

Benefits Missed When You Don't Delegate

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If you've been a manager or parent for very long, you know the importance of delegation. You know you can't do everything. Getting things done in a family or organization is a team activity, not an individual one. You also know that delegation isn't as simple as asking someone to do something.

Handing off a responsibility to others can be difficult for many reasons. Not everyone is dependable. Some lack skill. Some lack time. Some lack interest or work ethic. In other cases, there just aren't enough people or hours in the day to get everything done. Or it is simply faster to do something yourself than to explain, train, and oversee someone else.

But a lack of time and resource aren't the primary reasons that many managers and parents find it difficult to empower others. The real reason is that they can't let go. Many people are afraid to give responsibility to others. They fear losing control. They fear work won't get done how and when they want it. They fear becoming unneeded.

Many parents try to do everything for their family they possibly can. Some to the point of exhaustion. They plan, work, shuttle, cook, clean, buy, repair, pick up, put away, dress, and take on their family's responsibilities even when their kids are capable of pitching in.

In the workplace too there are managers who act like proverbial helicopter parents. They can't let go. They stay directly involved in all of their organization's work even though they are paying people to do the work. Some managers withhold opportunities for their employees to do higher-level work. Other managers delegate but then micromanage those they have supposedly empowered.

Whether at home or work, there are managers and parents who are overwhelmed and burned out. They try to do it all while their children are watching TV and employees are taking off early.

If you or someone you know is struggling to let go, consider that there is a significant cost to not letting go. You are cheating yourself as well as others.

Before you try to add another task to your to-do list, consider what you are doing to yourself as well as those around you. Consider what you are not getting done. There are many benefits missed when you do work that could better be delegated to others.

As a reminder, delegation isn't abdication. Parents and bosses still have a role to play. They follow up on what has been delegated. They stay informed about what is going on. They provide coaching, guidance, and resources as needed. They provide praise and encouragement. Yes, these take some time, but the benefits are huge.



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Listed below are the benefits missed when responsibilities are not handed off, people are not empowered, and delegation is withheld:

1. People lose the opportunity to learn and develop. They become dependent rather than self-sufficient.
2. People miss out on owning a responsibility that could lead to an achievement and sense of satisfaction.
3. People are cheated out of doing the work they were hired to do, could be paid to do, or should be doing.
4. People don't feel valued or trusted. They feel disrespected and excluded.
5. People don't get to use their ideas and abilities. Their innovation and creativity aren't utilized.
6. People lose their sense of authority and ambition. They turn their brain off and wait to be told what to do.
7. People get bored, lose their motivation, and no longer believe in their work. Top performers will move on to something else.
8. People don't receive the confidence boost and self-assurance that comes with doing meaningful work.
9. You don't spend your time on other activities that may be more strategic, important, and of higher value.
10. You have to keep telling people how to do things because they haven't learned how to do things on their own.
11. The amount of work that can be done is limited because you choose to be in the critical path of whatever needs to be done.

The next time you have a choice to achieve a desired outcome yourself or empower someone else to own it, consider which of these benefits apply. Consider the cost of withholding delegation. When possible, choose instead to be the coach on the sideline rather than the player on the field.

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