



The Leader's Triad: Responsibility, Accountability, Authority

Responsibility, authority, and accountability (or influence) are interconnected and interdependent. The best leaders understand these eternal attributes are inseparable from their unique and inspirational roles. They know their core values, their character, and the position they hold are the same. In all they do, they are genuine and authentic.

Leaders have the duty, indeed the **responsibility** to develop their teams to become better than the best they ever knew. That's how we evolve together and move forward. That's how we tackle the complex problems of tomorrow, and innovate beyond the imagination of today. We are responsible to ourselves to do what's right; we are responsible to our teams to lead them with integrity; and we are responsible to our organizations to achieve our shared vision together.

Leaders have ultimate **accountability** for the people under their charge and for accomplishing their mission. When the team succeeds, the leader downplays their contributions and is satisfied only when teammates are recognized publicly for their superior efforts. When any member of the team stumbles or fails in a well-intentioned effort, the leader rapidly takes the blame. The team wins together, but only the leader fails.

Authority (or influence) is not a position, title, or office. It's not about giving orders. Leaders can, but that's ineffective and short sighted. Authority is the mandate to inspire and empower people and teams to exceed their potential and expectations. To elevate empathy, respect, and trust. To listen, learn, and create impact for others. Authority means inspiring people to lead meaningful change that lasts. It means serving those whom we lead, and in all things putting our people first. It means sustaining a culture of excellence. Borrowing from Thomas Jefferson, great leaders' authority is for their people.

One person, one leader, can make a tremendous difference for every team and generate untold positive impact for others. However, what a team can accomplish together will always be more important than what anyone can do alone. The best leaders know this, and they serve tirelessly as catalysts for their teams by mobilizing their collective intuition, heart, spirit, and courage toward the team's shared vision.