

# Stories about **LEADERSHIP**

## A STORY ABOUT DELEGATION SKILLS AND TRUST



I can see it in the clock and in my breathing: it's that time again. 7:48 p.m. The screen is still on, the Gantt chart is open on the second monitor, the small bars looming like a threat. I've been in project mode since eight this morning, lunch between two calls, and yet I still feel like I haven't really finished anything.

It's not the first time. It's been going on like this for weeks. I call it the "final sprint." In reality, it's a marathon run on fumes.

My phone vibrates. Jonas: "Frederik, I've uploaded the final interface description. Can you take a look?" I immediately type back: "Yes, I'll do it right away."

Even before I send the message, I feel that pull in my stomach — the little alarm shot that says: You still haven't understood that this is your pattern.

I put my phone down next to the laptop and stare at the screen. I could double-check everything myself. I could, as so often before, take the final step myself, out of a sense of responsibility. And then tomorrow, I could go back to the meeting, tired and smiling, as if I weren't on the verge of a breakdown.

I was proud of this pattern for a long time. "I can do this." I'm reliable. I follow through. Quality is important to me.

And somewhere along this path, reliability turned into control.

The next morning, everyone seems a bit exhausted during the lead call. The Q2 driver in Region 3 is due to compete; the organization is no walk in the park.

I see Priya taking notes on the side, Jonas with his focused gaze, HR Lead, Operations.

"Frederik, you're so quiet," Priya says, half-jokingly. "Is everything okay?" I smile automatically. "Yes, everything's fine. I'm just sorting things out."

That's the spot where I usually swerve.

I know why. If I admit I'm overloaded, someone might think I'm not suitable. I know that old belief all too well. Then I remember something the CEO said a few months ago, when we were sitting in the management update after the Q1 pilot. She had said quietly, "Frederik, you don't have to be the bottleneck to be important." I laughed at the time. Now I realize how right she was.

"I want to address something today," I say, and suddenly I hear my voice much more clearly than the noise inside me. "I realize that I've been keeping too much to myself these past few weeks. Not because you can't, but because I'm not allowing myself to."

A few tiles fall silent. Not a defensive reaction, more like attentiveness.

"What exactly do you mean?" Jonas asks.

I take a deep breath. "For example, with your interface descriptions. I personally review them every time. You're the expert, though. I'm unintentionally holding us back."

Priya nods slowly. "I know that feeling. When things get critical, you draw it towards you."

That's putting it kindly. And yet it's true, because it's true.

"I think I'm confusing responsibility with control," I say. "And I want to change that. Otherwise, I'll become the bottleneck."

It's quiet. I notice my pulse quickening. This admission is uncomfortable because it makes me visible. Not as a hero, but as a human being with patterns.

"Okay," Priya finally says. "What do you need from us?"

I look at my notes. I made a list last night. Not as a plan, more as an admission on paper. "From now on, I want to clearly delegate responsibility for three issues," I say. "Not as a way to deflect responsibility, but as a genuine transfer."

I'm splitting the screen. Three boxes.

Interface finalization – Jonas, you have the technical decision. I just want one more piece of information if you see a risk.

Region 3 Change Plan – Priya, you decide on the local sequence and communication steps. I trust your judgment.

Training & Enablement – HR Lead, you're in charge of timing, content, and selection of trainers.

"And I want you to disagree with me when I start retracting things again," I added. "Not because I want to annoy you, but because otherwise I won't believe myself."

Jonas looks at me. "This is a big step. For you." I nod, feeling both shame and relief at the same time. "Yes." HR Lead says, "Thank you. That makes things clearer for us. We often waited because it wasn't clear whether we were allowed to decide." Priya smiles briefly. "And if you want to control everything again at night?" I laugh softly. "Then I'll just send you a message instead. And go to sleep."

A few tiles join in the laughter. It's a small laugh that creates a connection.

Things don't automatically get easier after the call. Delegating isn't a switch. It's a muscle.

In the afternoon, Jonas arrives with an entry in the decision log: "Interface variant B final." Previously, I would have immediately opened it, read it, checked it, and formulated follow-up questions. Now I read it, feel the reflex, and practice a sentence I have to relearn: "Jonas can do this."

I write back: "Thanks. Looks good. Let me know if you see any blockers."

And I force myself not to secretly exchange this sentence for another exam.

A week later, I'm sitting in the management update. The managing director asks about Region 3.

"Priya, do you want to give the status?" I say.

It sounds simple, but I'm trembling inside. What if she says something I would say differently?

Then I realize: That's exactly the point. If I only grant trust as long as it aligns with my own, it isn't trust.

Priya reports clearly, concisely, and realistically. She identifies risks and outlines a plan. The managing director nods.

"Very good," she says. "Thank you." And looks at me. "That's right, Frederik."

I feel my shoulders sag slightly. Not out of pride, but because I'm no longer balancing on a tightrope alone.

In the evening, at 6:30 p.m., I close my laptop. My inbox isn't empty. But I'm not empty. A distinction I'd almost forgotten.

The ability to delegate is not about giving up due to weakness.

It is trust as a leadership decision.

# Takeaway inspiration

## Delegation skills and trust

The ability to delegate means truly transferring responsibility – including decision-making authority – instead of merely distributing tasks and retaining control. It boosts performance and reduces workload because trust removes the bottleneck from the system.

Today, choose a task that you habitually take on and delegate it with three clear points: goal – decision-making scope – feedback point. Then practice not jumping back into it.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS ON DELEGATION SKILLS AND TRUST

1. Where do I hold on to responsibility, even though others would have been ready long ago?
2. What fear lies behind my urge to control?
3. What would be better tomorrow if I consistently chose trust instead of control?



Feel free to contact me anytime::

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