance is that he gets to hear me tell that story over and over and over again.

But the part of this story that I want to highlight today is the part that usually gets glossed over—those two and a half years between me setting that goal of making enough money from my blog that my husband could quit his job, and ACTUALLY achieving that goal.

That's the part that doesn't usually get told, because that's not the part that's glamorous or funny or exciting. It's not all that compelling to hear about how many mistakes and false starts and wrong turns I made, or how frustrated and lonely I felt, or how much I wished for someone to show me the way. It's not fun to hear about how hard it was, and how scary and disappointing, and how many times I felt so close to throwing in the towel.

Because in hindsight, 2 and a half years doesn't sound like a long time, but when you are in the middle of it, it feels like an ETERNITY.

Especially when you don't feel like you have any support.

My husband thought my goal was insane. My real-life friends found the fact that I was writing about how to

use coupons incredibly embarrassing, and beneath them. I even found out that I had basically become the source of entertainment for them, as they made fun of me behind my back.

At one point I even asked my sister if she was reading my blog and she told me, “no, I’m not really into that sort of thing. I think it’s kind of stupid.” I was SO hurt that she wouldn’t at least try to support me. Even the teller at the bank would mock what she called “my silly coupon business.”

But the thing is, hindsight is 20/20, and I realize now that even though I didn’t always feel like it at the time, I did actually have support.

Because while Chuck was certainly skeptical for a long time, he did support me in his own way. He was the one who encouraged me to incorporate my business, even before I had made any money, and went with me to the accountant to make it happen. He went out of his way to make it work when I told him I wanted to attend my first conference, even though he still thought the whole thing was pretty dumb. He would take the kids out on the weekends so that I could work, even as he wished I wouldn’t.

He didn’t necessarily believe in my dream, but he did love me, and that meant supporting me in the only ways he knew how.

But I can tell you that at the time, it didn’t always feel like support to me. I so wished that he would get more enthusiastic.

Even now I feel that way sometimes. I see other bloggers and authors and influencers whose husbands have joined their business, or who have built something together, and I sometimes think, “oh, that would be so nice to have a relationship like that.”

I can’t even get Chuck to come be a guest on my podcast!



The support you get might look different than what you think you want, and that is okay.

But what I have come to realize and appreciate is that he does support me in his own way. Chuck is 100% a behind-the-scenes guy, someone who clears the path so that I can shine. He is my counterweight, providing much-needed balance in my life.

And I think a big part of the reason I felt SO unsupported sometimes was simply because I was so scared. I was going after this huge goal, and I really had no idea what I was doing, or how I was going to get there, and I really just wanted someone to take my hand and show me the way and tell it was going to be okay.

And I see now that there was no one who could actually do that. I had to figure it out for myself. And I also had to realize that support comes in many different forms.

So why am I telling you all of this?

I guess because I just want to start this conversation about finding the support to go after your dreams by pointing out that support might not always look exactly the way you think it is going to. People rarely behave exactly the way we want them to. They don’t say or do exactly the right thing, and they can’t read our minds. And that means that the support you get might look different than what you think you want, and that is okay.

And if you start this journey from a place of grace and gratitude, you might just find that support is all around you.

But with all that being said, I do still think that there are some clear action steps you can take to find more support in your life for going after your big goals and dreams. And if you have been feeling unsupported or alone in your journey, then these are some of the steps I recommend you take right away.

ACTION STEP 1: GET CLEAR ON WHAT YOU WANT AND WHY YOU WANT IT

The first step is to get crystal clear on exactly what it is that you want to achieve—the goal or dream that you are aiming for—and more importantly WHY that goal matters to you.

When you set a goal, it has to be something that you actually care about—not something you think you are supposed to do, or some expectations put on you by someone else. It has to be YOUR goal, the thing YOU care about, something YOU really truly want to achieve.

I think that a lot of times we pick goals that we think we should want, rather than goals that we actually want. And when we do that, it is hard to find that inner motivation to keep us going, which means that we start looking for motivation to come from outside sources—we expect other people to lift us up and keep us going and keep us strong. And that means that we will be much more likely to feel like we are not getting enough support, because we don't have enough inner drive holding us up and sustaining us.

The reality is that the main support and drive for our dreams has to first come from within, from ourselves and from that fire in our belly. And that comes when we are not only clear about what we want to achieve, but clear about WHY that goal matters so much to us. We have to feel it in our core.

And not just that, but getting clear about what we want makes it easier to explain to other people what we are trying to accomplish, which will in turn make it easier for them to get on board or at least just understand what we are going for. If that goal is nebulous or unclear or if we have a hard time explaining exactly what we want, then it is more likely that other people either won't really get it or will be skeptical.

So get clear about what you want and WHY that goal matters to you—that is the first action step you'll need to take when it comes to finding more support for your big goals and dreams.

ACTION STEP 2: KNOW WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT YOU NEED, AND MAKE THE ASK

The second step you'll need to take, then, is to figure out what kind of support you actually need, and then—and this is a difficult thing—to actually ask for it.

And this can be really hard sometimes. Because truthfully it's easier to just get frustrated at the lack of support, or to be hurt or angry because the people in our lives aren't stepping up and giving us the support or the encouragement or the help that we need.

A lot of times, especially with our spouses, we want them to be able to read our minds, and to just know what we need. This is something I talked about a few months ago too, in episode 35, which was about self-care.

But oftentimes, even though we don't always want to admit it, at least some of the fault—maybe even most of the fault—rests in the fact that we haven't been clear about the kind of support or encouragement or help that we need.

Of course, in order to get clear with other people about the kind of support we really need, we must first get clear with ourselves. I think sometimes we don't make the ask because we don't really know what we need, or what we want. We just want something that we don't feel like we are getting. Or maybe that's just me!

But I think sometimes it is a matter of getting really specific about the kind of support and help you need, and the support that is going to be meaningful to you.

Maybe it is a matter of sitting down with your spouse or your partner or your siblings or your parents or whoever you are hoping to get more support from, at a time where you are not angry or upset or in the middle of some big fight, and saying something like, "This is the goal that I am trying to accomplish, and it is really important to me." And then maybe take some time to explain your why, and why this goal matters to you. But once you've done that, then say something like, "I know you might not totally understand why I want to do this, but I need you to know that your support is really important to me, and here are some specific things that you could do that would really help and encourage me."

And then you tell them the specific things they can do. Maybe you need them to ask how things are going every once in a while. Or maybe it's having your husband take the kids out of the house every Saturday so you can work on your goal. Maybe it's a prayer or words of encouragement. Maybe it is making some connections or introductions on your behalf.

With my own husband I had to realize that he was never going to "get" the blogging thing, and that he was probably never going to be super enthusiastic. He was never going to be one of those husbands that wanted to go into business with me. Even now, there is nothing that drives him crazy more than hearing me talk endlessly about business or blogging or marketing...which for the record, I could literally talk about All. The. Time.

But you know what? I've also realized what a blessing that is to me. It forces me to have some balance, and to have a life completely outside of and unrelated to work.

And there have been so many ways that my husband HAS supported my dream along the way, but sometimes I have to let him know what I need.



So know what kind of support you need, and then make the ask. That's step 2.

ACTION STEP 3: EXPAND YOUR CIRCLE

It's never a good feeling to feel like you are all alone, especially when you are working towards a big goal or dream. And while your spouse or your family or circle of close friends might do their best to be supportive, chances are, that if they're not in that world that you are in, or if they are not going towards a similar goal, there is going to be some aspects of your experience that they just can't relate to.

And that doesn't make them bad people or even unsupportive, that just makes them human.

Think about it.

For the most part, we all see life through the lens of our own experience—our own feelings, our own interactions, our own desires and dreams.

What you want, or what you are dreaming about might be so far outside of what the people around you are thinking or dreaming about, that they just can't relate very well.

And that's why it is so important to expand your circle to include friends who are existing in the same space, or who are going towards similar goals. If you're starting a business, that means finding a circle of other business owners—maybe joining the chamber of commerce, or connecting with a small business owners group online.

If you are going back to school, maybe it will be finding a study group to connect with, or getting involved with the student body somehow, so you have other students to connect with.

If you are working to pay off debt, it might be taking a financial peace class or connecting with a debt-free group online.

Whatever you are trying to accomplish, chances are there are other people out there in the world who are doing something similar, and probably just as badly wanting to connect as well.

In fact, I've found that this has been one of the most frequent requests in our communities—so many people asking how they can get connected with other growth minded people, wanting a place where they can get support and encouragement and accountability, which is exactly how this Doing It Scared community came to exist.

This is a place filled with incredible people who are dedicated to supporting each other as we go after their goals and dreams, and so if you haven't yet participated in the Facebook community and started getting to know the other members of this group, then it is time to do just that.

But regardless of where you find that additional support, whether it is in the connections you make in real life or online, you'll need to expand your circle—and that's step three.

STEP 4: STAY ENCOURAGED

Let's not kid ourselves here. Doing it scared is not for the faint of heart. The process of facing our fears and going after big goals and dreams is rarely easy.

And while on one level, in theory, most of us probably understand that to be true, on a practical level, it's not always easy to remember. When things get hard or disappointments and obstacles show up, all that optimism and excitement we felt in the beginning is soon replaced with discouragement and frustration and fear.

We don't want it to be hard. We don't want it to hurt. We don't want to get our hands dirty, or to have to fight for what we want, or to feel the pain of defeat or the humiliation of failure. We don't want to face adversity, or to risk being judged by others. We don't want to have to take responsibility or find out we might not be good enough to achieve what we want.

When the going gets tough, it can be tough to stay encouraged. But that is exactly the time when we need encouragement the most. And while you could sit around waiting and wishing and hoping for that encouragement to come from somewhere or someone else, the reality is that you'll probably be waiting for a very long time.

Remember, in the end, the only thing you can ever control is you—not what happens to you, but how you choose to respond. And that means that one of the very best things you can ever do for yourself is to learn how to put safeguards in place that will help you avoid and overcome discouragement, and find more joy along the way.

Have you ever noticed, when driving on a hot sunny day, that it sometimes looks like there is a shiny wet spot up ahead? It's known as a highway mirage, and the most infuriating thing about this mirage is that you can never actually get to it. No matter how long or how far you drive, it is always somewhere up ahead, far off into the distance.

Unfortunately, our big goals can sometimes start to feel exactly like that highway mirage—always just out of reach. Instead of motivating us, they become a source of frustration and discouragement because they just seem so far away. And when that messy middle hits and things start to get hard and painful and intense, it is only natural to feel discouraged, or to feel as if you are never going to get there.

It is all too easy to fall into “the space between,” that place somewhere in the middle of where you are and where you want to be. It's that place where you have all of these big goals and there's always more to do to get there, but you never quite make it.

If we spend all our time in this space between, we will never feel like we are getting anywhere or accomplishing anything, even though we actually are. That is why it is so important to take time each day to also look back instead of only looking forward, to actually celebrate your wins and accomplishments, rather than continuously focus on all the things you haven't done just yet.

Having clear goals is wonderful, and being a goal-oriented person can be a huge strength, but neglecting to focus on what you have already accomplished and what you are continuing to accomplish—even if you aren't quite there yet—can easily bring you down.

And not only that, you need to actively work at continually filling up.

Because the thing is, as humans, I'm pretty sure that we have an insatiable need for encouragement. It doesn't seem to

matter how often we might hear that we are smart or capable or beautiful or courageous or any other number of positive messages, we still need to hear it again and again. No sooner than we've heard it, we forget it again. Life gets crazy or hard or stressful, self-doubt and all those fears creep in, and suddenly all that confidence starts to fade away yet again.

And that's why it is so important to keep filling up. There is no limit to the number of motivational and self-help books you should read, the number of times you should read your favorite bible verses or devotionals, the number of inspirational podcasts you should be listening to, or the number of events or gatherings you should attend, because the energy and excitement, the motivation and the inspiration that feels so incredible in the moment will eventually fade away. But even so, the more positive and uplifting messages you have pouring in, the more likely you'll be to hold on to some of it.

You need to keep filling up.

Make it a habit to listen to podcasts or encouraging audiobooks while you're driving or working out or doing the dishes. The Do It Scared® podcast is a great one to start with! One listener told me that she just listens to all of the episodes over and over again, so that she always has me voicing encouragement in her head.

Or maybe you could make it a goal to read at least one inspiring book a month or be on the lookout for events and gatherings happening in your area that will get you fired up.

Actively work at staying motivated, and make encouragement and inspiration a priority so that the progress you make doesn't fade away.

In the end, courage is a daily decision—one that requires the willingness to act, even in the face of fear, and to keep taking steps toward your goals, even when you're not always sure where the path is going to lead. But even as you do this, it can be frustrating and disheartening to feel like you don't have enough support—or maybe even any support—along the way.

But before you start feeling sorry for yourself, make sure you have taken the steps we've talked about today—first get clear about what you want and why you want it, so that others have a better chance of understanding it too. Second, identify what kind of support you really need—and then be willing to ask for it, rather than expecting other people to read your mind. Third, make an effort to expand your circle and find other like-minded individuals who are going towards similar goals that you can relate to better. And finally, work to stay encouraged. It's your job to make sure you are putting safeguards in place that will help you keep filling up.



In the end, courage is a daily decision—one that requires the willingness to act, even in the face of fear, and to keep taking steps toward your goals, even when you're not always sure where the path is going to lead.



Practicing
Personal Accountability
at Work and in Life

QBQ!

THE QUESTION BEHIND THE QUESTION®

What to Really Ask Yourself
to Eliminate Blame, Victim Thinking,
Complaining, and Procrastination

JOHN G. MILLER

do^{ing} it scared

book of the month

QBQ! The Question Behind the Question

by John G. Miller

Executive Summary

JESSICA BOWMAN



If you only read one book this year, make it this one.

QBQ! The Question Behind the Question by John G. Miller is a quick and easy read, but there are some extremely powerful takeaways that will undoubtedly stick with you for years.

Miller tells the story, “I wanted to buy coffee at a gas station convenience store, but the pot was empty. I told the person behind the counter...he then pointed at a co-worker and said ‘coffee is her department!’”

Sound familiar? We’ve all been there! There’s certainly no shortage of people willing to shirk responsibility in any way possible to avoid being blamed or called out.

People have a tendency to blame others for their personal and professional issues. In *QBQ*, Miller shares what to really ask yourself in order to eliminate blame, complaining, and procrastination from your life. *The Question Behind the Question* is all about personal accountability—taking responsibility for one’s actions, problems, and feelings instead of blaming others, and shifting your thinking, so that instead of asking “why me?” or “why don’t other people work harder?”, you start asking the right questions, like “how can I help?” and “what can I do differently?”

Miller tells another story of a different employee. After waiting for a long time at a diner and not being served, a dishwasher stopped by Miller’s table and asked him if he needed help. He took Miller’s order and, when Miller asked for a Diet Coke, the dishwasher asked, “is Diet Pepsi okay?” Miller said he would rather have water instead. Minutes later, the dishwasher reappeared with an icy bottle of Diet Coke. He sent the manager of the diner to a nearby gas station to fetch it for him! With that kind of above and beyond attitude, it’s no surprise that he was quickly promoted from washing dishes into management himself.

QBQ: The Question Behind the Question explores how freeing it can be when you realize, “I can only change me.” Once you begin to ask the right questions and take ownership and accountability for your life, only then are you free to live a life that’s truly yours. You can’t change how others feel or react. You can’t change what’s happened to you in your past or what your circumstances are. But you can control how you respond.

You can only change you.

FOSTER TRUE ACCOUNTABILITY

HOW TO OPEN YOURSELF UP TO THE KIND OF
RELATIONSHIPS THAT WILL CHANGE YOU FOR THE BETTER.

RUTH SOUKUP

When it comes to my inner circle of friends, I tend to favor depth over breadth. I'm definitely NOT a social butterfly—I'm an introvert at heart, and while I've managed to overcome a lot of my social anxiety, it's always right there beneath the surface whenever I find myself meeting new people for the first time.

But I always know when I've found someone who is “my people,” as I like to say.

The thing is, my closest friends are the ones with whom I can always be brutally real—honest and vulnerable—the ones with whom I never worry about being judged, and the ones who are never afraid to go deep.

And within the last few years, I've been fortunate to add three new people to that very exclusive list—Gry, Susie, and Laura.

These three women, each smart and funny and real, make up my “Truth Club.” They are the ones who cheer me on and hold me accountable, who aren't afraid to tell me I'm wrong, but who also let me know when I'm on the right track. They make me laugh. They make me cry. And they always, always, always keep it real. There's no pretense, no posturing, no bull—nothing but truth, vulnerability, and authenticity.

We've committed to get together in person every few months for 3 days of masterminding, and we've also committed to meeting via conference call once a month, just to check in and hold each other accountable. We text back and forth on a regular basis, sometimes to give encouragement, sometimes to ask advice, but always to offer support.

But here's the thing—I don't think that I'm the only one who can or should have a circle of friends like this! And believe it or not, putting this kind of accountability in place is more doable than it might seem.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

I've heard it said that as humans, we are the sum of the five people we spend the most time with. And while that might be overstating it just a little, the reality is that our friendships and relationships have a huge impact on the way we live our lives, whether we realize it or not.

The pressure to fit in and conform starts young, and never really goes away. We dress a certain way, talk a certain way, participate in certain activities, watch certain TV shows, eat certain foods, cheer for certain sports teams, like certain celebrities, drive certain vehicles, vote a certain way, shop at certain stores, read certain books, and discuss certain topics because the people around us—the circle we've surrounded ourselves with—are doing the same thing.

And there's nothing wrong with that, per se, as long as you are sure that the set of norms you are conforming to—consciously or not—are the norms that you actually want to be conforming to.

If you work in an office where people tend to be negative and unmotivated, or where the culture includes a lot of complaining and gossip, you'll probably, at some point, find yourself stepping into that mode too. If the women at the gym you go to look more like they are ready for the runway than the treadmill, you might start putting a little more effort into your workout wear too. If everyone at your church speaks in "Christianese," you'll probably start speaking it too—often without even realizing it. If the friends you spend the most time with drink a lot of beer, drive big trucks, and watch a lot of football, then you probably will too.

And if the people you surround yourself with don't operate with a growth mindset—if they aren't interested in pushing past their comfort zones or trying new things or setting big goals—then it can be really hard to find

the motivation to do that in your own life, at least on an ongoing basis.

So what's the solution? Should you ditch all your friends in favor of better ones? Do you leave your spouse and family members behind? How do you create a new culture of growth around yourself, when you still have to live your life among the old culture? How do you break free from the social norms that may be holding you back without burning all those bridges?

FIND YOUR TRIBE

If you have realized that the social norms of your current circle might be holding you back from exploring your full potential, or perhaps keeping you stuck in a pattern that you don't want to be stuck in anymore, then it might be time to expand your circle.





I promise you that there are people out there in the world who are YOUR people—ones with whom you will feel a strong connection, the ones with whom you can be real and authentic, the ones who will push you to be better, and who won't be afraid to hold you accountable when you need it. There are people waiting for someone just like you to brighten and enrich their lives in the same way they will be able to brighten and enrich yours.

But YOU will have to find them.

It will probably mean stepping outside the comfort zone of the people that you already know and associate with in order to make new friends. It might mean reaching out to someone you don't know well, but perhaps a person you've admired or looked up to from afar. It might mean trying new activities—perhaps taking a class, attending a conference, connecting in a Facebook group or online forum, joining a book club or the Chamber of Commerce or maybe even Toastmasters.

I know that all of that can feel a little scary at first, especially if you've lived your whole life within the same small circle. But I promise it does get easier with time. And what's more, is that once you open yourself up to the possibility of meeting and making new friends, you will be amazed at how the right people start to show up in your life.

FOSTER REAL ACCOUNTABILITY

But what then? What do you do once you've found your people? How do you deepen those relationships, create meaningful dialogue, and foster real accountability? How do you actually form your own Truth Club?

It starts by finding at least one trustworthy person that will be able to provide the accountability and support you are looking for, and who is open to receiving that same sort of accountability and support in return. You might even want to create this sort of relationship with multiple people, for different areas of your life. For instance, you might want someone to hold you accountable from a business standpoint, but you might also want accountability for losing weight, being a better parent, or deepening your faith or spiritual life.

Just keep in mind that the key to making an accountability partnership—whether it be a single person or a group—is finding people who are just as committed to the idea as you are, people who are operating from a growth mindset and

6 TIPS FOR FOSTERING ACCOUNTABILITY

1

DARE TO BE VULNERABLE

Accountability doesn't work if you are on the defensive, or if you are trying to present a version of yourself to the world that might not be representative of the way that you are feeling inside. And while that might still be the armor you present to the world at large, that shield needs to come down with the people you are trusting to hold you accountable.

Keep in mind too, that it is especially easy to get defensive or to want to protect yourself or hide behind your mask when you are feeling stressed out or emotional or exhausted. Those are the times that accountability will feel the most scary, because even the gentlest feedback can feel like harsh criticism.

Good accountability partners will be able to see, at least eventually, when you are putting up that armor or hiding behind your normal defenses, and, if they are doing their job, they will encourage you to push past that instinct and get to the heart of the matter.

4

BE INTENTIONAL WITH YOUR TIME

It's easy to get off track, as well as to avoid tough conversations, so to make the most of your accountability time, be sure to set some intentions at the beginning. What is it that you most want to get out of your time together? What are you struggling with that you would like help thinking through? Where do you need to be pushed? Where do you need to be encouraged?

Asking these types of questions helps set the tone, strip away pretense from the beginning, and really open up the conversation.

5

CHECK IN REGULARLY

For most of us, life can get pretty busy sometimes, and when things get crazy, it is almost always our relationships that suffer. So how will you make this accountability partnership a priority? You could set up a recurring appointment in your schedule, or make a point of checking in once a week or once a month—whatever feels right.

My friend Bonnie and I always set our next lunch date before we say goodbye, because we know that if we don't, it will be months before it happens again. Likewise, with my Truth Club, we set a regular date and time for our monthly calls, and scheduled our 3-day masterminds a year in advance to make sure they are blocked out on everyone's schedule.

2

SET SOME GROUND RULES

Not every accountability partnership needs to be some formalized thing, but it is not a bad idea to establish some ground rules to make sure that everyone is on the same page, and comfortable with pushing back, or with being pushed.



Ground rules for your Truth Club might include maintaining confidentiality, (which should go without saying, but sometimes it does need to be said), as well as things like when it is okay to give feedback and when it is just time to listen. Your ground rules might also include words or phrases to avoid, or perhaps even preferred methods of communication.



3

GET CLEAR ABOUT YOUR GOALS

It's pretty hard to provide accountability if there aren't any goals or objectives to hold someone accountable to, so make sure the members of your Truth Club are very clear about sharing their goals, and that you are diligent about keeping track of not only your own goals, but your accountability partners' goals as well.



This might mean restating your goals whenever you meet, or perhaps posting them someplace where you all have access—a shared Google Doc, Dropbox folder, or even a text thread.

6

ASK QUESTIONS & PUSH BACK



The most important part of accountability is actually being able and willing to ask thoughtful and probing questions, and to push back when necessary. This might mean calling someone out when they act in a way that is not in sync with their goals or beliefs. Or it might mean pushing someone forward when you see that their own limiting beliefs are holding them back.

This is the part where accountability can get uncomfortable, because it's the place where we move out of our comfort zone and into uncharted territory. And that's a little scary, but it is also the point. Because everyone needs accountability.



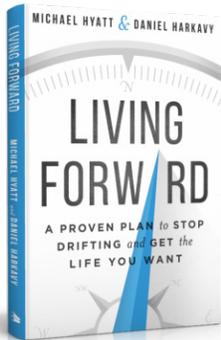
genuinely want to see the same type of change and transformation happen in their own lives that you are looking to create in yours.

So go form your Truth Club. Start by understanding that you are the sum of the people you spend the most time with, and that **WHO YOU SURROUND YOURSELF WITH IS WHO YOU WILL BECOME.**

Second, do what it takes to discover your tribe, and then consciously surround yourself with the people who will make you better and inspire you to take action. Put it out there into the universe that these sort of relationships are the ones you are looking for. It might just be the most important thing you ever do.

And then finally, once you have found your people, get intentional about fostering that accountability. Be honest and vulnerable, and perhaps even set some ground rules if you have to, but make accountability a real part of your life everyday.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



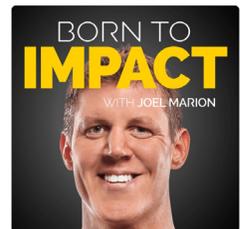
LIVING FORWARD BY MICHAEL HYATT, DANIEL HARKAVY
AVAILABLE AT AMAZON AND MAJOR RETAILERS

Each of us has but one life to live on this earth. What we do with it is our choice. What if we lived each day as though it were part of a bigger picture, a plan? That's what New York Times bestselling author Michael Hyatt and executive coach Daniel Harkavy show us how to do: to design a life with the end in mind, determining in advance the outcomes we desire and path to get there. In this step-by-step guide, they share proven principles that help readers create a simple but effective life plan so that they can get from where they are now to where they really want to be—in every area of life.

BORN TO IMPACT WITH JOEL MARION PODCAST:

AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY, ITUNES AND ALL OTHER PLATFORMS

Born to Impact is the one and only podcast specifically designed to move you further towards living the life you were born to live. Hosted by bestselling author and serial entrepreneur, Joel Marion, the goal of every Born to Impact episode is to give you clear and actionable steps—not fluff, but real, practical takeaways—to help you live a more impactful life... A life of purpose... A life where you're making a difference in your family, in your relationships, in your career, and in the world around you.



EPISODE 13 ON THE DO IT SCARED™ PODCAST:

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST AT DOITSCARED.COM

Tune into this episode to learn more about the steps for creating your truth club, how to create deep and meaningful relationships once you find your people, the role of accountability groups, how to foster accountability in your new relationships or partnerships, and much more!

STIKK APP:

INSTALL THE APP IS AVAILABLE FOR BOTH APPLE AND ANDROID USERS

Set your goals. Add incentives. End procrastination. stickK is the world's most powerful goal-setting platform created by behavioral economists from Yale University. Designed to help you achieve your goals, stickK leverages the power of incentives and loss aversion to your advantage. So whether you're the everyday slacker trying to get your life in order, the casual smoker who is looking to quit once and for all, or a passionate dreamer who has trouble materializing projects – stickK is the best social accountability tool to help you stick(K) to your word, regardless of the goal!



THE AGONY OF LETTING GO

SOMETIMES AS PARENTS WE NEED
ACCOUNTABILITY TOO.

RUTH SOUKUP

Last June, for the second year in a row, my husband Chuck and I sent our kids off to summer camp—Camp Firwood, to be exact.

It's the same camp I went to as a kid, the place where memories are made.

One whole week of sleeping in open-air cabins with no electricity. A week of swimming and games, rock climbing and archery and sailing and survival skills, arts & crafts and drama, campfires and s'mores....the classic American childhood experience.

And because it was our second year we knew a little more about what to expect, which made it a whole lot easier. But can I just tell you? Last year, as we were about to hand off our precious children to some strange counselor who looked no more than 14 years old, I was a complete WRECK.

After all, when we first signed up, somewhere in mid-winter, it seemed like such a good idea. A week of good old-fashioned wholesome fun for the kids, and a quiet, relaxing week off for mom and dad. We'd be able to go out on dates every night, sleep in every morning, or maybe even sneak off for a little getaway. It was going to be amazing!

But the moment we pulled into camp that first Sunday, in one terrifying instant, it occurred to me that there is SO much they don't know! I was suddenly painfully aware of all the things I haven't taught my kids about

how to take care of themselves, and how woefully UN-self-sufficient they are.

How would they possibly survive a week on their own, with no parent around to tell them to eat their vegetables, or to brush their teeth before bedtime, to change their underwear and hang up their towel so it doesn't get gross, or to keep track of all their stuff?

And while the kids seemed completely fine and not at all bothered by the prospect of a week without us, Chuck and I reluctantly drove away with pits in our stomachs and proceeded to spend the entire week missing our kids and getting absolutely nothing done.

For six days, we spent our time nervously pacing around the house, anxiously wondering whether they are okay. And, like drug addicts looking for a fix, we'd refresh the camper photo page fifty times a day, hoping they'll have posted a few new pictures and we might catch a glimpse of one of our girls.

It was the agony of letting go.

After several long days and sleepless nights, I finally called my dear friend and accountability partner Edie, figuring, as a mom and stepmom to 9 kids, she'd have some wise words of advice.

And of course, she did.

She said, "it never gets any easier, you know, sending them off into the world. Every time they do something

new, whether it be going off to camp or high school or college, you just hope and pray that you've done a good enough job. It's always a little bit terrifying, but those little tests make you realize just how important it is to prepare them for life without you."

And of course, she was right.

In between our frantic website refreshes, Chuck and I had some great conversations about the things we want to teach our kids about life and the world. It forced us to see, with a lot more clarity, all the room for improvement, and I would like to think that in the year since that first year at camp, we have been a lot more intentional about teaching them personal responsibility, and giving them the freedom to make mistakes.

I guess a little distance always brings perspective.

But man, I really miss them when they are gone!

Ann Landers once said, "it's not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings." Along those lines, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote, "there are two things children should get from their parents: roots and wings."

In other words, **the hardest part of being a parent isn't holding on, it's letting go.**

Our kids need us to be there for them, but they also need us to prepare them for life without them. They need to learn self-sufficiency and the value of hard work, how to navigate interpersonal relationships, how to try new things, and yes, sometimes even get hurt or fail.

And as parents, it is downright painful to watch sometimes. When we picked up the girls last year, we discovered that almost every single thing we feared happening had actually happened! They lost their stuff. They got lost and didn't know where to go. They never showered. They didn't change their underwear. They ate way too much candy. They got homesick and had times where they felt left out. They were scared to walk to the bathrooms at night. They fell and scraped their knees. And they came back SO DIRTY!

They also had the BEST time ever, and from the moment we picked them up, they only talked about how soon they could go back.

Because truthfully, the alternative—kids who never learn to thrive on their own—is so much worse.

And so, the challenge, if you are a parent, is to (at least once in a while) loosen up the reins just a little, and look for ways to let your kids do things for themselves. If they are still little, this could mean letting them feed or dress themselves, without stepping in to take over. If your kids are a little older, this might mean letting them cook or walk to the store or stay home on their own. Those little opportunities to foster independence happen every single day. We just have to look for them.

Of course, for now, I'm just glad to have them safely back once again!

“**Being part of this community, it’s really beautiful. You never know who is right behind the other screen.**”



Danielle & Linda

do^{ing} it scared

story of the month

“We normally just laugh the entire call... and maybe cry a little.”

Danielle and Linda, are accountability partners.

If we ask you right now, who in your life cares for you? For your goals and your dreams? Who is constantly checking in on you and providing support and encouragement? Who is ready to push you to keep moving?

Does someone come to mind? Or does no one fit the bill?

If you're in the camp of not having anyone that fits the description above, then let us remind you that there are people like that! And, it's easier than you think to find them.

The thing is, something magical happens when you bring together two people with the same goals and the same ambition, equally ready to give encouragement as well as tough love.

Having an accountability partner was, honestly, a really strange concept for both of us. The first time we ever heard of this concept was when we, by weird and completely different reasons, joined the Doing it Scared community.

Everyone was in search of an accountability partner, and we can both agree now that we were terrified to start talking to some stranger about our hopes and dreams. It just felt weird.

I (Danielle) kept reading all the different posts of people looking for partners, but I never had enough nerve to

answer any of the posts. I thought to myself “what if I'm not what they're looking for” I WAS SO SCARED. As the days went by and I kept reading about all the accountability partners being made, I thought to myself, that maybe, having one would be great for me, as I found myself going nowhere and fast.

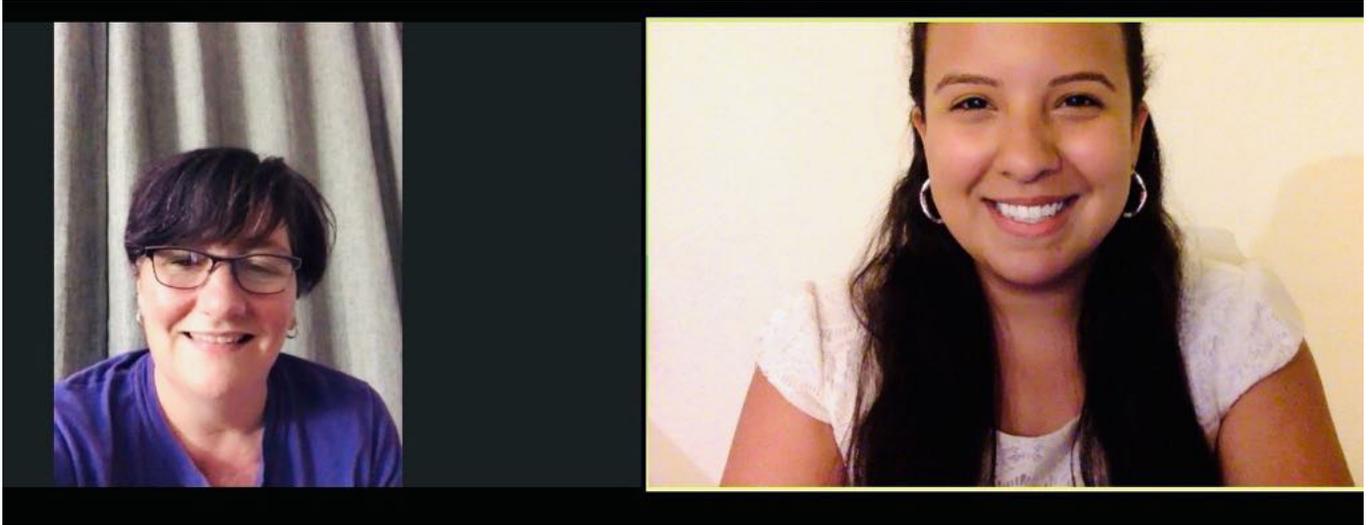
So, I finally did it scared and posted the results of my Fear Assessment in the group. Very quickly I received a response!! She asked if she could contact me on Facebook Messenger.

We talked for a few minutes and decided we would be a good fit for each other. We set up a Skype call and we hit it off right away! She has become a great accountability partner for me!

For me (Linda) taking the Fear Assessment was an eye-opener. I was a complete hot mess, letting my procrastinator side get bigger and bigger every day. Until that day, when I got a 97% score on my test. I got worried. This was getting out of hand.

I started looking for someone in the community that was all the things I wasn't, and when I saw her results, I thought to myself, BINGO! I have her weaknesses as my top strengths, she has her strengths as my top weaknesses.

After a couple of months together, we can now say that having an accountability partner is a game changer. We both live in different countries, speak different languages, one is married and has kids, the other is single, we have a considerable age difference, we couldn't be further from each other.



Yet we have found in this interesting relationship, a friend.

Someone who won't judge you, someone who believes in you and someone who is just there. There to talk about those things you don't really talk about with anyone else.

Sometimes it feels like a mirror. If one feels scared, so does the other. If one feels overwhelmed, so does the other. If one feels like throwing in the towel, yep, you guessed it, so does the other.

We can honestly say that doing this and trying to move just a little step further, every day or every week, to that big BIG goal, it's all about GRACE.

We give each other grace all the time. Grace when we don't know what to say. Grace when we don't know how to fix our mistakes, when we don't have time to do the things we are supposed to do... grace, grace, grace. All the time. Mixed with little pushes here and there. A little pressure just so we don't stop moving. We support and encourage and empower each other as much as we can.

Being part of this community, it's really beautiful. You never know who is right behind the other screen.

We encourage you to give it a shot and try. You might just end up finding that person that checks in on you, that cares for you and that helps you move forward in your biggest projects.

And, best of all, you might just find a friend.

Danielle & Linda.

Accountability Partners & Friends



ACCOUNTABILITY

BREEDS

RESPONSE-

ABILITY

- STEPHEN COVEY

WE ASKED, YOU ANSWERED

WHEN IT COMES TO HOLDING YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE, WHAT DO YOU DO TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS?



JENNIFER ROSKAMP

“I have a money saving community. It’s called Thriving on a Dime and it’s where we come together and I teach lessons and skills, but it’s more than that. I’ve discovered after almost two years of doing this, that the beauty of the community aspect comes in when we band together and say, “Hey, this is what I’m struggling with.” Or, “Hey, this is what I found works for me.” And it’s really being there for each other and really realizing how much we all have to learn from each other. And being able to do that together and bringing people together has been so amazing! To see the difference that people have made in their lives just by learning some pretty basic skills, and having the courage to

actually follow them through, having the self-confidence that they’re actually on the right track, is nothing short of inspiring.”



Kate Ahl

“In our church- community circle, we have this thing called “checking in”, where you just check in using sometimes, just one word, like encourage, sad, angry, whatever you want to use to describe it. We “check in”, and they’re not in the online world—one is a mom, one is a corporate executive at Nike—and so I’ll text them and say, “I’m checking in discouraged today. I just feel x, y, z. Could you just pray for me?”—One gal is a new mom. She’s like, “I’m so exhausted, and I’m checking in completely sleep deprived. Will you just pray that I get five hours of sleep?”

It’s just a text. It’s really quick and easy, but you know that somebody is there receiving what you have to say and really taking it in.

The “checking in” system works for me because it doesn’t take a ton of time. It’s not a phone call, and sometimes we don’t have time for a phone call, but being able to just check in and say, “How are you today? Give me one word.” That’s it.”



Carla Moore

“You have to tell yourself the truth about yourself. You have to own who you are and the actions you have taken. And you need to journal about your journey, and then visualize where you want to be and want you want to accomplish.”



Gretchen Rubin

“So if you are struggling or something isn’t working for you, try a different way, because there’s a lot of ways to achieve our aims. Do you need outer accountability? Do you need choice and freedom? Once you know the problem you are facing you can then try to work on a solution that will work for you and your personality. You want to make it more convenient to do this thing. And less convenient not to do it. You want to pair it with something that you really enjoy.”



Laura Belgray

“Be friends with people who, or have exposure to people who, are scared of the same things that you are, who will say, “What are you so afraid of? “ “What’s the worst that could happen? Get over it.”

FINDING YOUR IDEAL ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

Having an accountability partner is key when trying to stay motivated to keep up with your goals. After you have taken the Fear Assessment and figured out what your Fear Archetype is, take some time to see who your most ideal accountability partner may be!

FEAR ARCHETYPE	IDEAL ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER
 <p>THE SELF-DOUBTER</p> <p>Primary fear: Struggles most with the fear of not being capable, which often manifests itself as deep feelings of insecurity and fear of not being good enough.</p>	 <p>THE EXCUSE MAKER: Good team player and excellent cheerleader</p>  <p>PESSIMIST: Tend to be caring and compassionate and possess a high level of empathy.</p>
 <p>THE EXCUSE MAKER</p> <p>Primary Fear: Struggles most with the fear of taking responsibility, which can manifest itself as the fear of being held accountable, or the fear of being blamed</p>	 <p>THE SELF-DOUBTER: Goes above and beyond to do a good job and is a hard worker.</p>  <p>THE OUTCAST: Self-motivated and driven to succeed and willing to take risks.</p>
 <p>PESSIMIST</p> <p>Primary Fear: Struggles most with the fear of adversity, which can manifest itself as the fear of experiencing hardships and difficulties or the fear of pain.</p>	 <p>SELF- DOUBTER: They are good listeners, kind and empathetic. They are also very hard workers and will go above and beyond to do a good job.</p>  <p>RULE FOLLOWER: Extremely trustworthy and responsible, loyal and can be counted on to look out for other people.</p>  <p>PROCRASTINATOR: Tends to be very well organized and gives great attention to detail</p>

FEAR ARCHETYPE

IDEAL ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER



PROCRASTINATOR

Primary fear: Struggles most with fear of making a mistake which often manifests itself as perfectionism and the fear of commitment.



OUTCAST: Persistent and willing to take risks and not easily discouraged by failure



PESSIMIST: Tends to be caring and compassionate, possess a lot of empathy for others. They are typically quite social, good listeners, and can also be thoughtful and reflective



THE RULE FOLLOWER

Primary Fear: Struggles most with an outsized fear of authority which often manifests itself as an irrational aversion to breaking the rules or doing something that is perceived as “not allowed”



THE EXCUSE MAKER: Team player and cheerleader, keen observer who learns from others’ successes and mistakes



OUTCAST: Willing to take risks and not easily discouraged by failure



THE PEOPLE PLEASER

Primary Fear: Struggles most with the fear of being judged, which also manifests itself as the fear of letting people down and the fear of what other people might say



OUTCAST: Self-motivated and driven to succeed and willing to take risks



THE EXCUSE MAKER: Good team player and excellent cheerleader.



THE OUTCAST

Primary Fear: Struggles most with the fear of rejection, or a fear of trusting other people - a fear that often manifests itself by rejecting others before one has the chance to be rejected.



RULE FOLLOWER: Extremely trustworthy and responsible, loyal and can be counted on to look out for other people.



PEOPLE PLEASER: They are usually the nicest, most thoughtful, generous and caring people around. They are also very considerate and go out of their way to help.



PROCRASTINATOR: focused, driven, and diligent. They possess strong work ethic and are very trustworthy.

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER CHECK IN

Check in date: _____

What is **my** Fear Archetype?

What is **my partners** Fear Archetype?

What did my partner and I **discuss**?

What is it I want to be **held accountable** for?

What do I commit to **holding my partner accountable** to?