



DELEGATION

Delegation Skills

Abstract

This program is designed to assist leaders who are struggling with delegation skills to achieve greater success in becoming more effective delegators.

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Lesson 1: What is Delegation?

(30 mins)

Learning Outcomes

- Define delegation in the context of emotionally intelligent leadership
- Differentiate between task dumping and strategic delegation

Defining Delegation

Delegation is more than just handing off tasks, it's a strategic leadership practice rooted in trust, clarity, and development. It reflects a leader's ability to empower others while maintaining accountability for outcomes.

Here are two complementary definitions to ground the concept:

Definition 1 (Strategic Lens):

Delegation is the intentional assignment of responsibility and authority for specific tasks or decisions to another person, while the leader retains overall accountability for results.

Definition 2 (Relational Lens):

Delegation is a trust-based leadership act that enables others to grow, contribute meaningfully, and take ownership within clearly defined boundaries.

These definitions highlight both the operational and emotional dimensions of delegation, making it a cornerstone of effective, human-centered leadership.

Key Principles of Delegation

To delegate effectively, leaders must embrace several foundational principles. These principles ensure that delegation is not only efficient but also empowering and aligned with ethical leadership.

1. Clarity of Expectations

- Clearly define the task, desired outcomes, timelines, and boundaries.
- Ambiguity leads to frustration and rework, clarity builds confidence.

2. Trust and Psychological Safety

- Delegation is a signal of trust. When leaders delegate, they affirm the competence and potential of others.
- Psychological safety allows team members to ask questions, take initiative, and learn from mistakes without fear.

3. Right Person, Right Task

- Match tasks to individuals based on their strengths, developmental goals, and capacity.
- Delegation should stretch people, not set them up to fail.

4. Support Without Micromanaging

- Provide resources, guidance, and access to feedback, but resist the urge to micromanage.
- Effective delegation balances autonomy with availability.

5. Accountability and Follow-Through

- Delegation doesn't mean abdication. Leaders remain accountable for results and must follow up constructively.
- Use check-ins to celebrate progress, troubleshoot challenges, and reinforce learning.

6. Growth-Oriented Mindset

- View delegation as a developmental opportunity, for both the leader and the team.
- Ask: "How can this task help someone grow?" rather than "How can I get this off my plate?"

Reflective Activity: Delegation

Think about when you delegate and reflect on the following

- a) "When you delegate, do you do so with clarity, trust, and growth in mind, or out of urgency and overload?"

- b) What shifts could you make to delegate more intentionally?

Lesson 2: Why is Delegation Important?

(30 mins)

Learning Outcomes

- Explore how delegation enhances leadership effectiveness
- Understand its role in team development and psychological safety

Delegation is not just a tactical move, it's a strategic, relational, and emotionally intelligent leadership practice. When done well, it transforms team dynamics, strengthens trust, and frees leaders to lead with greater clarity and purpose.

Strategic Benefits of Delegation

1. Frees Up Leader Capacity for Vision and Strategy

Effective leaders operate best when they're focused on high-impact activities, visioning, strategic planning, and culture shaping.

Delegation allows leaders to step out of the operational weeds and into their rightful role as architects of the future.

- Without delegation, leaders risk becoming bottlenecks.
- With delegation, they create space to think, innovate, and lead proactively.

"Delegation is not about giving away work—it's about creating space for leadership."

2. Builds Team Competence and Confidence

Delegation is a developmental tool. When leaders entrust tasks to others, they signal belief in their team's potential.

This builds competence through experience and confidence through trust.

- Team members gain new skills and stretch their capacity.
- Confidence grows when people feel trusted and supported.

"People rise to the level of trust you place in them."

Relational Benefits of Delegation

1. Signals Trust and Respect

Delegation is a relational act. It communicates, “I believe in you,” more powerfully than any motivational speech. It affirms the value of others and invites them into meaningful contribution.

- Trust is the currency of leadership; delegation is one way to invest it.
- Respect is shown when leaders delegate with clarity and care.

2. Encourages Ownership and Accountability

When people are given responsibility, they begin to take ownership—not just of tasks, but of outcomes.

Delegation fosters a culture where accountability is shared, and leadership is distributed.

- Ownership leads to initiative, problem-solving, and pride in work.
- Accountability becomes a shared value, not a top-down demand.

“Delegation turns followers into co-creators.”

Emotional Intelligence Benefits of Delegation

1. Leaders Must Manage Their Own Fears

Delegation often triggers internal resistance. Leaders may fear:

- Losing control
- Being perceived as lazy
- Mistakes or failure
- “No one can do it like I can”

Emotionally intelligent leaders recognize these fears, name them, and choose trust over control. They understand that growth requires letting go.

“Delegation is a mirror—it reflects your relationship with control, trust, and vulnerability.”

2. Delegation Builds Relational Equity

Every act of delegation is a deposit into the trust bank. Over time, these deposits build relational equity, a foundation of mutual respect, psychological safety, and shared purpose.

- Teams become more resilient and self-directed.
- Leaders become more trusted and approachable.

"Delegation isn't just about tasks—it's about trust, growth, and connection."

Activity: Reflection on the importance of delegation

Reflect on the following questions honestly

- a) What fears or beliefs might hold you back from delegating more often?

- b) How do these impact your team's growth?

Lesson 3: Tools for Effective Delegation

(45 mins)

Learning Outcomes

- Learn practical models and tools to delegate with clarity and impact

The 5 Levels of Delegation.

In his leadership framework, Michael Hyatt introduces the *5 Levels of Delegation* as a practical tool to help leaders clarify the degree of authority they're granting when assigning tasks.

This model is especially valuable in emotionally intelligent leadership, where trust, autonomy, and accountability must be carefully balanced. By explicitly communicating the level of decision-making expected, from strict adherence to instructions (Level 1) to full independent action (Level 5).

Leaders reduce ambiguity, empower their teams, and foster a culture of ownership.

The framework encourages progressive trust-building, allowing leaders to delegate with confidence while developing the capacity and confidence of those they lead.

The 5 Levels of Delegation (Michael Hyatt-inspired):

1. Do exactly what I say
2. Research and report back
3. Research and recommend
4. Decide and inform me
5. Decide and act independently

Why Levels of Delegation Matter

Delegation is not a one-size-fits-all activity. The level of autonomy you grant depends on the task, the person, and the context.

Leaders who delegate effectively understand that clarity of authority is just as important as clarity of task. Without it, delegation can lead to confusion, frustration, or micromanagement.

The 5 Levels of Delegation offer a practical framework to help leaders:

- Communicate expectations with precision
- Match responsibility to readiness
- Build trust progressively
- Develop team autonomy over time

This model encourages leaders to move from control to empowerment, while maintaining accountability and psychological safety.

The 5 Levels of Delegation

Each level represents a different degree of decision-making authority. Leaders should explicitly communicate which level applies when delegating a task.

Level 1: Do Exactly What I Say

- The leader gives specific instructions and expects them to be followed precisely.
- No decision-making is required or permitted.
- Useful for urgent, high-risk, or compliance-driven tasks.

Example: "Please send this exact email to the client by 3 PM."

Leadership Insight: This level is about execution, not empowerment. Use sparingly and with clarity.

Level 2: Research and Report Back

- The team member investigates options or gathers information but does not make decisions.
- The leader retains full control and decides what action to take.

Example: "Please research three venue options for our leadership retreat and report back with pros and cons."

Leadership Insight: This builds analytical skills and prepares the team member for higher levels of autonomy.

Level 3: Research and Recommend

- The team member explores options and makes a recommendation.
- The leader reviews and decides whether to approve or modify the recommendation.

Example: "Find the best platform for our online course delivery and recommend your top choice with justification."

Leadership Insight: This level fosters ownership and critical thinking while keeping final authority with the leader.

Level 4: Decide and Inform Me

- The team member makes the decision and informs the leader afterward.
- The leader trusts the person's judgment and does not need to approve beforehand.

Example: "Choose the facilitator for next month's workshop and let me know who you've selected."

Leadership Insight: This level signals high trust and allows the leader to stay informed without interfering.

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Level 5: Decide and Act Independently

- Full responsibility and authority are delegated.
- The team member acts without needing to report back unless issues arise.

Example: "You're fully in charge of onboarding new team members—design the process and implement it as you see fit."

Leadership Insight: This is the ultimate expression of trust and empowerment. Use when the person is highly competent and aligned with values.

"Which level of delegation do you most often use—and why? What would it take to delegate at Level 4 or 5 more consistently?"

Activity: "5 Levels of Delegation"

a) Which level of delegation do you most often use—and why?

b) What would it take to delegate at Level 4 or 5 more consistently?

The TRUST Framework for Effective Delegation

Designed for emotionally intelligent, trust-based leadership

Delegation is not just about handing off tasks, it's about transferring ownership in a way that builds competence, confidence, and connection. The **TRUST Framework** offers a structured yet flexible approach to delegation that aligns with TBLA's values of ethical leadership, psychological safety, and relational accountability.

Each element of TRUST represents a key ingredient for successful delegation:

T - Task Clarity

What exactly is being delegated?

- Leaders must define the task with precision: What needs to be done? What does success look like? What are the boundaries?
- Vague instructions lead to confusion and rework. Clear expectations create confidence and alignment.
- Include purpose, scope, deliverables, and any non-negotiables.

Leadership Insight: Clarity is kindness. It's the first act of trust.

R - Responsibility Alignment

Who is best suited to take this on—and why?

- Match the task to the right person based on strengths, developmental goals, and current capacity.
- Consider not just technical skills, but emotional readiness and relational dynamics.
- Ensure the person understands their level of authority (use the 5 Levels of Delegation).

Leadership Insight: Delegation is a vote of confidence. Make it count by aligning responsibility with readiness.

U - Understanding Capacity

Does the person have the time, tools, and emotional bandwidth to succeed?

- Check for competing priorities, workload, and stress levels.
- Explore what support or training might be needed to build capacity.
- This step requires empathy and honest dialogue—not assumptions.

Leadership Insight: Delegation without capacity is not empowerment—it's pressure.

S - Support Structures

What scaffolding will help them succeed?

- Provide access to resources, mentorship, templates, or peer support.
- Set up regular check-ins or feedback loops to offer guidance without micromanaging.
- Create psychological safety by inviting questions and normalizing learning curves.

Leadership Insight: Support is not control—it's connection. It says, "I'm with you, not over you."

T - Timeline and Feedback

When is it due—and how will we learn from it?

- Agree on realistic timelines and milestones.
- Clarify how progress will be tracked and how feedback will be given.
- Use completion as a moment for reflection, celebration, and growth—not just evaluation.

Leadership Insight: Feedback is a gift. When delivered with care, it deepens trust and strengthens relationships.

Activity: “The TRUST Framework”

Which part of the TRUST Framework do you tend to skip or rush through—and what impact does that have on your team's experience of delegation?

Activity: Delegation Planning Template

Use this tool to plan intentional, trust-based delegation that empowers your team.

Empowering leaders to delegate with clarity, care, and trust

This framework is structured around five key components; each aligned with the TRUST Framework principles. It's designed to guide leaders through intentional delegation that fosters growth, ownership, and relational accountability.

1. Task Description

Purpose: Define the task clearly and contextually.

- What is the task?
- Why is it important?
- What are the expected outcomes or deliverables?
- What are the boundaries or constraints?

Example: “Design a 30-minute reflective activity for Module 4 on Psychological Safety, including facilitator notes and learner prompts.”

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2. Person Selected

Purpose: Align the task with the right individual.

- Who is being delegated to?
- What strengths or developmental goals make them a good fit?
- How does this task support their growth?

Example: "Sipho N., a junior facilitator with strong interpersonal insight and a desire to grow in curriculum design."

3. Level of Authority

Purpose: Clarify decision-making power.

Use TBLA's **5 Levels of Delegation** (or customize your own scale):

Level	Description
1	Do exactly as instructed
2	Research and report back
3	Recommend and act with approval
4	Act and inform
5	Full ownership and accountability

Example: "Level 3 – Recommend and act with approval from the lead designer."

4. Support Needed

Purpose: Identify scaffolding and resources.

- What tools, templates, or materials are needed?
- Who can offer mentorship or guidance?
- What emotional or relational support might be helpful?

Example: "Access to previous module templates, weekly coaching with Noeline, and peer review from another facilitator."

5. Check-In Schedule

Purpose: Establish rhythm and feedback loops.

Week	Focus	Format
1	Task briefing & goals	Live meeting
2	Draft review	Email + notes
3	Final feedback	Live meeting
4	Reflection & learning	Live meeting

Tip: Include space for mutual feedback—what worked, what could improve, and how trust was built.

Lesson 4: Obstacles to Delegation

30 min

Delegation, while essential to effective leadership, is often easier said than done. Many leaders understand its strategic value, yet still struggle to practice it consistently. Why? Because delegation isn't just a technical skill; it's a relational and emotional process that requires vulnerability, trust, and self-awareness.

Obstacles to delegation often stem from internal beliefs, fears, and habits that are deeply ingrained in a leader's identity.

These may include perfectionism, fear of losing control, or the assumption that "it's quicker to do it myself." External factors, such as unclear roles, lack of team readiness, or poor communication, can also create friction and hesitation.

By naming these obstacles, leaders can begin to dismantle them. This section invites you to reflect honestly on what holds you back, explore the emotional roots of resistance, and consider how overcoming these barriers can unlock greater trust, accountability, and team growth.

Internal Barriers to Delegation

Delegation is not simply a matter of assigning tasks, it's a relational act that requires trust, vulnerability, and a willingness to let go. While external factors like team readiness or role clarity can hinder delegation, the most persistent obstacles often lie within the leader themselves.

Internal barriers are shaped by personal beliefs, emotional habits, and identity narratives. They can subtly influence decision-making, erode trust in others, and reinforce a cycle of over-responsibility. By bringing these barriers into conscious awareness, leaders can begin to shift from control to collaboration, from self-protection to shared growth.

Let's explore three common internal barriers that often stand in the way of effective delegation:

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is the belief that only flawless outcomes are acceptable, and that only I can ensure they happen. Leaders who struggle with perfectionism may hesitate to delegate because they fear others won't meet their standards. This mindset often leads to micromanagement, burnout, and missed opportunities for team development.

What lies beneath:

- A deep need for approval or fear of criticism
- Identity tied to being “the reliable one” or “the expert”
- Discomfort with uncertainty or mistakes

Reframe for growth:

Delegation becomes a tool for learning, not just execution. When leaders allow others to try, fail, and improve, they foster a culture of growth rather than fear. Excellence is still valued, but it's pursued collectively, not guarded individually.

Fear of Losing Control

Control offers a sense of safety. Leaders may resist delegation because it feels like relinquishing authority, influence, or oversight. This fear can manifest as over-involvement, reluctance to share information, or subtle undermining of others' autonomy.

What lies beneath:

- Anxiety about unpredictability or being sidelined
- Past experiences of betrayal or disappointment
- A belief that leadership equals constant oversight

Reframe for growth:

True leadership isn't about holding the reins tightly; it's about empowering others to steer. Delegation is an act of trust that expands a leader's influence through others, rather than diminishing it. Control shifts from task-level to values-level: guiding through purpose, not micromanagement.

Belief That “It’s Quicker to Do It Myself”

This barrier is deceptively practical. In fast-paced environments, leaders often default to doing tasks themselves because teaching or explaining feels time-consuming. While this may offer short-term efficiency, it undermines long-term capacity building.

What lies beneath:

- Impatience or urgency
- Underestimation of others' potential
- A habit of over-functioning or rescuing

Reframe for growth:

Delegation is an investment. The time spent upfront in coaching or clarifying pays dividends in future autonomy, innovation, and resilience. Leaders shift from being the bottleneck to being the catalyst.

External Barriers to Delegation

Even when a leader is internally ready to delegate, the surrounding environment may not be. External barriers arise from team dynamics, organizational systems, and communication structures that make delegation feel risky, unclear, or ineffective. These barriers are not about personal reluctance; they're about practical realities that can undermine trust and accountability.

By identifying and addressing these external factors, leaders can create conditions that support empowered delegation, psychological safety, and shared ownership.

Lack of Team Readiness

When a team isn't adequately prepared to take on delegated tasks, even the most well-intentioned delegation can backfire. Readiness isn't just about skill—it's about mindset, confidence, and cohesion.

Key dimensions of this barrier:

- **Skill gaps:** Team members may lack the technical or interpersonal competencies required to execute the task effectively.
- **Low confidence or psychological safety:** If individuals fear failure or judgment, they may avoid taking initiative or ownership.
- **Limited autonomy experience:** Teams unused to decision-making may struggle with accountability or problem-solving when given responsibility.
- **Resistance to change:** Delegation often shifts dynamics. If the team isn't aligned with the leader's vision or values, resistance may emerge.

Leadership response:

Build readiness through coaching, gradual empowerment, and trust-building rituals. Use reflective tools to assess individual and collective capacity, and foster a culture where learning is prioritized over perfection.

Poor Communication

Delegation thrives on clarity, context, and connection. When communication is fragmented or inconsistent, it erodes trust and creates confusion around roles, responsibilities, and outcomes.

Key dimensions of this barrier:

- **Lack of clarity:** Vague instructions or ambiguous goals leave team members unsure of what's expected.
- **One-way directives:** Delegation without dialogue can feel transactional, reducing engagement and ownership.
- **Inadequate feedback loops:** Without regular check-ins or space for questions, misunderstandings compound.
- **Cultural or relational disconnects:** Differences in communication styles or relational dynamics can distort intent and interpretation.

Leadership response:

Practice emotionally intelligent communication—listen actively, frame delegation as partnership, and ensure mutual understanding. Use tools like delegation charters or shared agreements to reinforce clarity and alignment.

Undefined Expectations

When expectations are not explicitly defined, delegation becomes a guessing game. This leads to misaligned outcomes, frustration, and potential breakdowns in accountability.

Key dimensions of this barrier:

- **Unclear success criteria:** If the team doesn't know what "good" looks like, they may deliver work that misses the mark.
- **No boundaries or authority levels:** Without knowing how much decision-making power they hold, team members may either overstep or underperform.
- **Lack of timelines or milestones:** Delegation without structure can result in delays or missed opportunities.
- **Absence of shared purpose:** If the task feels disconnected from the team's values or goals, motivation suffers.

Leadership response:

Define expectations collaboratively. Co-create success indicators, timelines, and decision rights. Anchor tasks in shared purpose to enhance meaning and commitment.

Activity: Obstacles to Delegation

Which of these obstacles show up most often in your leadership?

What mindset shift could help you overcome it?"

Lesson 5: Practical Tools for Delegation

45 min

Delegation is more than a managerial skill, it's a relational practice rooted in trust, clarity, and shared growth. When leaders delegate with intention, they signal belief in their team's potential, foster accountability, and create space for collective evolution. Yet, effective delegation requires more than assigning tasks, it demands emotional intelligence, strategic alignment, and a deep understanding of team dynamics.

This section invites you to explore delegation as a transformative leadership tool. Through reflective assessment, practical mapping, and emotionally intelligent dialogue, you'll uncover how to delegate in ways that empower others, strengthen trust, and reinforce ethical leadership.

Each activity is designed to help you:

- Reflect on your current delegation habits
- Identify meaningful opportunities to share responsibility
- Practice conversations that build psychological safety and clarity

Let's move beyond task transfer and into trust transfer.

1. Delegation Self-Assessment

Purpose:

To help leaders reflect on their current delegation habits and identify areas for growth.

Instructions:

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 = Rarely / 2 = Occasionally / 3 = Sometimes / 4 = Often and 5 = Consistently, across the following 10 dimensions:

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Dimension	Description	1	2	3	4	5
1. Clarity	I clearly communicate the task, purpose, and desired outcomes.					
2. Trust	I trust my team to take ownership without micromanaging.					
3. Follow-Up	I check in appropriately without hovering or withdrawing.					
4. Matching	I delegate tasks based on strengths, interests, and growth potential.					
5. Boundaries	I define decision-making authority and limits clearly.					
6. Feedback	I provide constructive feedback and celebrate progress.					
7. Emotional Intelligence	I consider the emotional impact of delegation on team members.					
8. Purpose Alignment	I connect tasks to the team's broader purpose or goals.					
9. Learning Orientation	I treat delegation as a development opportunity, not just task transfer.					
10. Accountability	I hold others accountable with empathy and fairness.					

Which dimensions scored lowest?

What patterns do you notice?

What one shift could improve your delegation practice this week?

2. Delegation Map

Purpose:

To identify delegation opportunities and align them with team strengths.

Instructions:

1. List 3 tasks you currently handle that could be delegated.

Think of tasks that are time-consuming, developmental for others, or not in your zone of genius.

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2. Match each task to a team member.

Include a brief rationale based on their strengths, interests, or growth goals.

Task	Team Member	Rationale

Reflection Prompt:

What support or coaching might each person need to succeed?

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How will you communicate the “why” behind the delegation?

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3. Delegation Conversation Script

Purpose:

To practice emotionally intelligent delegation that builds trust and clarity you can use this script as a guideline.

Structure:

1. Connect with Purpose:

"I'd love to explore a way for you to take on something that aligns with your strengths and helps us move forward as a team."

2. Frame the Task Clearly:

"The task involves [brief description], and it contributes to [broader goal or impact]."

3. Define Expectations:

"Here's what success looks like: [outcomes, timelines, boundaries]. You'll have decision-making space around [specific areas]."

4. Offer Support:

"I'm here to support you—whether through check-ins, resources, or sounding board moments. What would help you feel confident?"

5. Invite Dialogue:

"How does this feel for you? Any thoughts or concerns you'd like to share?"

6. Affirm Trust:

"I trust your judgment and know you'll bring your unique strengths to this. Let's make this a learning win for both of us."

Reflections for action:

Our Reflections are often the most powerful part of the learning process

It would be a pity to forget them. Use this Work page to record things which you have learnt during the workshop and which you want to put into Action.

	Action	Who what when
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