

LUV LIBRARY OF PERSPECTIVE

Creating the Conditions for Ownership

OWNERSHIP SERIES • TITLE 001

Understanding • Mutual Dignity • Ownership

Before We Begin

Thank you for spending a few minutes with this reflection.

Our hope is not to convince you to adopt a new model, framework, or way of working.

Our hope is much simpler.

We hope this conversation helps you see something that has always been there but may have been difficult to name.

If, somewhere in these pages, you find yourself thinking,

“I’ve experienced that... I just never had words for it,”

then this reflection has served its purpose.

The ideas that follow are offered with deep respect for the work you already do and the people you serve.

Take what strengthens your work.

Leave behind what doesn’t.

Thank you for thinking alongside us.

Creating the Conditions for Ownership

Most plans don't fail because they're poorly written.

They fail because ownership never had the opportunity to grow.

Every day, professional partners across the country sit down with people they genuinely hope will succeed.

A probation officer hopes a young person never walks through the gates of prison.

A behavioral health clinician hopes a person finds stability.

A school counselor hopes a student discovers they belong.

A child welfare professional hopes a family can safely be together again.

Most begin with genuine care and good intentions.

The problem is...

Those intentions are often invisible.

The person sitting across the table doesn't see hope.

They see another authority figure.

Another counselor.

Another probation officer.

Another professional who already seems to know what's wrong with them.

Another plan someone else has already decided they need.

A Different Beginning

REFLECTION

What if ownership begins long before the plan?

What if it begins by creating the conditions where ownership has an opportunity to grow?

Imagine a young person walking into a probation office.

He expects the conversation to begin the way most conversations have.

"What happened?"

"Why didn't you follow through?"

"Here are your probation conditions."

Instead, the probation officer says something unexpected.

"Before we begin, I'd like to tell you something. When we're finished working together, here's what I hope is different."

"I hope you stay out of prison. I hope you find work you enjoy. I hope your mom sleeps a little easier. I hope one day you don't need to see me anymore because you're building the life you want."

The room becomes quieter.

Nothing about probation has changed.

Nothing about the law has changed.

Nothing about the officer's responsibilities has changed.

But something invisible has.

The young person no longer hears only an authority figure.

For the first time...

he wonders if the person sitting across the table actually cares what happens to him.

The probation officer continues.

"Can I ask you something? When we're finished working together, what do you hope will be different?"

The young person pauses.

"I don't want to keep getting arrested. I'd like my mom to trust me again. I'd like to keep a job."

The probation officer nods.

As they begin reviewing the probation conditions, the conversation sounds different.

“One of your probation conditions is checking in with me every Tuesday. That may feel like just another rule. But you told me you want your mom to trust you again. Trust is built through consistency. Every time you show up, you’re practicing the very thing you said you wanted to rebuild.”

A little later...

“Another condition is maintaining employment or actively looking for work. I’m not asking this because I like paperwork. You told me you want to keep a job and build a different future. This condition supports the future you just described.”

The probation conditions haven’t changed.

Their meaning has.

So... What Changed?

At first glance, it might seem like the conversation changed because the probation officer asked better questions.

But the questions weren’t what changed the conversation.

The conditions surrounding the conversation did.

Those conditions are often invisible.

Yet they influence how people listen, what they choose to share, how they interpret recommendations, and whether ownership has an opportunity to grow.

The Invisible Conditions That Changed the Conversation

Intent Made Visible

The probation officer began by revealing something the young person could not have known.

Their hope.

Instead of beginning with expectations, conditions, or consequences, the conversation began with purpose.

Until that moment, every recommendation would have been filtered through previous experiences.

Now the conversation had a different starting point.

Permission Created

By going first, the probation officer created something equally important.

Permission.

Without saying the words...

the officer quietly communicated,

| *"It's safe to tell me what matters to you."*

The invitation wasn't created by the question.

It was created by the example.

Without realizing it, the young person also experienced something deeper.

Someone wasn't beginning with what was wrong.

Someone was beginning with what was possible.

The officer never said,

| *"You matter."*

The young person simply began wondering...

| *"Maybe I do."*

Shared Purpose Discovered

Only after making purpose visible did the probation officer ask,

| *"When we're finished working together, what do you hope will be different?"*

Neither person changed roles.

The probation officer remained responsible for public safety.

The young person remained responsible for the choices ahead.

But together they discovered something neither expected.

They were hoping for many of the same outcomes.

They had been standing on the same side of the mountain.

They simply couldn't see it together.

The Connection Revealed

As they reviewed each probation condition, every recommendation became connected to something the young person had already said mattered.

The plan didn't change.

Understanding did.

People are more likely to engage in a plan when they understand how it connects to their own goals and future.

Ownership Began to Grow

Ownership wasn't demanded.

It wasn't negotiated.

It wasn't taught.

The conditions made it possible.

Notice something else.

The probation officer didn't need another meeting.

There wasn't another assessment.

There wasn't twenty extra minutes.

The conversation simply began differently.

Because both people now understood where they were trying to go together, the next conversation no longer had to begin from opposite sides of the table.

It could begin where the previous conversation ended.

With a shared understanding of the future they were building together.

That is ownership growing.

A Different Room. The Same Conditions.

A mother sits across from a child welfare or Department of Family Services professional partner.

She already knows why she's there.

She's expecting another conversation about everything she's done wrong.

Instead, the professional partner begins differently.

"Before we talk about today's plan, I'd like to tell you something. When we're finished working together, here's what I hope is different."

"I hope your daughter feels safe. I hope you experience more days where you believe change is possible. I hope you become the mother you want your daughter to remember. And I hope one day our work together is finished because your family no longer needs us."

The mother doesn't respond immediately.

Then the professional partner asks,

"When we're finished working together, what do you hope will be different?"

Tears begin to form.

"I just want my little girl to come home."

As they begin discussing the case plan, each recommendation is connected to the future the mother just described.

"This parenting class isn't simply another requirement. You told me you want your daughter home. Every skill you build is one more step toward creating the safe, stable home you hope to provide."

"Recovery isn't only about meeting expectations. It's about removing the barriers standing between you and the future you just described."

Nothing about the requirements has changed.

Everything about the conversation has.

Different profession.

Different responsibilities.

Different circumstances.

The same invisible conditions.

Continue the Conversation

If today's reflection resonated with challenges your organization is already working to address, we invite you to continue the conversation.

Visit our Building Ownership page to explore additional leadership reflections, practical ideas, and organizational resources focused on creating the conditions where ownership naturally grows.

Download the complimentary Ownership Framework™ Discussion Guide to begin meaningful conversations with your leadership team, supervisors, and professional partners.

Or, if you'd like to explore how these ideas might apply within your own organization, we'd be honored to spend time thinking alongside you.

No sales presentation.

Just a conversation about the people you serve and the future you're trying to build.

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Creating the Conditions for Ownership

LUV Library of Perspective — Title #001



Ownership cannot be assigned, mandated, instructed, or required.

Ownership grows when people understand the purpose, see themselves in the plan, and recognize that their hopes, goals, and future are not separate from the plan—they are the reason for it.

A Distinction Worth Keeping in View

Compliance may sound like:

“I understand what I am expected to do.”

Ownership sounds more like:

“I understand why this matters, I can see myself in it, and I am choosing to carry it forward.”



Compliance, cooperation, agreement, and participation may be necessary or valuable, but they are not automatically ownership.

Conditions That Invite Ownership

1.

Understanding

People understand the purpose—not only the instructions.

2.

Mutual Dignity

Professional knowledge, lived experience, responsibility, and humanity are respected.

3.

Meaningful Influence

People believe their questions, concerns, and perspectives can genuinely matter.

4.

A Future They Can See

People recognize a connection between the plan and something they value, hope for, or want to protect.

Question to Carry Forward

Are we asking people to take ownership—or creating the conditions where ownership can grow?



Understanding → Shared Ownership → Lasting Results