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I'm responsible for this side of the road and you're responsible for the other side. But who's got the road? Me? You? Someone else? No one? Everyone? If we don't know or care about it, then the road will eventually cause us some serious headaches.

Quite often in military operations, the boundaries of areas, zones, or sectors are divided by an identifiable landmark or a natural pathway such as a road, river, or creek. Typically, a road is used as a boundary demarcation line. In these instances, one of the leaders assigned to one of the areas on either side of the road must be responsible for the road as well. Otherwise, there is a risk that each leader may assume the other leader is monitoring the road. And if that were to happen, it is just a matter of time before the enemy marches in on it, unhindered--and that's when bad things happen.

In life, the road is symbolic of other things--and the assumptions that occur with them. If we see a piece of trash in a public area laying on the ground next to a trash can, what do we typically do? Many of us walk right past it. Most of us are convinced that someone else will eventually come along, pick it up, and throw it out. Maybe someone does. Perhaps someone is paid to do it. But most likely no one will pick it up until someone becomes so frustrated at the sight or smell of it that they take care of it themselves.

In homeowners' associations, most residents ignore problems in common areas because they believe someone else will notice and report it, or do something about it. It's often assumed to be the association president's problem to solve, but then the problem persists for weeks, months, or years.

How about at work? How often is there a problem or issue that no one tends to? Many supervisors and workers are territorial. Each department's war cry is: "It's not our responsibility!" But until someone gets tired of walking through the green slime in the hallway, the green slime continues to exist day after day, welcoming everyone to their office areas with open arms every morning.

As an experiment, I once tipped over a small statue in the front entrance hallway of my headquarters building. The purpose of the experiment was to see how many people, and for how long, would walk past the face-down statue before someone would stand it back up. There were 47 people who walked past it on their way into the building during the morning. The 48th person entering the building for the day stood the statue back up. I asked that person why he did it and he said, "It looked like it needed to be done." I asked others why they didn't do anything about it and the answers varied, from "I don't know," to "I don't get paid to straighten this place up," to "I figured the janitor would take care of it," to "What? Where?"

I've learned over the years that I had to assign someone to clean the break room at the end of the day or no one would clean it. I had to assign someone to monitor the dumpster or no one would notice, acknowledge, or care when it was overflowing. I had to assign someone to monitor exterior building lights or the light bulbs would burn out and the building would end up completely dark at night.

In business, if someone's not keeping an eye out for internal and external threats, those threats will rear their ugly heads at the most inopportune times. How many times has your company or organization had something burn and

crash, or missed out on the next big thing, because no one was keeping an eye on the road?

Remember Blockbuster, the old video tape rental store? They survived the change from VHS to DVD, but missed the boat for streaming services. In fact, Netflix actually asked Blockbuster to partner up with them when the sun was rising on streaming services, but Blockbuster thought it was a dumb idea and declined. Within three years, Blockbuster filed for bankruptcy. No one at Blockbuster had their eye on the road while Netflix was marching down it to streaming services. Blockbuster fortified its walls and paid no attention to the transition affecting its market. Blockbuster put itself out of business!

Someone has to be responsible for the road. From observing it, to maintaining it, to reconstructing it, someone better be on it. Someone has to be capable of detecting, deterring, and delaying any impending threats from the road, as well as being able to notice and act upon any opportunities presented by the road. Your business or organization's livelihood may depend on it.

Lastly, I leave you with the following anonymously written story:

This is the story about four people named: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

~ The End ~