



resonant

Ideas that Carry Further

Delegate to Empower

Great leaders at all levels delegate effectively. When they do, they empower their teams, avoid micromanaging, and keep their own attention where it needs to be focused.

Here's how to delegate effectively in four straightforward steps.



1. Ensure shared expectations

When you delegate to a person or team, start by ensuring that you have shared expectations of what's to be done and what the timeline is.

This step might seem basic, and yet it's where a lot of delegation falls down - because you have one understanding of what's to be done and the other person has a different idea.

State your expectations clearly. If you're not 100% sure from the conversation that the other person is on the same page that you are, you can say "I'd like to make sure that we have shared expectations. Can you please tell me what you understand the work to be?"

Focus your shared expectations on the WHO, WHAT, and WHEN of the work: who's involved, what's to be done, and when it needs to be completed.

Unless there's a very specific reason why the work needs to be done in a particular way, leave the HOW up to the individual - that's where they use their experience, expertise, creativity, and discretion. If you find yourself focusing on the HOW, it's worth asking yourself if you're starting to micromanage.

2. Share the context

Help the person or team to whom you're delegating understand WHY the work is important.

Who will use the work, and what will they use it to do?

Who is holding you accountable for this work?

What do they need to know so their work meets the immediate need and speaks to the larger context?



3. Set them up for success

Once you're confident that you and the person or team to whom you're delegating have a shared understanding of the work to be done, ask "How can I set you up for success?"

Then stop talking and listen.

Find out what the individual needs - and what they don't need - to succeed.

Then provide what they need: information, access to resources, additional staff to meet the timeline.

If you have the urge to do more, check in with yourself - that's the urge to micromanage.

Before you close the conversation, make clear that they're welcome to come back to you at any time if they need your support or access to resources that they can't reach directly.

4. Set up a clear system of accountability

Tell the person or team to whom you're delegating **WHAT** you need to know and **WHEN** you need to know it.

Then ask them what system of accountability might work best for them. That is, leave the **HOW** up to them.

If you know you might be called upon at any time to provide a status update, ask for what you need to be prepared for that.

If you have to present at a standing meeting, ask for the person's help in being prepared for that. Better yet, ask if that person can be invited to the meeting so they have a chance to present their own work and shine.

Then step back. Don't check in unless the person or team doesn't share information in keeping with the system of accountability that you all agreed to.