

Mistakes and Discoveries while Cultivating Ownership

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On your first day at **Netflix**, you can:
Push code into to 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

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

Demonstration

Oversight

Observation

Execution

Vision

Demonstration

Oversight

Observation

Execution

Vision

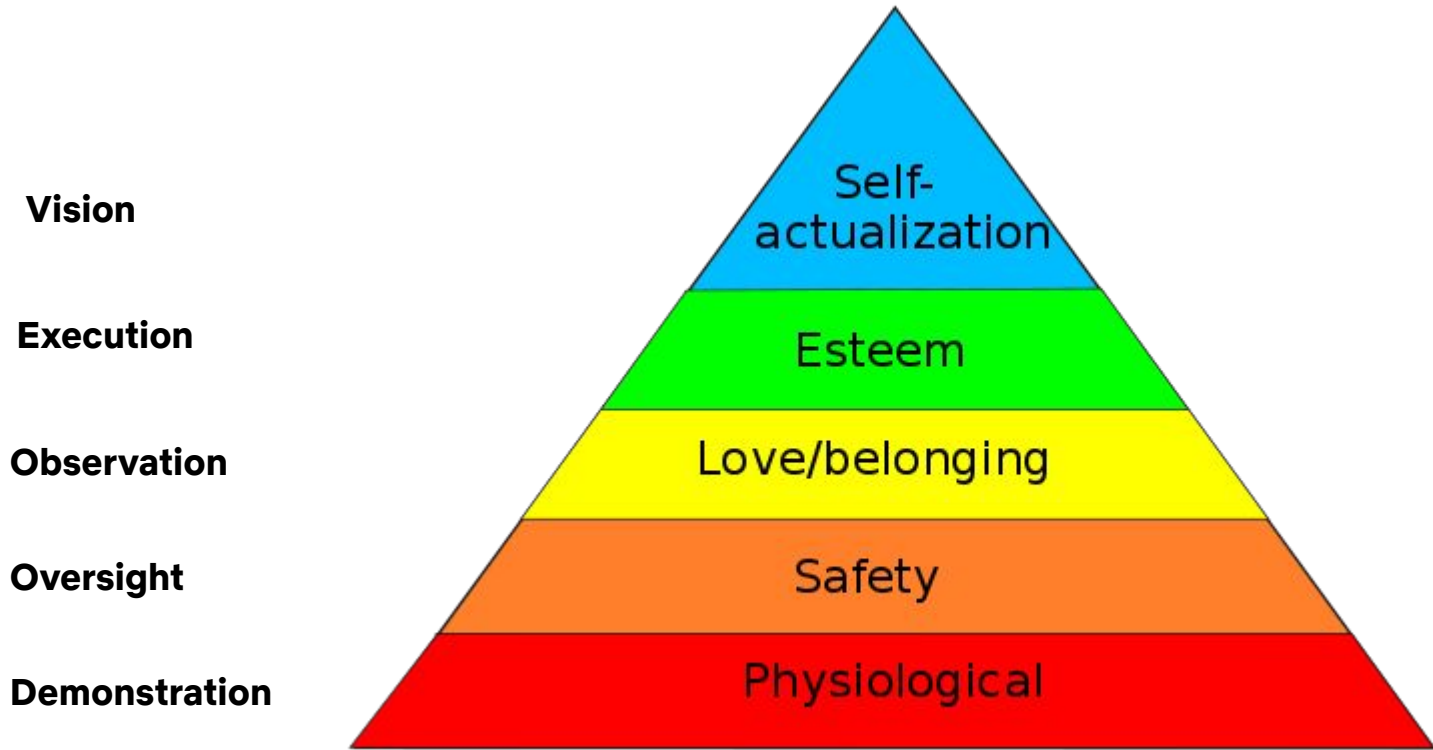
Demonstration

Oversight

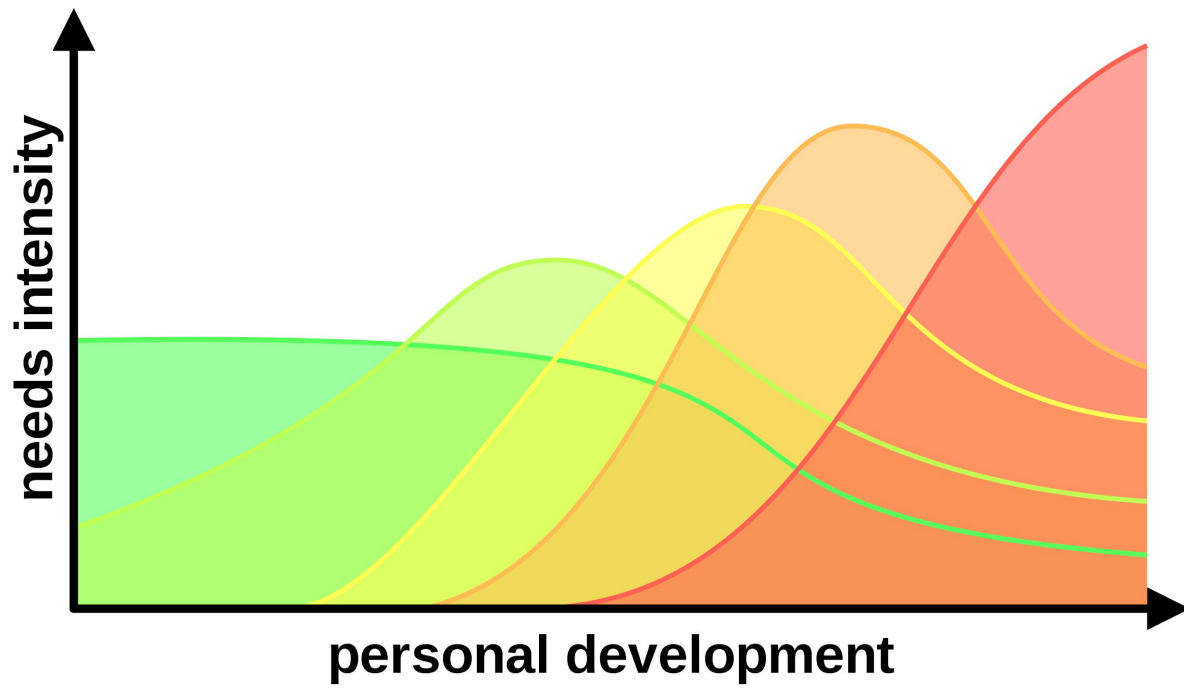
Observation

Execution

Vision



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Philipp Guttman CC-BY-SA

Sound good?



Not



How To Cultivate **Ownership**

| Leading by **Counter-Example**



Archie's Communications

4. Vision

3. Execution



2. Observation

1. Oversight



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

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

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?**

4. Vision



3. Execution



2. Observation

1. Oversight

0. Demonstration

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.

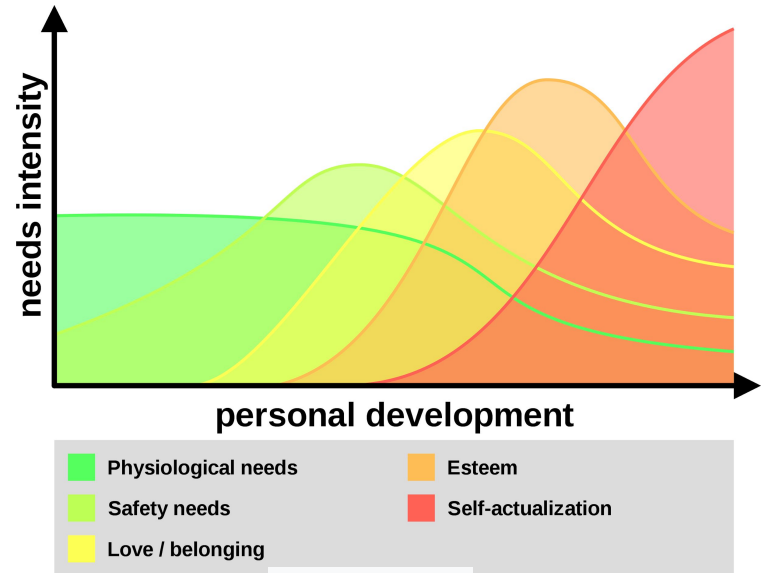
When asking to have more Observation, have empathy for **emotional implications.**

Bringing it all Together



Levels of Ownership

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



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

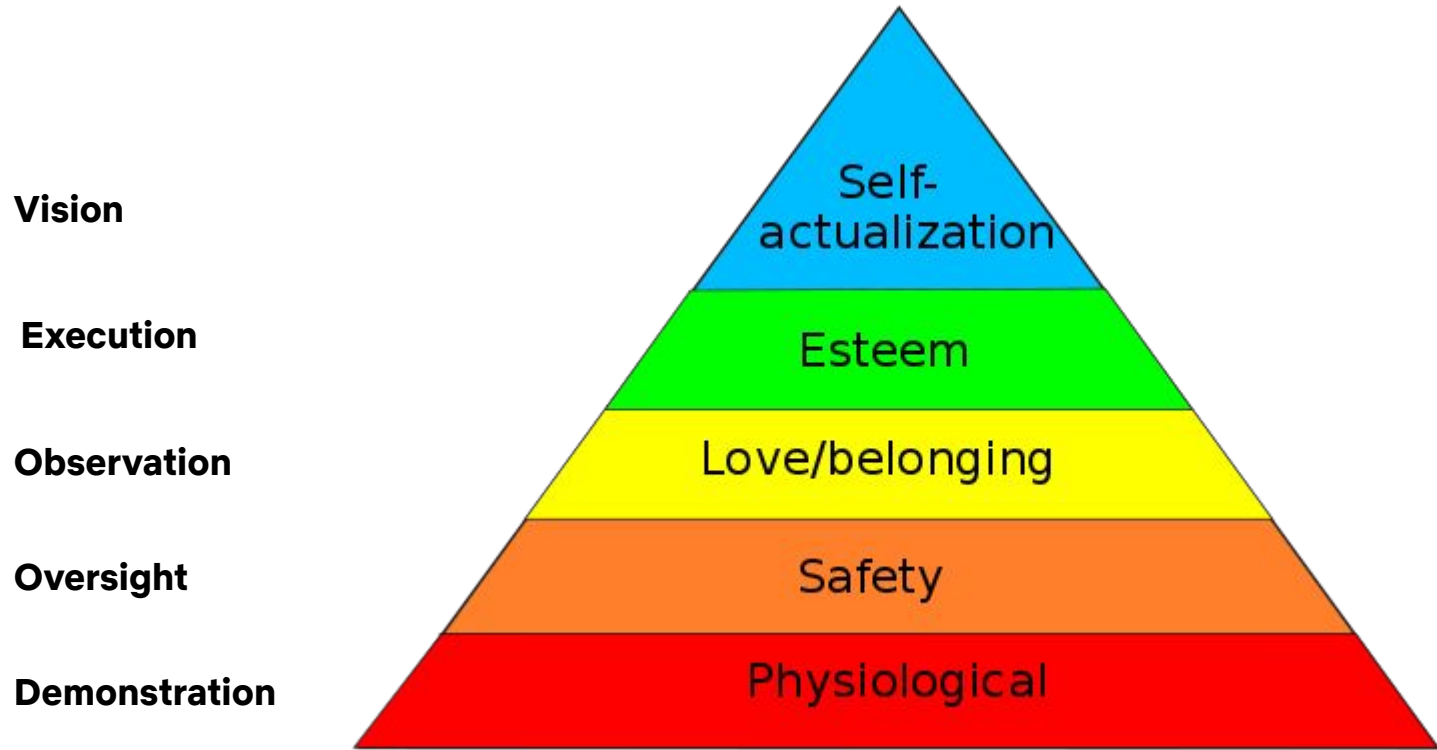
Flash Back



Archie's Work

Bonus Track





**Cultivating Other People's
Ownership**

Transcendence

Vision

Self-actualization

Execution

Esteem

Observation

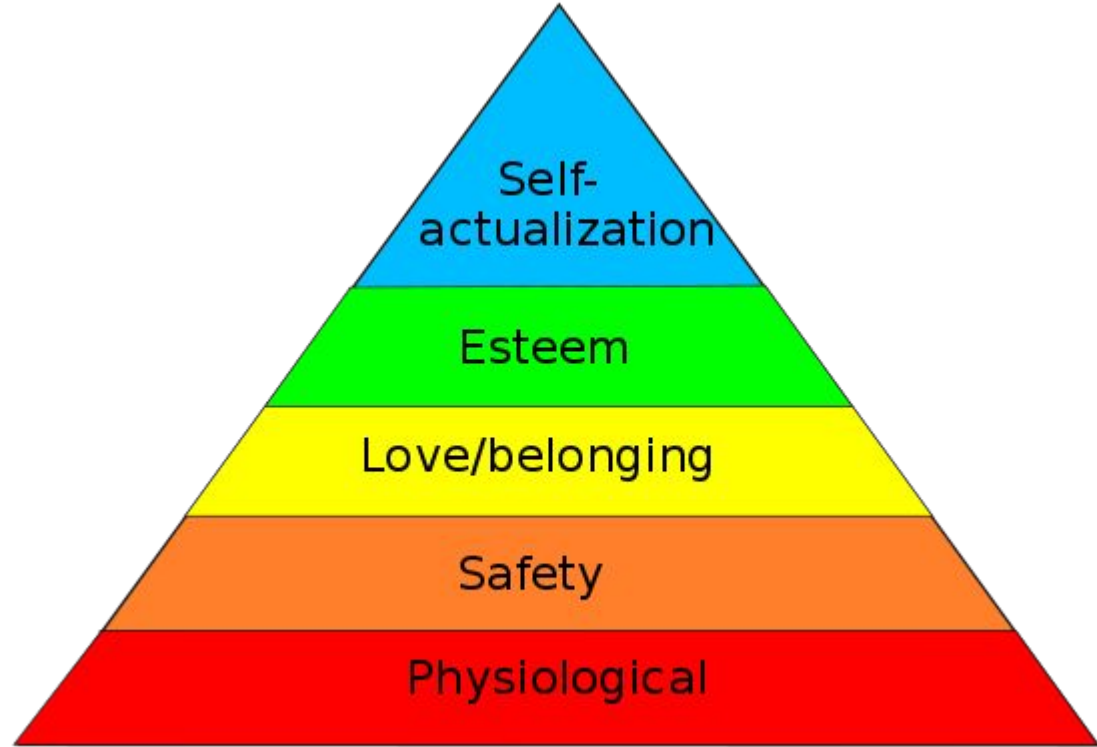
Love/belonging

Oversight

Safety

Demonstration

Physiological



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!**

- * **Cultivation**
- 4. **Vision**
- 3. **Execution**
- 2. **Observation**
- 1. **Oversight**
- 0. **Demonstration**

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