SuccessLabs

# EXTREME OWNERSHIP

Cultivating an ownership mindset

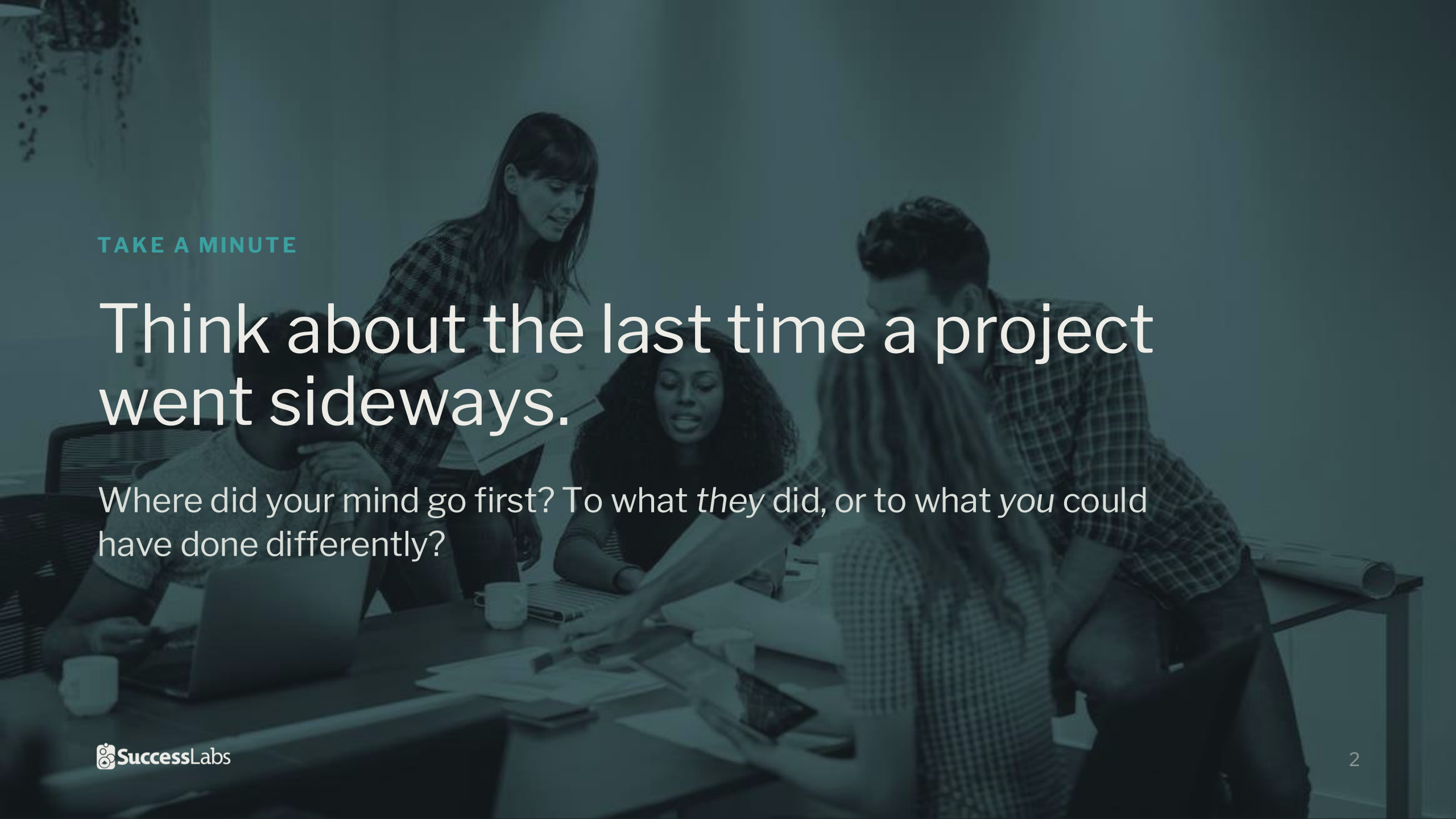
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TAKE A MINUTE

# Think about the last time a project went sideways.

Where did your mind go first? To what *they* did, or to what *you* could have done differently?

# THE STORY BEHIND THE BOOK

### RAMADI, IRAQ · 2006

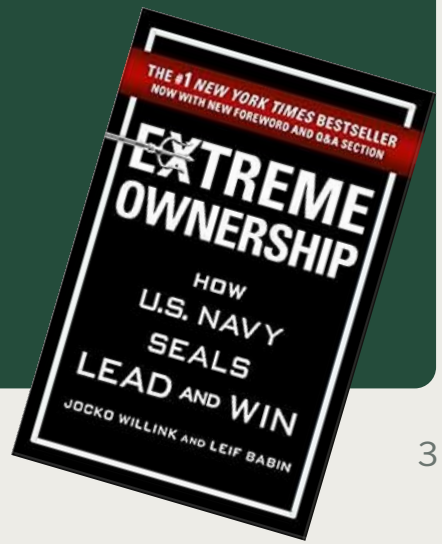
During an operation, a confused firefight broke out between friendly units. One Iraqi soldier was killed and several others, including a SEAL, were wounded.

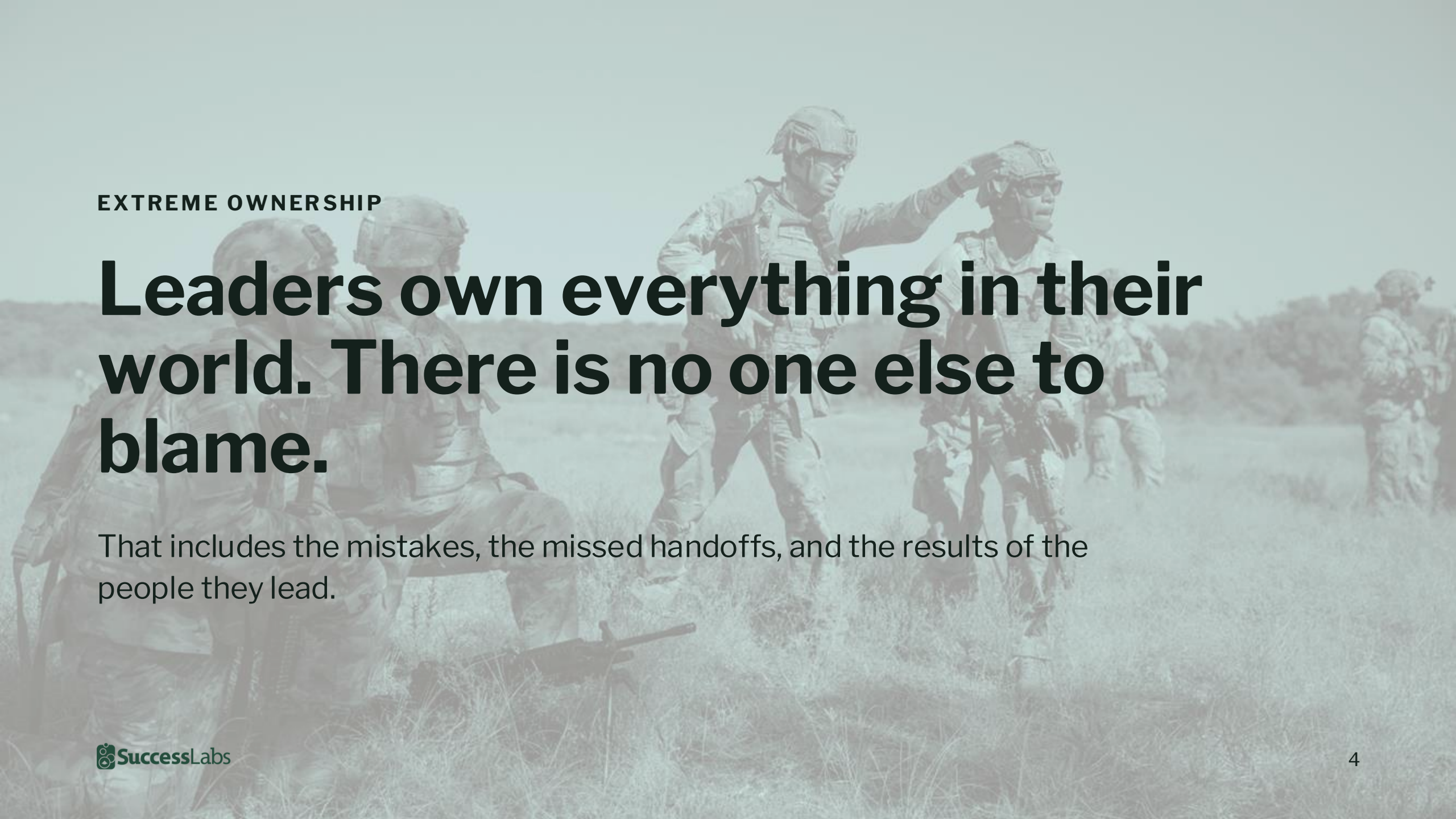
### THE DEBRIEF

Commander Jocko Willink listened as the team listed what had gone wrong. Then he told his superiors that there was only one person to blame: him.

### WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Instead of losing his command, he earned more trust from his bosses, and his team began owning their mistakes too.





EXTREME OWNERSHIP

# Leaders own everything in their world. There is no one else to blame.

That includes the mistakes, the missed handoffs, and the results of the people they lead.

# WHAT OWNERSHIP SOUNDS LIKE

| Blame sounds like | Ownership sounds like |
|---|---|
| “The contractor didn’t get the sampling data in on time.” | “I didn’t confirm the deadline or check in halfway through.” |
| “Operations never told us about the process change.” | “I haven’t set up a way for operations to flag changes early.” |
| “Corporate keeps changing our priorities.” | “I need to ask what is driving the shift and explain it to my team.” |
| “My team just doesn’t get it.” | “I haven’t explained it in a way that makes sense to them.” |

# No bad teams, only bad leaders

During SEAL training's Hell Week, boat crews race each other for days. One crew kept winning and another kept finishing last.

The instructors swapped only the two leaders. The last-place crew started winning almost immediately.

> **"It's not what you preach, it's what you tolerate."**
>
> Jocko Willink & Leif Babin

# TWO HABITS THAT MAKE OWNERSHIP POSSIBLE



## Believe

You can’t lead people toward a goal you don’t believe in yourself. When a decision doesn’t make sense to you, ask questions up the chain until you understand the why.



## Check the ego

Ego makes it hard to admit a mistake and easy to protect a bad plan. Confidence is healthy, but it should never keep you from seeing the situation clearly.

# THE FOUR LAWS OF COMBAT

### Cover and move

Teams support each other. When one group fails, everyone fails, so help the department next to you win.

### Simple

Plans and instructions everyone can understand. If people can’t repeat it back, it is too complicated.

### Prioritize and execute

When everything feels urgent, pick the most important problem, solve it, and then move to the next.

### Decentralized command

Leaders explain the intent so people closest to the work can make good decisions without waiting.

# WHEN EVERYTHING IS ON FIRE

## Relax. Look around. Make a call.

**1**

Step back and find the highest-priority problem.

**2**

Explain it to the team in simple, clear terms.

**3**

Decide on a solution, with input from the team.

**4**

Put full effort there, then move to the next one.

# LEADING UP AND DOWN THE CHAIN

### Leading down

Your team often can't see what you see. Share the bigger picture and explain how their work connects to the goal, so they can make good decisions without you.

### Leading up

If your boss isn't giving you what you need, ask yourself what you haven't done to help them understand. Owning that relationship is part of the job.



SUSTAINING IT

# Discipline equals freedom.

Routines, checklists, and clear standards handle the predictable work, which frees your team to think and adapt when something unexpected happens.

# OWNERSHIP IS A BALANCE

Every strength can be pushed too far.

**Own everything**
without doing everything yourself

**Lead**
and know when to follow someone else’s good idea

**Be confident**
without being cocky

**Be disciplined**
without becoming rigid

# YOUR OWNERSHIP AUDIT

**In pairs · 4 minutes**

1. Name one problem at work you have been blaming on someone or something else.

2. What part of it is yours? Rewrite it as an ownership statement.

3. What is one thing you will do differently this week?

AWARENESS TO ACTION

# What will you own this week?

Pick one situation, start with your part, and watch what it changes for your team.

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