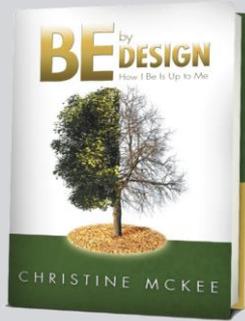


BE Institute Radio 9th August 2013

'Being an Accountable Leader: A Discussion with Rob D'Alessio'



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Announcer: It's time to devote the next hour to yourself and strap yourself in for a fun, down to earth, enthusiastic, compassionate, easy to understand discussion on the unlimited ways you can be all that you want to be. This is BE Institute Radio with Christine McKee on TogiNet Radio. Christine is your tour guide for the duration of the show for your personal, professional and spiritual journey. Christine is dedicated and passionate about creating the space for deeper self-awareness and self-knowing.

Today and each week, we'll have lively and open discussions and interviews, share stories and case studies, and hear from experts on the topic of the week. We want to hear from you too, so call in and share your story and receive my coaching. This is BE Institute Radio. Your host on today's journey is registered psychologist, author and sought-after speaker, Christine McKee.

Christine: Good morning, everyone from wherever you're listening in from. Welcome to this week's Be Institute Radio show where I'm delighted to be sharing the air today with the very wonderful Rob D'Alessio. He's a really passionate, motivated, dynamic manager and leader. He works within a predominant airline within Australia at Australia's largest airport and he's going to be joining me in just a moment's time from Sydney, here in Australia.

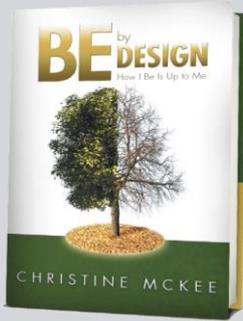
It's going to be an awesome discussion because Rob and I will be sharing lots of ideas, examples, strategies and tools on accountable leadership, and ensuring that people are fully empowered to reach their full potential whilst delivering on really important business outcomes. I think, in the busyness of the business world today, it's so vital for leaders and their teams to be fully empowered and fully accountable in the choices that they make when they're in the workplace.

Now having spent the past 12 years working in the airline industry, Rob's been involved in every facet of airport operations, from direct front line management of large teams of direct employees and also managing an array of suppliers. He designs day-to-day process and systems back of house. He's very, very good at his long-term strategic planning and managing large portfolios to business improvement projects as well. His experience, commitment, his people focus has resulted in Rob being a really fantastic mentor within his business as well, and he's a highly respected leader.

So let's make the most of this time we've got with Rob D'Alessio. Hi, Rob, fab to have you with us today.

Rob: Hi, Chris, what an introduction. Thank you. I was a little bit humbled by that, but great to be here.

Christine: Well you deserve every moment of that. You're just such a wonderful leader and I've thoroughly enjoyed working alongside you for some time as well, but before we get into all of that, can you share a little,



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Rob, with the listeners about your story of how you've come to be the leader that you are?

Rob: Yeah, sure. I guess my partner would say I'm bossy by nature, so she would say I was always destined to be a leader or a manager, but I guess in all seriousness about the way my history's evolved is, I guess I've always fallen into leadership roles throughout my childhood and throughout my early years where I sort of always ended up being the person that got picked for the sporting captain or the school captain.

I didn't really know that I wanted to get into this thing called leadership until I guess early in my career, I found that I was kind of a jack of all trades and I worked in lots of industries and jobs, and I found out that no matter where I ended up, I always ended up being the guy that wanted to improve things, whether it be through ... for the customer or for what we were trying to achieve for the business or just for the team.

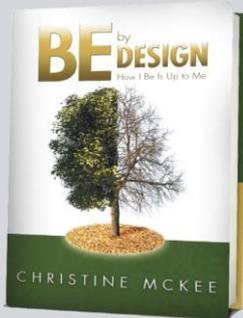
So I kind of naturally gravitated toward leadership. It kind of dawned on me that was where I wanted to spend my time in the future. Then I guess with that in mind, I said I'm going to try to be the best leader I can be and I thought at the time, that felt like going and getting some education, so I went away and did an MBA or Master of Business, and I did that part time.

As I was going through, I was progressively taking on more responsibility at work, but also doing this MBA part time, which was great because it really allowed me to talk to other leaders out in the community and see what challenges they were facing and to grab the theory and really apply it in reality as I was going through roles.

So that was excellent. I guess the last thing that probably really helped me, helped shape me as a leader to this point is, as you said, I've been with my current employer for 12 years and I think I have the record for the most roles with that employer, which has been excellent because ... more through default than by design, but I've really tried to grab these opportunities and as I've gone through, each time I had to take on a new team, and of course had to take on a new leader as I've gone through, so I've really been able to hone my own leadership skills, but also learn very quickly what kind of leader that I would want to work for, and also the leader that I wouldn't want to work for, and that's really helped me on my journey about becoming a leader on my own.

Christine: Absolutely. One of the things that ... For obvious reasons, Rob and I have been ... well, I was fortunate for myself to be able to work alongside each other with his current employer over the last about eight months or so in the accountability space and in empowering both Rob and his team to be able to really explore the full capability of their skills, and Rob, certainly one of the things that stands out for you as a leader, from my perspective, is your absolute passion for the people to be the best they can be. Why is that important for you as a leader?

Rob: I guess there's a couple of reasons why it's really important. For me, and part of the reason why I got into this leadership thing as well, I've always had this innate desire to create something special in the world, I suppose, be



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it for our customers or for our staff, and I think that, for me, was a natural predisposition of mine. It's important to me as it is, but equally, if we are trying to create something special for our customers, it's so important that our staff feel special, that they echo their work in a special place, and I think people spend so much time at work as well that for me, something as deeply satisfying as being able to really impact people's lives in a meaningful way by creating a special place for them to work.

I think all that ties into the topic of the day today, because getting these elements right really helps to make people more satisfied in their jobs.

Christine: Yeah, absolutely. For our listeners out there, our real main focus today is on accountable leadership versus just rocking up to work and being the best leader you can be. It's about true accountability and true empowerment, true fulfilling scope of role, whilst bringing other people and encouraging other people to be able to do the same.

So from your perspective, what does genuine accountability mean to you as a leader, Rob?

Rob: Yeah, I think accountability is quite simple. For me, it's really about each individual in the team really owning the things that they need to be responsible for in order for the whole team to perform, so giving each person something that is realistic and meaningful to achieve, that contributes to the greater good, making sure they're really clear that they own that, having full ownership of that, and then recognizing their performance, good or bad. To me, that is true accountability.

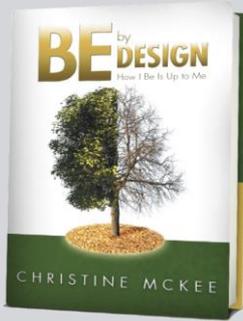
Christine: And people having the courage to be able to do that, and trusting that they can fulfill that without having any kind of long-term negative consequence I think is really important because I know one of the things you and I have spoken about before is that accountability and that word 'consequences' that you just raised there is one of probably the most overused set of terms used inside business, and largely not seen in a positive light.

Rob: Absolutely.

Christine: Yeah, and we've noticed that when we've worked alongside your teams, but what have you done specifically to start the process of changing that mindset around what accountability and consequence mean so that your teams actually embrace that and don't come from a space of fear.

Rob: Yeah, absolutely. It's such an important point. When we started down this journey of really trying to embed true accountability throughout our workforce, we knew this was going to be such a powerful thing, and as you and I know, when we first started talking to people about this, we started to use the words together, accountability and consequence, and of course, consequence is a fairly heavy word. If we're not careful, that can come across as being threatening or a word that's associated with fear.

So I think really, for me, it was about helping people understand that consequence is actually about outcome. Consequence doesn't have to be



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negative. It can be a positive outcome or a negative outcome, depending on where we are, but it's about saying you've got this accountability and there's going to be an outcome that comes with that, or a consequence, and 95% of the time, it's going to be a positive outcome.

Our intention here is to try and get you to a place where you've got some bestowed responsibility, you've got something meaningful and realistic to achieve, and then we want you to perform; then we want to be able to recognize you for it, because that will make us feel good and you feel good.

But of course, there has to be, and when you couch it in those terms, everybody accepts, and in fact everybody wants, there to be some ... they don't want it to just be all carrot. They want there to be some stick as well because if you don't have the stick, then you inevitably have 95% of the people doing the right thing carrying the 5% of people doing the wrong thing.

So I think when you talk it through with people, they begin to understand and they really buy into this notion of 'yes, we all do need to own something, yes, that is actually good for us and it's satisfying' and I'd be more satisfied if we made sure that if there are people not taking up their accountability, then we are, in a fair, equitable supportive way, that we're addressing that.

Christine: Absolutely, and I think most people don't turn up to an employer as that necessarily being their first place they've ever come from. We all, as you know and certainly by now our listeners will be aware, that we bring our history, our imprinting, our memories with us to every occasion, and if in our previous work lives or our previous, if we're a team member, our previous leader wasn't embracing accountability and consequences in that positive, empowered way that you just shared, sometimes there can be ... it can take a little bit of time for people to start to trust in that new way of being and thinking about accountability, and thinking about when you say carrot and stick, that even when they hear the word stick, that that can actually mean a growth opportunity, a learning, a new skill, a new knowledge that might come their way.

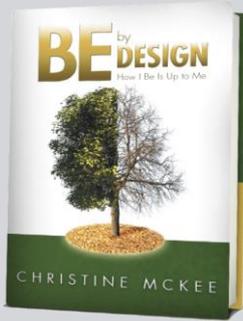
When we come back from our first break, what would be really great is if we can share with the listeners a little more about how to start to cultivate that culture where people feel safe enough to really own their accountability and really actually even be able to say, "Well, what is the full scope of what I'm here to do?" because certainly now, working alongside yourself in your business and every other business, it's not always clear to people. So are you comfy to go down that path when we come back, Rob?

Rob: Sounds great.

Christine: Fantastic. We'll be back in just a few moments after our first break.

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Christine: All right, Rob, so we've spoken a little bit about accountability from your perspective and that it's vital for each team member to own what they can within the scope of what's within their control. Now I'd like to hear a little bit more from you around cultivating that culture where it actually feels safe and secure for people to be able to talk openly about, "Here's what I think I need to contribute. Am I on the money with that? Here's how I'd like to take accountability for that."

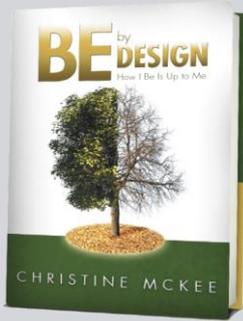
How, currently in your role, are you creating the space where people can genuinely trust that if they take accountability, sometimes they'll be awesome, sometimes they might make some mistakes, that's human. What do you do to make it a safe and trusting environment?

Rob: Yeah, great question. It's such an important piece you touch on. I think first and foremost, we always make sure that we're asking questions and it's absolutely taboo in this process, and the leaders certainly know this ... we've set this up through making sure that each of our leaders throughout the organization has been engaged in extensive dialogue with us before we started down this journey, to be very clear, establishing any cultures about norms and routines and behaviors, and one of the taboos for us is, there is no interrogation without inquiry. There is no judgement just by saying things on the surface or looking at metrics, and that's always tempting to do. We can have a bad day where we don't perform very strongly in one particular area.

It's very tempting for leaders, and I'm sure we've all certainly worked for leaders who have flown off the handle because things haven't gone correctly. What we really make sure we do is, the very first thing that happens is a conversation. We ask a question, we say, "Hey, how'd you feel about yesterday's performance? Was there anything from your perspective that you feel that led to it? What do you think the contributing factors were?"

Quite often, it's actually amazing how often we're surprised by things beyond the individual's control that actually led to the performance in the first place, so where it might have been tempting to go in and criticize the individual, quite often we end up walking away congratulating the individual for making the best of a bad situation.

So it's really important as we go on with this, we get curious right from the outset. We go on with this inquiry mindset. We give people an opportunity to explain their performance, good or bad, and then we decide what action we want to take from there before we determine what should



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happen. Absolute intention has to be, this is about growth. This is about people wanting to do the right thing from the outset. We may end up in a place where there's, after three or four or five or six instances of poor behavior, that were actually individuals, but we might end up in a place where it is actually a case of saying, "You're not performing," but we try and exhaust all avenues before we get there.

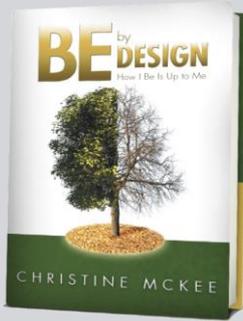
Christine: Yeah, that's fantastic and from what I'm hearing there anyway, that, even in itself, would be a collaborative conversation. I certainly know in my past in doing leadership roles and what not, it's always around, "Look, if you're in my position now where we've had five or six instances, what do you think the fairest outcome is now?" and having that person come to their own conclusion about perhaps where they're at or what might be the best for themselves and the business, so that even in the space of what may be perceived as somewhat of a negative message, a person can own that.

Rob: Absolutely, and we've seen some amazing turnarounds with individuals who we'd, for years before we started this process, almost written people off, to use quite a derogatory phrase, but we kind of got to the place where the leadership team had lost confidence that people in certain roles could actually perform. When we started having these conversations, the individuals themselves identified where it was going and we've seen some of our biggest turnarounds in performance through those individuals ... the light has come on of their own accord and they've really wanted to demonstrate to us how well they can perform. So it's a really powerful process if done the right way.

Christine: Absolutely, and certainly from my experience working alongside people, I find that if people have a sense of purpose and they're feeling that they actually have something meaningful to contribute when they come to work every day, because quite rightly, earlier on, you said that we obviously spend a lot of time in the work space, and when people are given that opportunity to truly contribute, that's where they can blossom and really show. So I think the work that you're doing with your people is absolutely fantastic because it does give them that sense of purpose that maybe they have lost in the past as well.

Rob: Oh, for sure. Yeah, I think fundamentally, we've spoken at length about that, I think fundamentally people want something to achieve and they want to be recognized for it. They want to be given some responsibility and if we can put those few things together, that for me is the most powerful thing we can do in terms of motivating people and making them satisfied in their jobs.

Christine: Yeah, absolutely. I'd love to pick your brain a little bit around what you believe the keys to success are for people on board and into an accountable journey, so from my perspective, and this is obviously something that you and I worked together on, if it doesn't start from the top, it's very unlikely to be grabbed hold of at the shop floor level, if you like. So my belief is that every leader at every level needs to be fully accountable themselves, owning it, willing to take on board those consequences, positive and growth opportunities, demonstrate, live it, walk it, and then teach it to the next layer and the next layer until we get to the shop floor level. I think that that genuine ownership from the top down, for me, is critical for success.



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What's your thoughts on that and your own experience of that?

Rob: Yeah, I think you hit the nail on the head with probably two of the critical ingredients right from the outset. For me, like creating any culture, I think the three main ingredients are education or training, routines, and leadership. You hit the nail on the head where you said, "First and foremost, we need to help people understand why this is important and what's in it for them," and that has to start from the top. If their leaders aren't on board, then they're not going to really believe in it and our employees can see this straight away if we don't. If they're not doing this with conviction, we've failed before we started.

So it's about this education and training at the most senior level, and then it's about embedding the routines and leadership from the outset at that level. I think that's the most important thing to get right because inevitably this will take time to own. People need to get practiced at it and people need to become really confident that when they're teaching it to the next level in the organization, that they can speak with confidence, they believe in the process, and they can answer all the questions that come out.

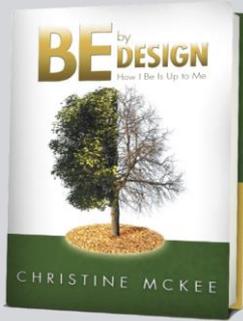
So I think step one of the journey we went on, let's get the most senior leaders signing up to this thing, make sure they're clear on why it's important for them and for others, and get that process started. Then, as we've done, then cascade it. It's the same three things again, train and educate the next level, establish those routines, and then employ the leadership.

Then, just to speak more specifically about those other two ingredients we haven't really touched on a lot of, the second part is routines. I think it's about saying, once people are accountable and they know why it's important and they know what they're accountable for, then it's about saying, how do we embed this as part of our day to day.

Some of the routines we've put in place in our workplace are very regular reporting on people's performance, whether they're reporting it to their leaders or whether we're dropping scorecards into their lap to say, this is how you're going, and then also regular conversations between leaders and their direct reports to say, let's talk about that performance. Here's your opportunity to tell me about it. What are you struggling with? What are your barriers? What can I help you with? Where are you taking this? What are you planning to do to improve the business on your own? So it's that routine element which is really important.

Then I think the third ingredient is the leadership, which is about saying we're going to make sure these routines are done. We're going to make sure we approach this in the right way. We're going to make sure that we reward good performance, and we also talk about sub-optimal performance in a positive way until it gets to the point where we need to do it in a different way. So it's really applying those three things together.

Christine: That sounds fantastic. It's clear. It's something that you can measure yourself on as well. What's your view around ... like I said, for me,



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with accountability, one of the main reasons that people cite not being able to be fully empowered, fully accountable for what they're coming into a workplace to do is, they don't have clarity on what's actually expected.

How do you counteract that, because I know that in your business, it's constantly growing and changing and there's new expectation, and it's dynamic and it's operational, which is similar across a lot of industry, how do you ground it so that people can genuinely feel okay about saying, here's the boundaries within which I need to work and I'm going to own that 100%?

Rob: Yeah, it's a really good question. I think it's a fantastic question. Lots of businesses really struggle with this, and certainly even in our business, for years, we didn't implement anything because what you just described, it was very difficult to get your head around and very complex, or it can be if you allow it to be.

What we've done and I think what needs to be done is, we just developed a very simple scorecard for people. We said, here's what you are clearly accountable for, which we'll call your scorecard. It's a balanced scorecard so it has all the different aspects of the business, because every business has competing tensions or priorities and in our business, we want to control our costs and make sure we're cost efficient, but we also want to deliver good service, and sometimes they're in conflict, but here are the things that within your role, these are the things we think are reasonable to achieve, based on where you sit.

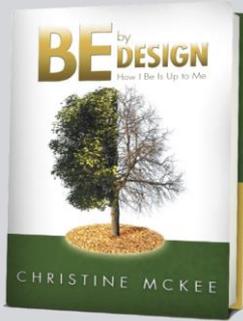
The trick is there, people will say, we can't necessarily measure that particular aspect of how we're going or this particular metric, we can only get a measure for it at a team level, not an individual level, but that's okay. Let's get it down on paper and let's at least spell out what the intent of your role is.

We don't have all the perfect measures to begin with, and in fact, the measures may evolve over time as you described. Businesses change and priorities change, so we might decide to change what we're measuring and what good performance looks like on your scorecard over time; however, as long as we start somewhere and we continually engage in those routines of ongoing dialogue where we continually check in and say, how are you performing, what do you need, what are you able to achieve, not able to achieve, what's changed in terms of priorities ... as long as we're continuing that dialogue, it can evolve and that's okay.

The other thing which we found really powerful is, it doesn't have to be that the scorecard is populated by the business or it's an automated scorecard. We can actually say, hey look, you're accountable for this. Come and tell me every day how you've gone. It can be an honesty system.

Christine: Which I think is fantastic and I think when we come back from the next break, I think if we can talk a little more about how that scorecard can be very collaborative so people can genuinely own their portion of that. But let's talk about that in just a few moments time when we do come back from our second break now.

Rob: Love to.



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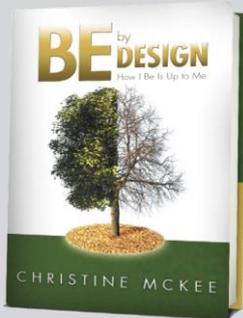
Christine: All right, Rob, we were just talking about those scorecards where they're relatively high level. They're giving people a snapshot of requirement on a daily, and leading into a monthly, basis. Now, for people to be truly accountable, I guess they've got to sign up and say I can do what's on that scorecard. I have a belief that I can actually manage what you're asking me to do there, and I know in the process that you've worked alongside your team in, one of the critical components was saying, here's the high level, but as an individual who needs to perform that on a daily basis, getting people to identify for themselves what their specific action and behavior or attitude would be to be able to achieve what's written down there.

How have you found that process to be and do you feel that people have genuinely taken that on board as a positive and a proactive step?

Rob: Yeah, absolutely. I think it's such an important piece of it you've talked about there in terms of getting people to think about how they're going to achieve it. I think if you just give them a scorecard without really giving them the opportunity to work through that, but it never really sinks in and the temptation is, oh, you're kidding, there's no way I can achieve all that. That looks like it's a big complex scary thing and how am I ever going to get there?

When we actually allow people the time, and particularly if we allow them the time to work it through with their peers so they can collaborate on it, it can be a guided conversation by our leaders, and certainly, Chris, you've been instrumental in some of the workshops that we've had just to help people think about how we can achieve some of these things, but what we've found is, as people started collaborating on one or two of these, that the light bulbs are going off, going, "Oh, you know what? This is something I actually achieve now, I just didn't know it yet. I didn't realize that we were doing it."

Or, that little two-second part of my day, or I can do this little thing differently, will actually enable me to achieve this particular target area, so what we found is that people really got to think about what they were doing when they came to work every day versus what they were doing in the past where they were just kind of showing up, following a combination of their experience, their evolved expectations over time through different



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interactions with leaders, and quite frankly, in a lot of cases, just kind of going with the flow whereas those kind of conversations really help people to be strategic about how they spent their time. Once we started down that journey, people really became confident that they could get there.

The other thing ... I'll just mention this very briefly, and that is it's important to start small. When we first started out with this, what we consciously did was make sure ... it might be 15 things that we want on people's scorecards in the performance of time, but let's not give people 15 from the outset. That would be overwhelming so let's just give them A to start with and then as they build confidence and they establish new routines, then we can lay new things on top.

That's really worked. People are now taking on more and more and they're finding they're able to do that easily without any duress.

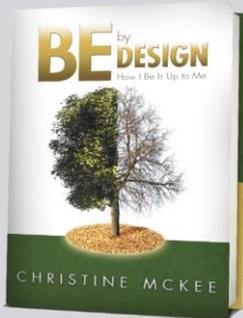
Christine: Yeah, and I doubt it's very much limited to the business that you're in or I've certainly seen it many places that I think we got so caught in our routine of what we believe our roles might be, that we start to do autopilot, habits every day that what we think the role is, but when we stand back, have a moment to pause in that, to create our own scorecards, to know what we're accountable for, it actually frees us up to be able to say, "Oh, I might actually be doing quite a lot of things that aren't in the scope of my role and I'd actually really like to empower somebody else to own those. I'd like the actual real owner of that to really genuinely grab that and run with it," and I think it frees us up a little bit more when we get focused on what it is that we're meant to be doing, instead of our habit of what we actually come to work to do.

What's your thoughts?

Rob: Yes, that's spot on. That's exactly what I was describing. You probably did a better job of describing it than I did, because certainly that's exactly what I meant. I think people can go into autopilot, absolutely, so I think it's creating that initial dissonance through these workshops or giving people the opportunity to talk that through, and work that through initially. Then it's the ongoing dialogue to say, "I had a strategy for how I take up my role," and now through this ongoing dialogue that we regularly engage in between leader and direct report, that allows me to evolve my strategy and refine it as the business priorities change.

Christine: That's excellent. What tips have you got for our listeners because everyone who's tuning in and will download the podcast later at some point in time no doubt have either been a leader or a team member, and in this amazingly busy world that we seem to have created for ourselves, the one thing that I consistently hear across the board from people when we present an opportunity to be fully accountable, take full ownership, know what it is you're coming to work to do and achieve and give meaning to, constantly, if there was to be one level of resistance that comes back, it's, "I don't have time."

Rob: Hmm.



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Christine: What do you do to manage that for yourself as a leader so that you're leading by example in that space? How do you encourage your team to acknowledge that yes, time is something we're all working and managing and prioritizing around, but what do you actually do that our listeners can learn from to push back on that a little bit, to be honest, because everyone's busy?

Rob: Yeah, it's the ultimate hurdle in today's workplace. We're all competing for time, no doubt about it, and certainly when we started on this journey, I think I was one of the first people to say, "Hey, this feels like one of those things that's going to take more of my precious time," but as we got into talking about this and really exploring this, what you actually realize is, you don't have time not to do this.

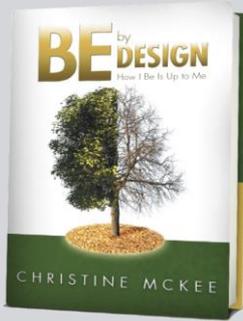
To give that some life or some context, when I took on this current team in the current airport that I'm at, the biggest problem I found was that my direct reports, who were the most senior leaders in the airport, had no time. They were overwhelmed. They're all working incredibly long work weeks. I'm talking 70 or 80 hours a week, and not only were we not performing as an airport overall, we were actually one of their worst performing airports in the network, but the rest of the workforce seemed to be in cruise mode.

We're now in a place, if we fast forward six months, where we've embedded this accountability model, where actually myself and my direct reports actually have some more time to do the things that we need to do, because all we've been able to achieve is distribute our work and distribute the empowerment right throughout our organization, where before we had people not really being clear, "Do I own this particular piece of work? Am I empowered to make this decision? Should I be expert on the thing that I'm involved in every day or is that someone else's job?"

I'll use a very simple example. We have some people who look after specific work areas. You work in an airport, to one of those check in ... those check in supervisors didn't, at the time, think that they were accountable for check in. So they felt like they were just coming to work every day and doing things, but they didn't see themselves as the experts. They didn't see themselves as decision makers in that space, so everything rose to the top.

To bring that to today's role where we've embedded accountability, now the decisions are made directly by them. Now when it comes to making a decision about should we paint this check in counter red or green ... I know that's a really silly example ... we ask them for their input and quite often, we delegate a decision to them. Not only does that make them feel special and they're certainly more satisfied in their jobs, but it means that more senior leaders have time to get on with things, the bigger decisions which are important they're involved in. So I guess, first and foremost, if you don't do this, you're going to have less time, so that's the ultimate for me.

Christine: Absolutely, and I think one of the things that I'd like to raise, more as devil's advocate than anything else, only because I know I've heard it in most of the workshops that we've done is, whilst people are learning to trust this process where you might delegate and ask and make more inquiry



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around what could one of your team members be more accountable for to deliver a result, some of the feedback that we've had, and it's across businesses, is there's a little bit of fear that might sit in some people's hearts and minds around 'is it going to be career limiting for me to push back, for me to say no, for me to say I don't understand, for me to say I'm not sure I've got time to do what you're asking me to do'.

I know that when people think, "Oh, I don't feel safe and confident to go in the room with levels of leadership above myself to ask some of these questions, and to push back," what do you do in your part to overcome that, because that's truly how accountability's going to start, when people can feel safe to talk at any level within the business about what's true for them?

Rob: Yeah, absolutely, I think again, it's all about creating that space of trust in those dialogues we're having between individuals and their direct reports, and when that's distributed throughout the organization, then I think any conversation about what I'm accountable for and whether I can achieve it based on my current constraints or tools or available time, that dialogue is always safe. So we've created that culture then and that will always support that kind of conversation, but you don't turn that on overnight.

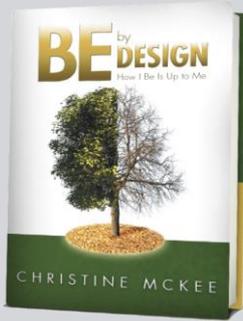
It takes several months of discussion where we allow our people who are accountable for their area to say, "You want me to achieve X, but I can only achieve X if I'm able to have access to this information or if you provide me with certain tools or you're able to empower me to make these decisions."

So that's the kind of dialogue we encourage and it's only after we make mistakes where we're actually talking about that regularly, and we accept, in a lot of cases ... and quite a lot of them we do ... we often have our leaders learn about why their areas aren't performing, as we learn through those conversations what are the barriers to performance, it's only then that we start breaking them down and people feel comfortable talking about them.

Christine: Absolutely, so I know you're excellent in this space. For our listeners to be able to learn from you, what are a couple of the specific things that you know you do that works for you that builds that trust with your people?

Rob: You've stumped me.

Rob: I can normally talk underwater, so well done. I think it's always about resisting that temptation to jump to judgement, is number one, and one of the great things I think you've taught us through your BE By Design philosophies, Chris, is the very first thing, it's really tempting, particularly in a large airport such as mine, we might have had a specific service failure which really upset a particular customer or group of customers, and it's really tempting to see red and to say, "Well, who was involved in that? Whose fault is it?" and so on, but I think if I can give our listeners one tip, is pause and breathe, and that is something you've certainly taught me very well. Think about this and get curious, and start to ask questions about, what are all the things that might have contributed to this and any conversations



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that are held with the people involved are one of positive intent and natural inquiry before all else. I think that would be number one.

Christine: And I think that is such an important one, yeah.

Rob: Yeah, that would be the overarching one, I think. I think tip number two is, be human and be genuine. The very first thing, if I think about the things that I set out to do to make sure that people truly believe that this is a culture of accountability that I buy into, is that when I'm accountable for something and I don't get it right, I put my hand up very publicly, and I'll be the first person to go out to my team and say, "Hey, look, I didn't live up to your expectations of me in this scenario and yet here we are."

Christine: Let's talk about that in just a moment in a little bit more detail.

Rob: Sounds good.

(Music)

Announcer: Christine McKee, psychologist and director of BE Institute, will return after this short break to expand on her philosophy that accountability or transformation begins from within. Stay tuned. We'll be right back.

(Music)

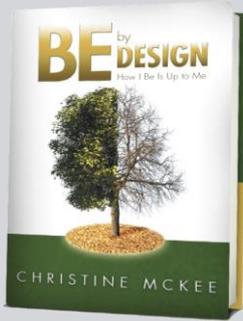
Announcer: Are you where you want to be? Do you know how to get there? BE Institute invites you to join psychologist and host of BE Institute Radio, Christine McKee, at the BE by Design. How I Be Is Up to Me, one-day interactive workshop. You'll learn fun and simple ways to be the active creator of your life experience, and this workshop is ideal for anyone who is looking for their pathway to be who they want to be. In this interactive, hands-on, self-empowering workshop, you will consolidate your skills across the four progressive phases of the BE by Design process: one, awareness; two, focus; three, maximizing potential; and, four, choices.

Here's what others have to say. "I can use all the content in my personal life and work." "Outstanding workshop. Very valuable." "Christine is very personable and very easy to relate to and listen to, keeping it real." "Content was fantastic and informative and everything I'd hoped for." "Content is fabulous. Love the enthusiasm, analogies, humor and including our real-life situations to help us learn." "Thought provoking and easy to understand." "Content and delivery was outstanding. I would attend any future workshops and recommend it highly to others."

To contact Christine visit beinstitute.com.au, and like Christine's page on Facebook for daily empowering posts, www.facebook.com/beinstitute.

(Music)

Announcer: Welcome back to BE Institute Radio with your host, Christine McKee, psychologist, author, creator of BE by Design and director of BE Institute. On today's show, we're learning tips and strategies to help us break free of habits and beliefs that hold us back. Now here with tools to



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help you reconnect with your intuition and empower your own life, host Christine McKee.

Christine: That human aspect that you speak of, Rob, I think is one of the greatest gifts a leader can ever bestow upon their team because it shows genuineness, realness, and for me, one of my favorite, favorite things in terms of being a wonderful leader is showing your vulnerability. I'm wondering, from your perspective, do you see that as a valuable thing to show to your team when you're wanting to be accountable and holding them to account, and what do you think the leverage that might come from being a vulnerable leader ... when I say vulnerable, that means the humanness showing all sides ... what's the value of that?

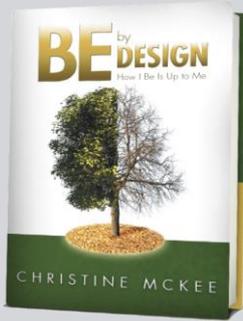
Rob: I think it's enormously valuable. I'm struggling for words here for a second. I think what it does is, it basically says to people, we want this culture of accountability. There's a whole bunch of reasons why that is good for us as a business and it's good for you as individuals, and we really want you to be in that place with us, but it doesn't have to be scary and it's okay sometimes if you make mistakes.

Not everyone brings their best game every day. We see sporting teams that are the best teams occasionally get walloped, have a bad game or they just aren't in form, and that's okay, so I think it is really important that people feel safe, that I don't have to walk around on eggshells. I can be human. As long as I set out to do my best, occasionally I'll fail and that's okay, and my leader is demonstrating that to me because he's telling me regularly, "Hey, look, I didn't quite get it right this time, but I'll try better next time. Here's what I'm doing to fix it."

Christine: Excellent, and for you to cultivate that with your teams, because you're accountable for a lot of people in your network down there in Sydney. How do you make sure you keep that dialogue going where you do have those opportunities to go out and speak with your people and share your own learnings, and say, "Hey, you know what? Didn't get this one today, but here's what we're going to do about it and I want to share with you, here's what that process has been like for me," so people can feel safe with that?

Rob: Yeah, good question. One of the things that I try and hold on to, you'll notice that I say 'routines' a lot throughout the discussion, but I think routines are the bedrock of good leadership, particularly in an operational environment. They just make sure that the things that are important, that you set out strategically in doing your role we spoke about earlier, are the things that get done, and one of the routines that I really have tried to imbed in this role in particular is to make time for every level of employee throughout the work force.

There are six levels of leadership throughout in this airport, and I try and make sure that I engage, spend time and allow people opportunities to talk with me directly, I talk to those levels, in a meaningful way, not just walking around saying 'hello', actually going and spending time with people. It's through those discussions that I'm able to help people understand the kind of norms and values that we are trying to set about creating at this



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airport. It's not diluted through the leadership chain. They can hear it from me directly and I can share directly with them my vulnerabilities.

I'll give you a classic example. We had a situation two weeks ago where we lost one of our core systems and our staff had a really hard time having to try and recover this situation and deal with our customers, and we didn't quite get it right in supporting them with information they needed to be able to deliver good service on the night, and they felt like we hung them out to dry. So we came out openly through those discussions and we told them, we said, "Hey, look, we didn't quite get it right and we're sorry, but this is what we're going to do so we don't let you down next time."

Christine: Fantastic. I think the more you demonstrate that with frequency and I think this is something that you shared earlier in the show too, that having that routine in your approach, people know if you're consistent, that they can rely on you, they can count on you, they're much more likely to want to fully own what they're there to do, because one of the things for accountability that I find hugely important is that people understand ... I always call it their swim line, which is what they're accountable for ... and then have the knock on effect, or the ripple effect, of everybody's actions and interactions with each other actually lead to the success or lack of success for everybody else in the business.

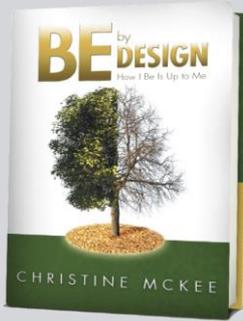
Christine: I think the more vulnerable that you are and the more open you are to going out on the floor and having those meaningful conversations, people are able to share with you much more about what's some of their strengths might be or some of their blocks might be, and I think that is one of your greatest strengths that you definitely bring to the table.

But let's talk a little bit about internal sustainability, because it's all great to have a process in place for accountability. From your perspective in an operational environment, how do you internally sustain it so that it does keep a pulse moving forward, so that people genuinely want to own what they come to work to do every day?

Rob: Yeah, I think that's about recognition. It's all great to have this ongoing dialogue about clarity of ownership, this ongoing dialogue about how I'm performing and what my challenges are and so on, but at some point there needs to be recognition and reward even, or we've spoken about consequences, at some point there also has to be consequences that aren't as desirable, but it does need to be true recognition, and recognition can come in all sorts of forms.

One of the most powerful, I think, is how we select people for promotion or for certain other rewards and the beauty about this model is, once you've got people clear about what they're setting out to achieve, and you know how they're performing in comparison to their peer group, it becomes very easy then and it's very transparent to be able to select people for progression based on that. That's one of the biggest, one of the most powerful recognition pieces, but it doesn't have to be something that big.

Christine: Sure.



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Rob: Recognition can come from anyone, but the important thing is that we make sure that we do recognize people.

Christine: In a way that is meaningful to them as well, as opposed to a blanket view that I often see in business. It's not a one size fits all.

Rob: Definitely.

Christine: Inside your business, in terms of encouraging people to be able to truly own that long-term sustainability for being accountable, is there any particular things that you encourage of your leaders who are filtering this process down to assist in keeping this alive?

Rob: To be honest, it's actually one of those things where in a lot of ways, I demand it of them, and they've asked me to demand it of them, which is really great. When we actually started those initial discussions about what do we want to achieve as a team, and inevitably, most people will say, "We want to perform," and in fact most people say they want to be the best. If we're going to be the best, we know that accountability will get us there. We know this model is going to work, so they're actually saying to me, "I want you to make sure that I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing," and so on down the organization. They're actually asking me for it the other way around. The sustainability is actually something that I demand rather than something I need to foster.

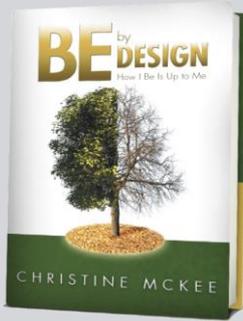
Christine: Okay, fantastic. All right, Rob, I'm going to come back to you in just a moment's time because amazingly, we have already almost finished the show which blows me away, so in a moment, I'm going to come back and ask you a couple of final questions, but for all our wonderful listeners who are tuning in, if you've got any questions that specifically relate to accountable leadership or being an accountable team member, please make sure you do contact us. For myself, you can do that either through email at chris@beinstitute.com.au or send me a message on our Facebook page which is BE Institute. If you'd like to learn more about what being an accountable leader actually means in terms of articles, tools, tips, other radio shows on similar topics, related articles that I've written, or others have written, please visit my website, www.beinstitute.com.au. That is full of other different tools and tips for you to be able to access.

Now, Rob, if our wonderful listeners would like to ask you any questions specifically, is there a way that they can contact you or would you prefer that to come through the website?

Rob: Probably the best way to do it, I think, is if they contact me through LinkedIn. I think that's the right way to collaborate with like-minded individuals and it's obviously public so we can all learn together.

Christine: What's your LinkedIn connection so people can find you?

Rob: It's just Robert D'Alessio, D-apostrophe-A-l-e-double s-i-o. If you search for me, there's only about two or three in the world, so I'm sure you'll find me.



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Christine: That is fantastic. All right, so for our listeners, if you've also got any topics that you would like for us to address in future shows, whether it's around leadership or any other topic, could be psychology based, learning based, spiritual based, it doesn't matter, please contact me at Facebook page which is the B-E Institute, and I'm certainly open to different topics.

So, Rob, you've been absolutely awesome today and I've just loved having you on the show. One thing to leave our listeners with though, what would you say if they could instill one thing to be fully accountable, what's the one thing that you would recommend they do?

Rob: I would say go in with positive intent. If you go in with positive intent and make sure that it's always a culture of people wanting to achieve and starting with questions first, you can't fail.

Christine: I love that, so I guess in a bit of a summary for some of those key points that you have shared throughout the show is, be curious, ask questions, inquire, pause, park any judgement that you might have about a situation before you go in on your fact-finding mission, if you like.

Collaborate, I think, is a word that you've used several times as well. Make sure you're incorporating the wonderful skills, knowledge, ideas and questions of your fantastic people who you surround yourself with, and with that hoping to include all their input they might want to bring to the table.

Rob: You've summarized it beautifully.

Christine: Rob, it's been amazing. Thank you so much for being with us today. I really, really appreciate and I'm sure that our listeners that have got so much from hearing you share today.

Rob: Great, it's been a pleasure to be a part of it, thanks for having me on.

Christine: Pleasure, pleasure, and to all of our wonderful listeners, thanks so much for investing time in yourself. It's such a rich investment for you. Join me again next week on the 16th of August at 9AM Australian Eastern Time, or Thursday 15th of August, 6PM central time for all our fabulous listeners in the US. It's going to be another great show so please, be sure to join us. But until then, have a brilliant and intentional week and sending you big smiles from Australia.

(Music)

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With love and blessings

