

## Five Steps To Effective Delegation

Stephen Covey: **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.**

“Some years ago, I had an interesting experience in delegation with one of my sons. We were having a family meeting, and we had our mission statement up on the wall to make sure our plans were in harmony with our values. Everybody was there.

I set up a big blackboard and we wrote down our goals — the key things we wanted to do — and the jobs that flowed out of those goals. Then I asked for volunteers to do the job.

“Who wants to pay the mortgage?” I asked. I noticed I was the only one with my hand up.

“Who wants to pay for the insurance? The food? The cars?” I seemed to have a real monopoly on the opportunities. As we went down the list, job by job, it was soon evident that Mom and Dad had more than sixty-hour work weeks. With that paradigm in mind, some of the other jobs took on a more proper perspective.

My seven-year-old son, Stephen, volunteered to take care of the yard. Before I actually gave him a job, I began a thorough training process. I wanted him to have a clear picture in his mind of what a well-cared-for yard was like, so I took him next door to our neighbor’s.

“Look, son,” I said. “See how our neighbor’s yard is green and clean? That’s what we’re after: green and clean. Now come look at our yard. See the mixed colors? That’s not it; that’s not green. Green and clean is what we want. Now how you get it green is up to you. You’re free to do it any way you want, except paint it. But I’ll tell you how I’d do it if it were up to me.”

“How would you do it, Dad?”

“I’d turn on the sprinklers. But you may want to use buckets or a hose. It makes no difference to me. All we care about is that the color is green. Okay?”

“Okay.”

“Now let’s talk about ‘clean,’ Son. Clean means no messes around — no paper, strings, bones, sticks, or anything that messes up the place. I’ll tell you what, let’s do it together. Let’s just clean up half of the yard right now and look at the difference.”

So we got out two paper sacks and picked up one side of the yard. “Now look at this side. Look at the other side. See the difference? That’s called clean.”

“Wait!” he called. “I see some paper behind that bush!” “Oh, good! I didn’t notice that newspaper back there. You have good eyes, son.”

“Now before you decide whether or not you’re going to take the job, let me tell you a few more things. Because when you take the job, I don’t do it anymore. It’s your job. It’s called a stewardship. Stewardship means ‘a job with a trust.’ I trust you to do the job, to get it done. Now who’s going to be your boss?”

“You, Dad?”

“No, not me. You’re the boss. You boss yourself. How do you like Mom and Dad nagging you all the time?”

“I don’t.”

“We don’t like doing it either. It sometimes causes a bad feeling doesn’t it? So you boss yourself...Now, guess who your helper is.”

“Who?”

“I am,” I said. “You boss me.”

“I do?”

“That’s right. But my time to help is limited. Sometimes I’m away. But when I’m here, you tell me how I can help. I’ll do anything you want me to do.”

“Okay!”

“Now guess who judges you.”

“Who?”

“You judge yourself.”

“I do?”

“That’s right. Twice a week the two of us will walk around the yard and you can show me how it’s coming. How are you going to judge?”

“Green and clean.”

“Right!”

I trained him with those two words for two weeks before I felt he was ready to take the job. Finally, the big day came...

“Is it a deal, Son?”

“It’s a deal.”

“What’s the job?”

“Green and clean.”

“What’s green?”

He looked at our yard, which was beginning to look better. Then he pointed next door. “That’s the color of his yard.”

“What’s clean?”

“No messes.”

“Who’s the boss?”

“I am.”

“Who’s your helper?”

“You are, when you have time.”

“Who’s the judge?”

“I am. We’ll walk around two times a week and I can show you how it’s coming.”

“And what will we look for?”

“Green and clean.”

Two weeks and two words. I thought he was ready.

It was Saturday. And he did nothing.

Sunday...nothing. Monday...nothing.

As I pulled out of the driveway on my way to work on Tuesday, I looked at the yellow, cluttered yard and the hot July sun on its way up. “Surely he’ll do it today,” I thought. I could rationalize Saturday because that was the day we made the agreement. I could rationalize Sunday; Sunday was for other things. But I couldn’t rationalize Monday. And now it was Tuesday. Certainly he’d do it today. It was summertime. What else did he have to do?

All day I could hardly wait to return home to see what happened. As I rounded the corner, I was met with the same picture I left that morning. And there was my son at the park across the street playing.

This was not acceptable. I was upset and disillusioned by his performance after two weeks of training and all those commitments. We had a lot of effort, pride, and money invested in the yard and I could see it going down the drain. Besides, my neighbor’s yard was manicured and beautiful, and the situation was beginning to get embarrassing.

I was ready to shout: ‘Son, you get over here and pick up this garbage right now or else!’ I knew I could get him to act if I reacted this way. But what about the longer term? What about the empowerment, the ownership? What would happen to his internal commitment? So I faked a smile and yelled across the street, “Hi, son. How’s it going?”

“Fine!” he returned.

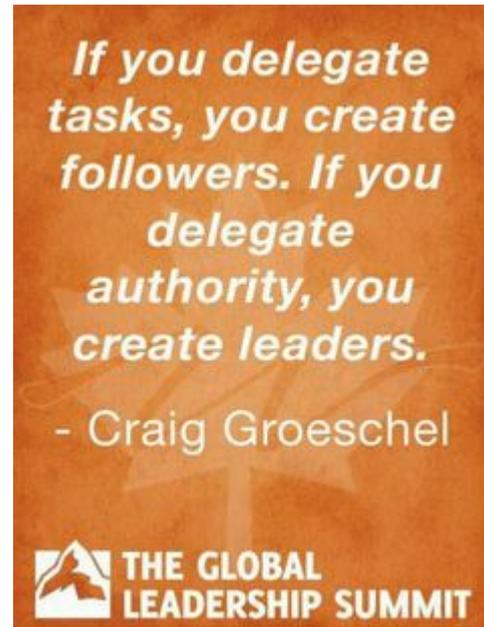
“How’s the yard coming?” I knew the minute I said it I had broken our agreement. That’s not the way we had set up accountability. That’s not what we had agreed. So he felt justified in breaking it, too.

“Fine, Dad.”

I bit my tongue and waited until after dinner. Then I said, “Son, let’s do as we agreed. Let’s walk around the yard together and you can show me how it’s going in your stewardship.”

As we started out the door, his chin began to quiver. Tears welled up in his eyes and, by the time we got out to the middle of the yard, he was whimpering. “It’s so hard, Dad!”

8 Five Steps to Effective Delegation



What's so hard? I thought to myself. You haven't done a single thing! But I knew what was hard – self-management, self-supervision. So I said, "Is there anything I can do to help?"

"Would you, Dad?" he sniffed

"What was our agreement?"

"You said you'd help me if you had time."

"I have time."

So he ran into the house and came back with two sacks. He handed me one. "Will you pick that stuff up?" He pointed to the garbage from Saturday night's barbecue. "It makes me sick!"

So I did. I did exactly what he asked me to do. And that was when he signed the agreement in his heart. It became his yard, his stewardship. He only asked for help two or three more times that entire summer. He took care of that yard. He kept it greener and cleaner than it had ever been under my stewardship. He even scolded his brothers and sisters if they left so much as a gum wrapper on the lawn.

Trust is the highest form of human motivation. It brings out the very best in people. But it takes time and patience, and it doesn't preclude the necessity to train and develop people so that their competency can rise to the level of that trust."

Five steps to effective delegation		
1	Delegate to the right person	Be sure to delegate to the person with the right skills and capabilities. Base your decisions on talent, not convenience
2	Specify the result you want	Clearly communicate the result you're looking for. Specify what you want it to look like when it's done, and done well
3	Establish the time frame	Establish a realistic time frame by which the project needs to be completed
4	Determine the person's level of authority	Determine how much authority the person has in terms of taking action and making decisions
5	Track progress and be available	Set up a reporting and communication system, so you know when things are completed. Be available to provide input to help problem solve

## Reflection on Experience of Delegation



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

**Think about a time you were delegated a task, project or responsibility.** It can be in any context and be from long ago or recent past. Use these questions to guide your reflection.

1. What were you asked to do?

2. Why were you chosen to delegate to?

3. How confident did you feel that you could manage the task effectively?

4. At the start of the delegation, what expectations were communicated to you?

5. What feedback did you receive during the period of delegation?

6. What did the delegator do that helped the delegation succeed or fail?

7. What could the delegator have done to make the delegation more successful?

8. From your experience, name 3 things that you want to ensure you do when you delegate.



## Leadership in the Age of Complexity: From Hero to Host

**Margaret Wheatley with Debbie Frieze** ©2010  
published in Resurgence Magazine, Winter 2011

For too long, too many of us have been entranced by heroes. Perhaps it's our desire to be saved, to not have to do the hard work, to rely on someone else to figure things out. Constantly we are barraged by politicians presenting themselves as heroes, the ones who will fix everything and make our problems go away. It's a seductive image, an enticing promise. And we keep believing it. Somewhere there's someone who will make it all better. Somewhere, there's someone who's visionary, inspiring, brilliant, trustworthy, and we'll all happily follow him or her. Somewhere...



Well, it is time for all the heroes to go home, as the poet William Stafford wrote. It is time for us to give up these hopes and expectations that only breed dependency and passivity, and that do not give us solutions to the challenges we face. It is time to stop waiting for someone to save us. It is time to face the truth of our situation—that we're all in this together, that we all have a voice—and figure out how to mobilize the hearts and minds of everyone in our workplaces and communities.

Why do we continue to hope for heroes? It seems we assume certain things:

- Leaders have the answers. They know what to do.
- People do what they're told. They just have to be given good plans and instructions.
- High risk requires high control. As situations grow more complex and challenging, power needs to shift to the top (with the leaders who know what to do.)

These beliefs give rise to the models of command and control revered in organizations and governments' world-wide. Those at the bottom of the hierarchy submit to the greater vision and expertise of those above. Leaders promise to get us out of this mess; we willingly surrender individual autonomy in exchange for security.

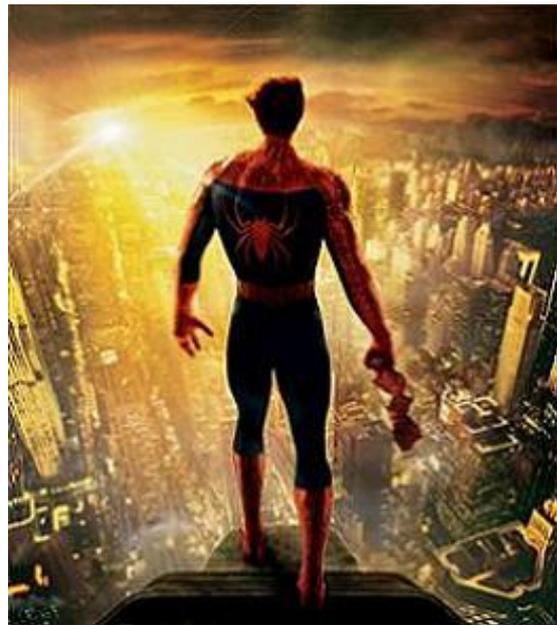
The only predictable consequence of leaders' attempts to wrest control of a complex, even chaotic situation, is that they create more chaos. They go into isolation with just a few key advisors, and attempt to find a simple solution (quickly) to a complex problem.

And people pressure them to do just that. Everyone wants the problem to disappear; cries of “fix it!” arise from the public. Leaders scramble to look like they’ve taken charge and have everything in hand.

But the causes of today’s problems are complex and interconnected. There are no simple answers, and no one individual can possibly know what to do. We seem unable to acknowledge these complex realities. Instead, when the leader fails to resolve the crisis, we fire him or her, and immediately begin searching for the next (more perfect) one. We don’t question our expectations of leaders, we don’t question our desire for heroes.

### **The Illusion of Control**

Heroic leadership rests on the illusion that someone *can be* in control. Yet we live in a world of complex systems whose very existence means they are inherently uncontrollable. No one is in charge of our food systems. No one is in charge of our schools. No one is in charge of the environment. No one is in charge of national security. No one is in charge! These systems are emergent phenomena—the result of thousands of small, local actions that converged to create powerful systems with properties that may bear little or no resemblance to the smaller actions that gave rise to them. These are the systems that now dominate our lives; they cannot be changed by working backwards, focusing on only a few simple causes. And certainly they cannot be changed by the boldest visions of our most heroic leaders.



If we want to be able to get these complex systems to work better, we need to abandon our reliance on the leader-as-hero and invite in the leader-as-host. We need to support those leaders who know that problems are complex, who know that in order to understand the full complexity of any issue, all parts of the system need to be invited in to participate and contribute. We, as followers, need to give our leaders time, patience, forgiveness; and we need to be willing to step up and contribute.

These leaders-as-hosts are candid enough to admit that they don’t know what to do; they realize that it’s sheer foolishness to rely only on them for answers. But they also know they can trust in other people’s creativity and commitment to get the work done. They know that other people, no matter where they are in the organizational hierarchy, can be as motivated, diligent and creative as the leader, given the right invitation.

## The Journey from Hero to Host

Leaders who journey from hero to host have seen past the negative dynamics of politics and opposition that hierarchy breeds, they've ignored the organizational charts and role descriptions that confine people's potential. Instead, they've become curious. Who's in this organization or community? What skills and capacities might they offer if they were invited into the work as full contributors? What do they know, what insights do they have that might lead to a solution to this problem?

Leaders-as-hosts know that people willingly support those things they've played a part in creating—that you can't expect people to 'buy-in' to plans and projects developed elsewhere. Leaders-as-hosts invest in meaningful conversations among people from



many parts of the system as the most productive way to engender new insights and possibilities for action. They trust that people are willing to contribute, and that most people yearn to find meaning and possibility in their lives and work. And these leaders know that hosting others is the only way to get complex, intractable problems solved.

Leaders-as-hosts don't just benevolently let go and trust that people will do good work on their own. Leaders have a great many things to attend to, but these are quite different than the work of heroes.

### Hosting leaders must:

- Provide conditions and good group processes for people to work together.
- Provide resources of time, the scarcest commodity of all.
- Insist that people and the system learn from experience, frequently.
- Offer unequivocal support—people know the leader is there for them.
- Keep the bureaucracy at bay, creating oases (or bunkers) where people are less encumbered by senseless demands for reports and administria.
- Play defense with other leaders who want to take back control, who are critical that people have been given too much freedom.
- Reflect back to people on a regular basis how they're doing, what they're accomplishing, how far they've journeyed.
- Work with people to develop relevant measures of progress to make their achievements visible.
- Value conviviality and esprit de corps—not false rah-rah activities, but the spirit that arises in any group that accomplishes difficult work together.

## Challenges from Superiors

It's important to note how leaders journeying from hero to host use their positional power. They have to work all levels of the hierarchy; most often, it's easier to gain support and respect from the people they lead than it is to gain it from their superiors. Most senior leaders of large hierarchies believe in their inherent superiority, as proven by the position they've attained. They don't believe that everyday people are as creative or self-motivated as are they. When participation is suggested as the means to gather insights and ideas from staff on a complex problem, senior leaders often will block such activities. They justify their opposition by stating that people would use this opportunity to take advantage of the organization; or that they would suggest ideas that have no bearing to the organization's mission; or that people would feel overly confident and overstep their roles. In truth, many senior leaders view engaging the whole system as a threat to their own power and control. They consistently choose for control, and the resultant chaos, rather than invite people in to solve difficult and complex problems.

Leaders who do know the value of full engagement, who do trust those they lead, have to constantly defend their staff from senior leaders who insist on more controls and more bureaucracy to curtail their activities, even when those very activities are producing excellent results. Strange to say, but too many senior leaders choose control over effectiveness; they're willing to risk creating more chaos by continuing their take-charge, command and control leadership.



## Re-engaging People

Those who've been held back in confining roles, who've been buried in the hierarchy, will eventually blossom and develop in the company of a hosting leader. Yet, it takes time for employees to believe that this boss is different, that this leader actually wants them to contribute. It can take 12 to 18 months in systems where people have been silenced into submission by autocratic leadership. These days, most people take a wait-and-see attitude, no longer interested in participating because past invitations weren't sincere, or didn't engage them in meaningful work.

The leader needs to prove him or herself by continually insisting that work cannot be accomplished, nor problems solved without the participation of everyone. If the message is sincere and consistent, people gradually return to life; even people who have died on the job, who're just waiting until retirement, can come alive in the presence of a leader who encourages them and creates opportunities for them to contribute.

Leaders-as-hosts need to be skilled conveners. They realize that their organization or community is rich in resources, and that the easiest way to discover these is to bring diverse people together in conversations that matter.

People who didn't like each other, people who discounted and ignored each other, people who felt invisible, neglected, left out—these are the people who can emerge from their boxes and labels to become interesting, engaged colleagues and citizens.



Hosting meaningful conversations isn't about getting people to like each other or feel good. It's about creating the means for problems to get solved, for teams to function well, for people to become energetic activists.

Hosting Leaders create substantive change by relying on everyone's creativity, commitment and generosity. They learn from firsthand experience that these qualities are present in just about everyone and in every organization. They extend sincere invitations, ask good questions, and have the courage to support risk-taking and experimentation.

## Are You a Hero?

Many of us can get caught up acting like heroes, not from power drives, but from our good intentions and desires to help. Are you acting as a hero?

Here's how to know.

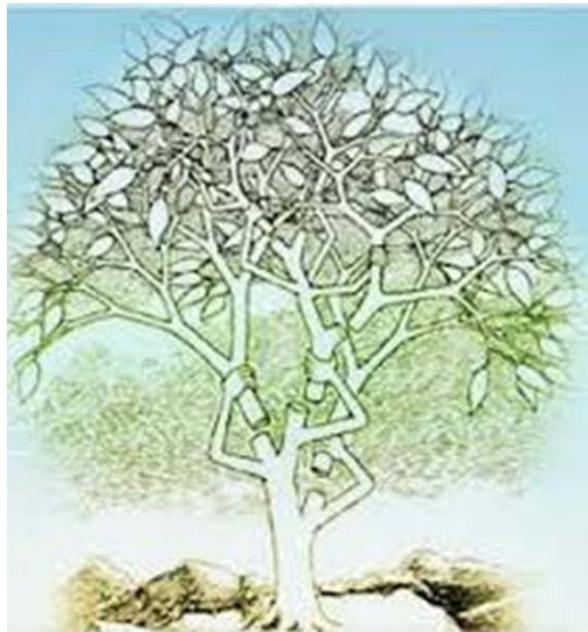
You're acting as a hero when you believe that if you just work harder, you'll fix things; that if you just get smarter or learn a new technique, you'll be able to solve problems for others. You're acting as a hero if you take on more and more projects and causes and have less time for relationships.

You're playing the hero if you believe that you can save the situation, the person, the world.

Our heroic impulses most often are born from the best of intentions. We want to help, we want to solve, we want to fix. Yet this is the illusion of specialness, that we're the only ones who can offer help, service, and skills. If we don't do it, nobody will. This hero's path has only one guaranteed destination—we end up feeling lonely, exhausted and unappreciated.

It is time for all us heroes to go home because, if we do, we'll notice that we're not alone. We're surrounded by people just like us. They too want to contribute, they too have ideas, they want to be useful to others and solve their own problems.

Truth be told, they never wanted heroes to rescue them anyway.

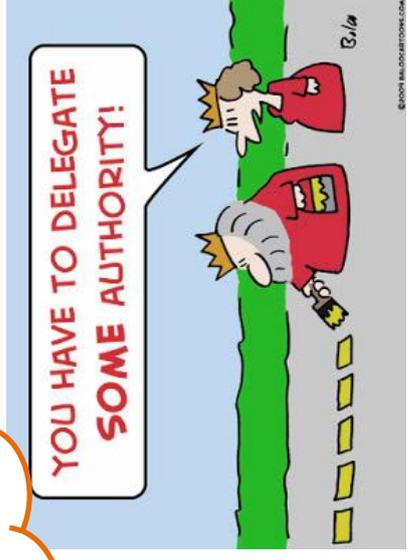
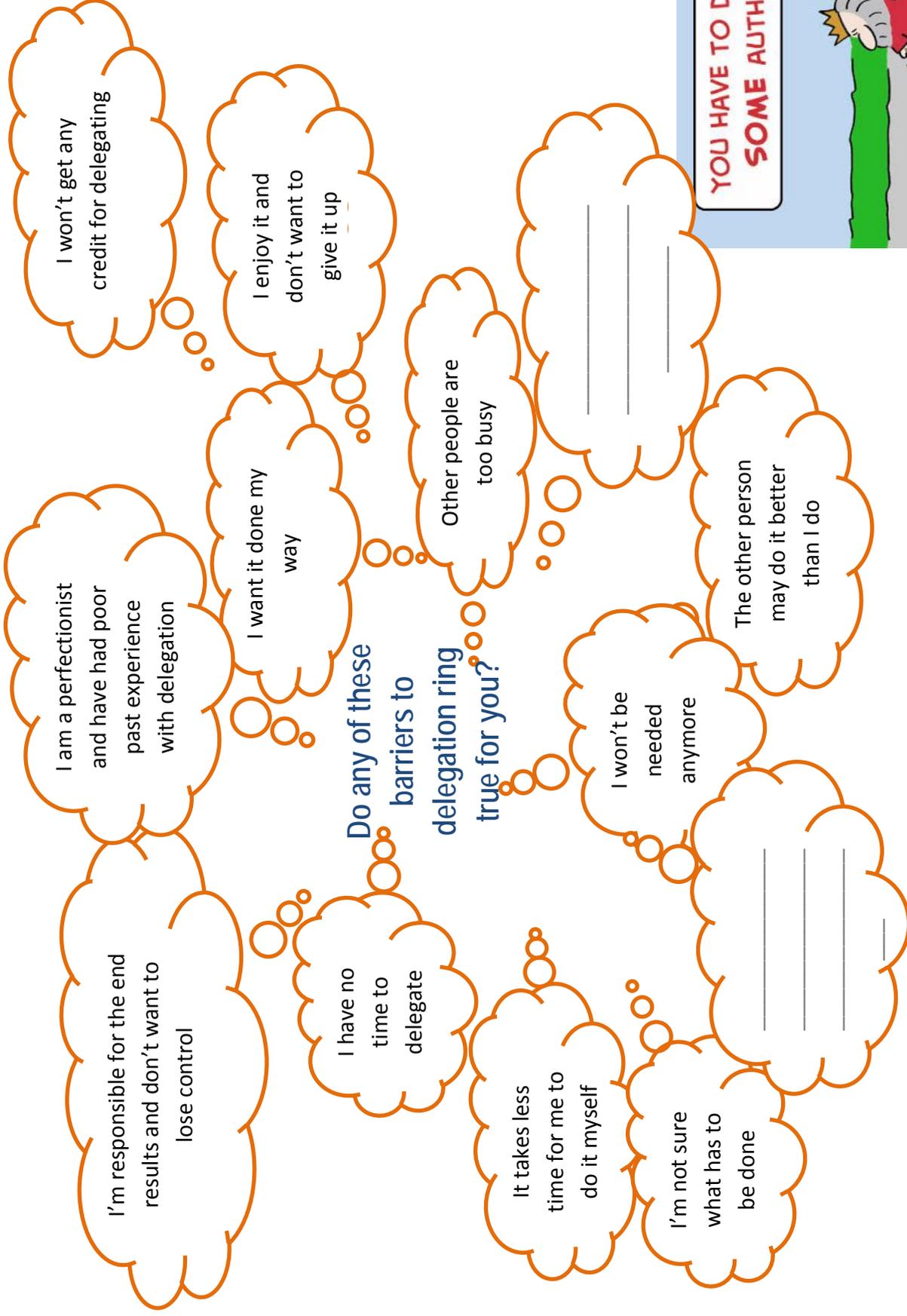


Parts of this article are excerpts from *Walk Out Walk On: A Learning Journey Into Communities Daring to Live the Future Now*. Margaret Wheatley & Deborah Frieze. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Forthcoming April 2011.

The real role of leadership in education... is not and should not be command and control. The real role of leadership is climate control, creating a climate of possibility.

Ken Robinson

# Barriers to Effective Delegation



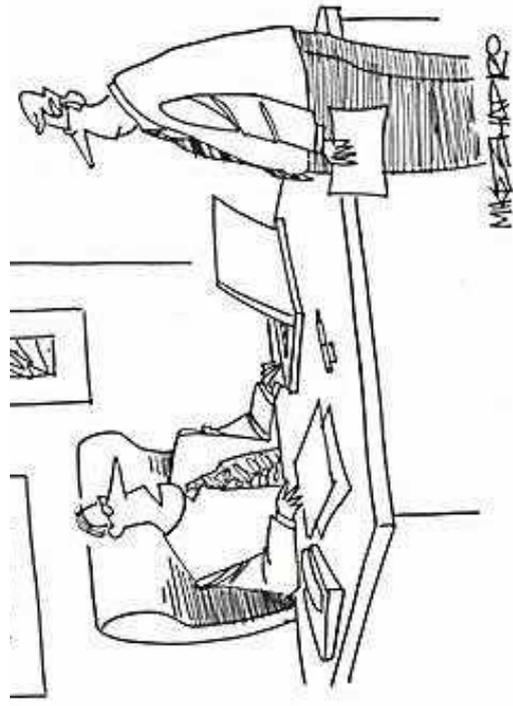
Consider other barriers and write them in the blank spaces.

## Think about the benefits of delegating.....

Benefits for you as a leader:

Benefits for the people we assist:

Benefits for the members and the Society:



"In the interest of overcoming my reluctance to delegate, starting Monday I want you to do all of my worrying for me."

### Do delegate

- When a person might benefit from the responsibility (e.g. an emerging leader in your group)
- When a person has a particular skill or talent that would suit a task
- When there is a lot of work to manage
- When someone expresses an interest in a task

### Add your own:



### Don't delegate

- Your own “hot potatoes” (e.g., tasks that are time sensitive, an emergency, and/or confidential)
- Things that you consider ‘beneath you’
- Tasks you would not be willing to complete
- Tasks that a person may not possess the necessary skills to complete the task successfully

### Add your own:

Thanks to Shaya Lambrechtsen from Lismore Central Council for sharing this resource with us.



# Categorising the demands on our time

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Urgent and Important</b></p> <p><b>Sensitive Issues, Deadline Driven</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential however creates burn out</li> <li>• Unless managed creates endless cycle</li> <li>• Must be minimised and requires proactivity</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Project work with imminent deadline</li> <li>◦ Reports and other submissions</li> <li>◦ Serious urgent complaints</li> <li>◦ Small problem that can escalate if it is not dealt with in a timely manner</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Non Urgent and Important</b></p> <p><b>Prevention, Planning and Improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden quadrant: productivity lives here</li> <li>• Where planning, capability improvement and relationship building occur</li> <li>• Essential for life balance and stress reduction</li> <li>• Allocate time, be ruthless</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Planning, preparation, scheduling</li> <li>◦ Thinking and creating</li> <li>◦ Anticipative, preventative activities</li> <li>◦ Developing strategy</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Urgent and Non Important</b></p> <p><b>Interruptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads to short term focus and crisis management environment</li> <li>• Minimise through discipline</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ad-hoc interruptions</li> <li>◦ Irrelevant distractions</li> <li>◦ Duplicated effort</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Non Urgent and Non Important</b></p> <p><b>Time Wasters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often pleasant rarely productive</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Chat and gossip</li> <li>◦ Unnecessary tidying and updating equipment, etc.</li> </ul>

## Categorising the demands on our time

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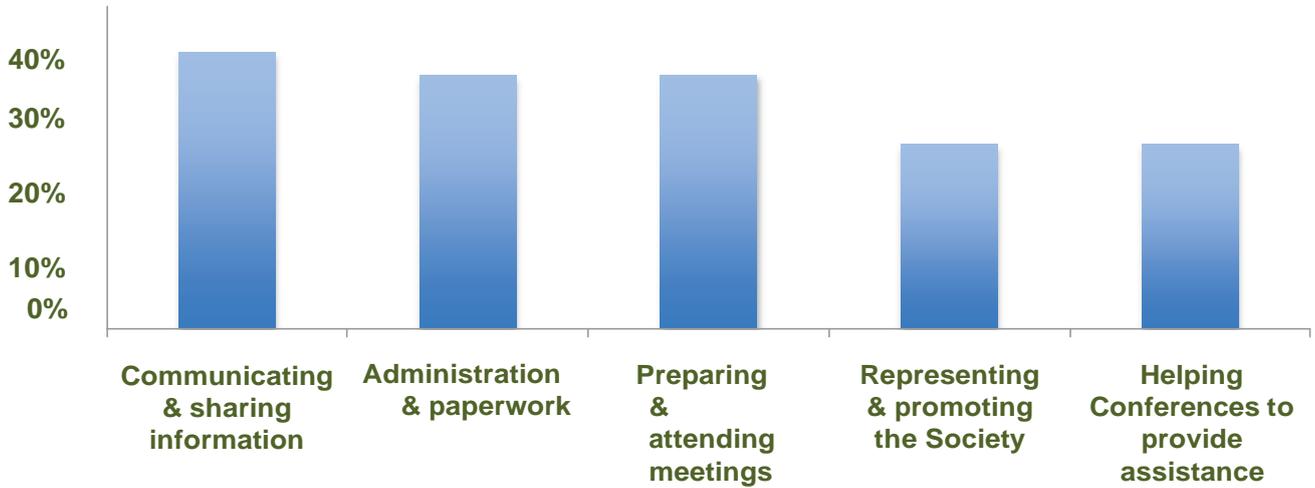
<p><b>Urgent and Important Do it Now</b></p> <p>Sensitive Issues, Deadline Driven</p>	<p><b>Non Urgent and Important Delegate</b></p> <p>Prevention, Planning and Improvement</p>
<p><b>Urgent and Non Important Do it Later</b></p> <p>Interruptions</p>	<p><b>Non Urgent and Non Important Don't do it</b></p> <p>Time Wasters</p>

**Instructions:** List the various tasks that you undertake into the above quadrants

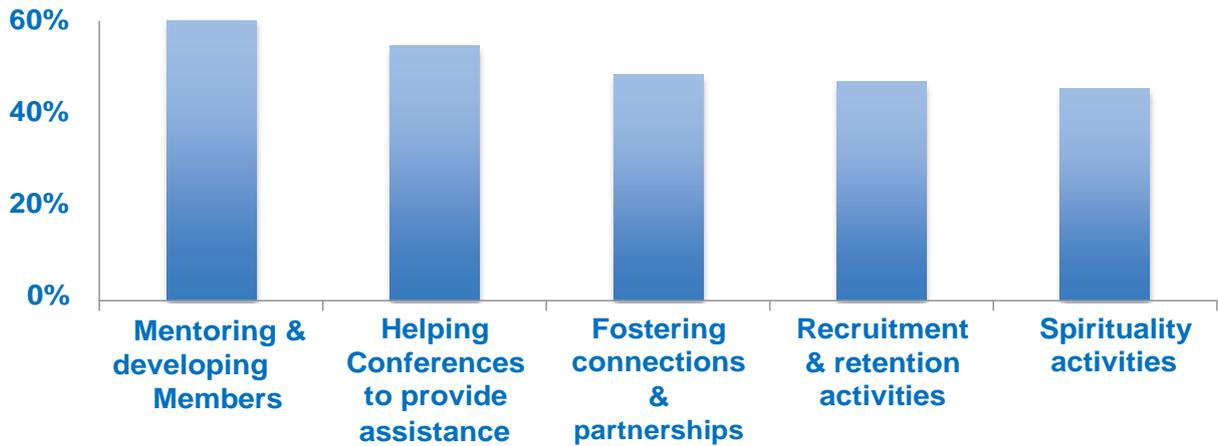


## Regional Council President Survey Snapshot

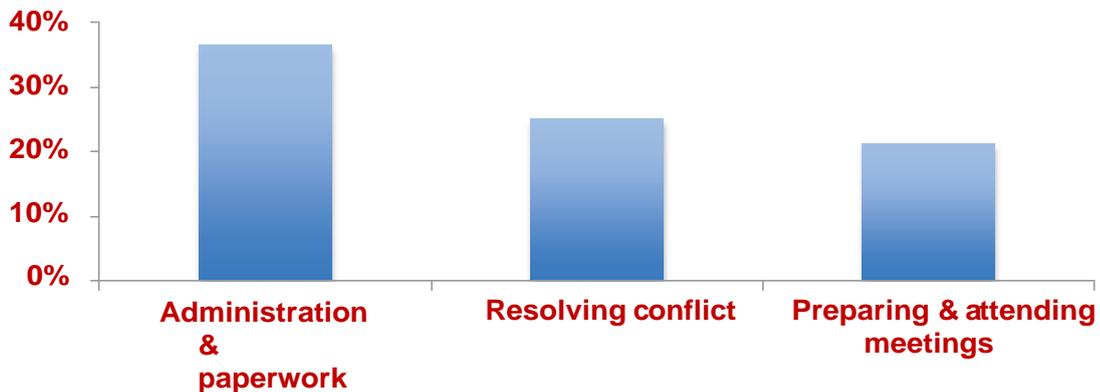
**Current Reality:** RCPs reported that these five activities take a lot of time



**Desired Future:** RCPs want to spend more time on these activities



**Desired Future:** RCPs want to spend less time on these activities





# **GROW** to delegate authority and ownership

Revisit these coaching questions to assist you delegate authority and ownership

## **1. Goal**

What do you want to achieve?

What will it look like when completed?

Describe your perfect world.

## **3. Options**

What are your options?

What could you do differently?

If anything was possible, what would you do?

## **2. Reality**

Where are you now in relation to your goal?

On a scale of 1 -10 where are you?

What skills /knowledge /attributes do you have?

What progress have you made so far?

## **4. Way forward**

What one small step are you going to take now?

What actions will you take?

When are you going to start?

Who will help you?

When shall I check back in with you?



# Consider this...



## Creating a Delegation Plan

1. What are some of the barriers for me in delegating to others?
  
2. Name one task, project, or role that you can delegate and create a Delegation Plan to do just that:

What can you delegate?	To Whom?	Specify the result you want	Establish time frame	Determine person's authority	How will you track progress and be available?

3. What are some other things in your life that you could consider changing to enable others to grow and increase their confidence and capacity for leadership?





## Delegation

1. All it takes is 10 minutes

[https://www.ted.com/playlists/245/talks\\_for\\_when\\_you\\_feel\\_total](https://www.ted.com/playlists/245/talks_for_when_you_feel_total) 9.24 minutes

When is the last time you did absolutely nothing for 10 whole minutes? Not texting, talking or even thinking? Mindfulness expert Andy Puddicombe describes the transformative power of doing just that: Refreshing your mind for 10 minutes a day, simply by being mindful and experiencing the present moment.

2. Delegation tips

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=how+to+delegate&&view=detail&mid=40AF68448563BF425CA940AF68448563BF425CA9&FORM=VRDGAR> 3.34

minutes

If you don't learn how to delegate a task, you're destined to do it forever!

3. Successful Delegation

[https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_98.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_98.htm)

Using the power of other people's help.

4. Patterns of Thinking

<http://mentoring-works.com/patterns-of-thinking/>