Mistakes and Discoveries while Cultivating Ownership

@aaronblohowiak
aaronb@netflix.com
On your first day at Netflix, you can: Push code into prod, spend up to $25M without manager approval, you can sign contracts, and All we ask is that you use good judgment.
On your first day, are you ready to do any of that?

No.
Netflix Culture

- Avoid Rules
- People over Process
- Context not Control
- Freedom & Responsibility
From the **CEO** down the hierarchy, **responsibility** is delegated.
From the **CEO** down the hierarchy, **vision** is refined.
The **Expectation** for Every Employee at Netflix

- Responsibility & Follow-through
- Proactivity & Anticipation
- Great long-term decisions
- Defining how things **should** be

@aaronblohowiak
The Expectation for Every Employee at Netflix

The highest* level of Ownership
What is Ownership?

- Beliefs
- Attitudes
- Behaviors
It’s not binary.
It’s a spectrum.
Levels of Ownership

0. Demonstration
1. Oversight
2. Observation
3. Execution
4. Vision
Demonstration
Oversight
Observation
Execution
Vision
Demonstration
Oversight
Observation
Execution
Vision

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Demonstration
Oversight
Observation
Execution
Vision
Demonstration
Oversight
Observation

Execution
Vision
Demonstration
Oversight
Observation
Execution

Vision
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- Physiological
- Safety
- Love/belonging
- Esteem
- Self-actualization

Vision
Execution
Observation
Oversight
Demonstration
Sound good?
How To Cultivate Ownership

Not Leading by Counter-Example
Archie’s Communications
1. Oversight
2. Observation
3. Execution
4. Vision
0. Demonstration
Mistakes:

We have different ideas about which level we should be at.
Discoveries:

Be **explicit** about what level we’re at.

**Explain why** we are at the level we’re at.
Lily’s Communications
0. Demonstration
1. Oversight
2. Observation
3. Execution
4. Vision
Mistakes:

We have different ideas about which level we are at
Discoveries:
Be **explicit** when the expected level changes.

If someone is stuck in an approval-seeking behavior pattern, they may just be waiting for **permission** to stop!

Establish the goal for every responsibility to get to **vision**
Lily’s Region Squeeze
0. Demonstration
1. Oversight
2. Observation
3. Execution
4. Vision
Mistakes:
Discoveries:

Be explicit when the expected level changes.
Fred’s Performance Tooling
Possible Interpretations

- Bad performance
- Poor judgment
- Bad onboarding
- Incorrect Level of Ownership
4. Vision
3. Execution
2. Observation
1. Oversight
0. Demonstration
Mistakes:

We agree on which level we are at, and believe it is the right level, but we are both wrong.
Discoveries:

Even amazing people shouldn’t start at a high a level because they don’t understand the current context, especially the implicit values of the team or project.
Akwesi’s Meetings
Why? Don’t you trust me?
Mistakes:

We have different ideas about which level we should be at.
Discoveries:

Ownership evolves. Not just over the course of relationships, but also over the course of projects.

When asking to have more Observation, have empathy for emotional implications.
Bringing it all Together
Levels of Ownership

4. Vision
3. Execution
2. Observation
1. Oversight
0. Demonstration

@aaronblohowiak
Classes of Mistakes:

We have different ideas about which level we are at.

We have different ideas about which level we should be at.

We agree on which level we are at, and believe it is the right level, but we are both wrong.
Biggest Discoveries:

Most failures of Ownership are failures to set the right context.

Be explicit about the expected level, and when it changes.

Don’t jump in the deep end.

Have empathy.
Given the right context and the freedom to do what’s best, people will make great decisions.
New Hire Onboarding

- Intro to levels of ownership
- 3 months
- 6 months
- 12 months
Flash Back
Archie’s Work

@aarontblohowiak
Bonus Track
The Expectation for Every Employee at Netflix

The highest* level of Ownership
* Cultivation

4. Vision
3. Execution
2. Observation
1. Oversight
0. Demonstration
Thank You!

@aaronblohowiak
aaronb@netflix.com

*. Cultivation
4. Vision
3. Execution
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