A FREE GUIDE BY ETHAN

Find What's Holding You Back

The reflex that got you promoted is the one keeping you stuck.



TEN MINUTES. NO PEN NEEDED.

DOING TO LEADING

You worked eleven hours today. Name one thing you finished.

If you can't, you're not lazy and you're not failing. Something else is going on. This guide shows you what.

01

Read this first

You got promoted because you were good. Really good. So why does it feel like you've never been worse at your job?

More hours. An inbox that never stops. A team that keeps coming back with the same questions. And at the end of the day, nothing you can point to.

Here's what nobody told you when they handed you the team: **you didn't get worse. The game changed.**

This guide won't teach you to lead. Not yet. First, it holds up a mirror.

> **Some pages will feel uncomfortably accurate. Good.**

02

Your day, honestly

9:14 You open your laptop with a plan.

9:20 The plan is gone. Someone's stuck. You jump in. It's faster that way.

11:40 Work comes back almost right. You fix it yourself. It's easier that way.

15:05 There's a conversation you need to have. You move it to Friday. Then to next week.

17:30 Your manager asks how it's going. "Good, I've got it covered." You do. That's the problem.

18:00 The office empties. You finally start your own work.

Here’s the uncomfortable part. Every one of those choices made sense in the moment. Faster. Easier. Safer.

That’s exactly what makes it a trap.

Nothing in your day looks like a mistake. It just adds up to a week where you’re busy all the time and moving nowhere. And a team that somehow needs you more, not less.

> **It’s not because you’re failing.**
> **It’s because the rules changed.**

03

The rules changed

For years the deal was simple. You did the work, you did it well, people noticed. You could see what you'd done every single day.

Then you got the team, and the deal changed overnight. Nobody announced it.

Linda Hill, a professor at Harvard Business School, followed new managers through their first year. Most of them walked in thinking the job was about authority. It turned out to be about getting results through other people. And many of them felt less competent than they had in years.

Not because they were worse. **Because the scoreboard moved.**

THE SCOREBOARD MOVED

BEFORE	NOW
You were valued for what you did.	**You're valued for what your team does.**
Success was visible by 6 p.m.	**Success shows up weeks later, in other people.**
Being the expert made you safe.	**Being the expert makes you the bottleneck.**
Solving problems felt like winning.	**Solving their problems keeps them small.**

Every skill that got you promoted is still in you. You just can't use it the old way anymore.

04

The feeling nobody names

Ask new leaders how the first months really feel, when nobody's listening, and the same words keep coming back. **Fake. Useless. Invisible.**

You do good work all day and go home feeling like you did nothing. You wonder when they'll notice you're making it up as you go.

If that's you, here's the truth: you're not broken, and you're not an impostor. You're keeping score with numbers that don't count anymore.

> **The feeling isn't proof you're failing. It's proof you're still playing the old game.**

05

Why “delegate more” never sticks

You’ve heard it a hundred times. Delegate more. Maybe you even bought the 300-page book, written by a CEO with a team of 4,000.

And then Tuesday happened. Someone got stuck, something was urgent, and before you’d thought about it, you were doing it yourself. Again.

That’s not a willpower problem. You don’t lack the advice. You lack the one thing nobody talks about.

> **It’s not a skill gap. It’s a reflex.**

The Doer's Reflex

The automatic pull back toward doing the work yourself, every time leading feels slow, risky or uncomfortable.

Every task you keep holding on to has a reason behind it. Not the one you'd say out loud ("it's faster"). The real one. **A need.**



The need to be useful

"If I'm not fixing things, what am I even for?"



The need for certainty

"If I don't check it, it'll go wrong."



The need for peace

"If I say it, things will get awkward."



The need to be worthy

"If I slow down, they'll see I'm not ready."

None of these needs are weak. They're the engine that made you good at your job. That's why the reflex is so hard to see. It doesn't feel like a problem. It feels like being responsible.

But as long as the need stays invisible, the task stays with you.

> **Everyone has the reflex.**
> **Not everyone has the same one.**

REFLEX 1 OF 4



The Rescuer

THE NEED TO BE USEFUL

You don’t let people fall. That’s the problem.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Someone gets stuck. You see it before they say a word, and before they’ve finished explaining, you’re already in. Ten minutes, done. They say thanks. You feel useful. Tomorrow they come back with the next one.

WHY IT GOT YOU HERE

This reflex got you promoted. You were the one who solved things, fast and clean.

WHAT IT COSTS YOU

Your day belongs to whoever gets stuck first. Around 9 p.m. you finally start your actual job.

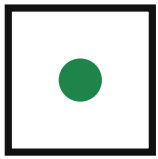
WHAT IT COSTS YOUR TEAM

Every rescue teaches one lesson: wait, and it gets fixed. They're not lazy. They're learning. From you.

YOU CATCH YOURSELF WHEN

you say “Here, let me just…” for the third time before lunch.

> I was a rescuer too. I fixed everything for everyone so nobody would notice I hadn’t fixed anything for me. The day I stopped, people didn’t fall. They stood up.
>
> ETHAN



The Controller

THE NEED FOR CERTAINTY

You do delegate. You just never really let go.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

You hand off the task. Then you ask for an update. Then to be copied on the email. Then you review the draft, and the second draft. Technically someone else did the work. In reality, you did it twice.

WHY IT GOT YOU HERE

Your standards made your work good. You see ten ways something can go wrong before anyone sees one.

WHAT IT COSTS YOU

You're doing your job and everyone's quality control. You don't feel in control. You feel on call.

WHAT IT COSTS YOUR TEAM

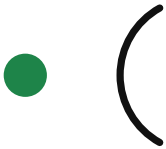
Why think, when you'll change it anyway? The good ones get bored. The rest hand you drafts instead of decisions.

YOU CATCH YOURSELF WHEN

“Just send it to me first” has become your answer to almost everything.

> I controlled everything I could, mostly how people saw me. I called it high standards. It was fear in a nicer outfit. Letting go didn’t make things worse. It made me trustworthy.

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The Avoider

THE NEED FOR PEACE

You keep the peace. And it's costing more than the war would.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

There's a conversation you need to have. You know exactly which one. It's been on your list for two weeks, and every day there's a good reason to wait. It won't sort itself out.

WHY IT GOT YOU HERE

People like working with you. You're fair, you read the room, you don't create drama.

WHAT IT COSTS YOU

The conversation moves into your head and pays rent. In the shower, at dinner, at 2 a.m.

WHAT IT COSTS YOUR TEAM

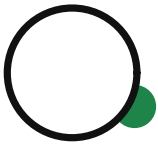
Your best people watch the one who doesn't pull their weight get away with it. The standard drops to whatever you tolerate.

YOU CATCH YOURSELF WHEN

you've rehearsed the conversation more times than it would take to just have it.

> For years my one goal was simple: don't get judged. So I never said anything that mattered. People liked me fine. Nobody respected me. Including me.

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The Prover

THE NEED TO BE WORTHY

You lead like you're still auditioning for the role.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

You got the title, but a voice keeps asking if you really deserved it. So you outwork everyone. First online, last off. You take the hardest, most visible tasks yourself.

WHY IT GOT YOU HERE

This drive is real and rare. You've always been the one who delivers when it counts.

WHAT IT COSTS YOU

Rest feels like falling behind. Praise slides off. The harder you work to feel ready, the less ready you feel.

WHAT IT COSTS YOUR TEAM

When the leader takes the visible work, the team gets the leftovers. No stretch, no credit, no growth.

YOU CATCH YOURSELF WHEN

at the end of the day, you count what you did, not what your team moved.

> I became a collector of courses. Signing up made me feel like I was growing. Then I met people with zero certificates who had everything I wanted. Proving is not becoming.

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06

If you saw yourself in two

Most people have a main reflex and a backup that kicks in under pressure.

Rescuer + Controller
You step in, then you hold on.

Rescuer + Prover
You fix things, and you need to be seen fixing them.

Controller + Avoider
You control the work so you never have to confront the person.

Avoider + Prover
You'd rather do it yourself than ask. Asking feels like admitting you can't.

Start with the one that costs your team the most. The other usually loosens with it.

07

The traps

Now you've seen it, and you'll want to fix it. Today, probably. Careful. This is where most new leaders get stuck again: they try to fix a reflex the way they'd fix a task. Fast, alone, all at once.

TRAP 1

The dump-and-run handover

You finally delegate. No context, no finish line. It comes back wrong, and the reflex gets its proof: should've done it myself.

TRAP 2

The Monday makeover

You read something inspiring on Sunday. Monday you're a new leader. By Thursday you're back where you started, feeling worse.

TRAP 3

Learning instead of changing

Another book. Another podcast. Knowing feels like progress. It's the most comfortable way to stay the same.

TRAP 4

Waiting to feel ready

You'll delegate when the team is stronger. The team can't get stronger while you're still doing their work.

> **Same root every time.**
> **Not a lack of intelligence. A lack of system.**

08

Seeing isn’t changing

When I started to change, I didn’t change everything. I couldn’t. I picked one thing and did it every single day, even when it felt pointless.

That one thing built momentum. Other things started to move. Looking back, it wasn’t luck or motivation. It was a structure. One I could repeat.

That’s the honest limit of this guide. It shows you the reflex. It can’t rewire it.

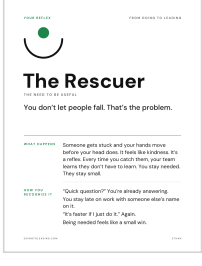
> **Seeing is the first step.**
> **Changing takes a system.**

YOUR NEXT STEP · FREE

Which one is running your week?

You've met all four. Now find yours. Ten real situations, three minutes, and your result on screen.

- Your reflex, and the backup behind it
- Your rule and your first move
- Two reminder pages for your wall and your desk, free by email





TAKE THE FREE TEST DOINGTOLEADING.COM

From Doing to Leading

Not another 300-page book. One small action a day, for 30 days, with your actual team.

1 **The Map**
Every task you hold, and the need behind it.

2 **The Handover**
One task, handed over properly, without hovering.

3 **The Conversations**
Word-for-word scripts, matched to your reflex.

4 **The New Scoreboard**
A good day, redefined. You win when they do.

Plus a two-minute daily check-in, and on Day 30 you see in numbers what changed.

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WHERE THIS GOES

The reflex got you here. It doesn't get to decide where you go next.

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ONE CIRCLE. MANY DOTS.

The day you stop being the one who does everything, they start doing more than you thought they could.



This guide is for reflection and practice. It's not therapy, medical or legal advice. If work stress is affecting your sleep, health or safety, talk to a professional. That's not weakness. It's the move a good leader makes.