



NO ONE NEEDS ME

AND THAT'S THE POINT

CHRIS CLASS

LeadDev NYC 2025



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WHAT IF LEADERSHIP MEANS BECOMING LESS CENTRAL?

- ▶▶ Teams thrive when you stop being the bottleneck
- ▶▶ Stepping back doesn't mean checking out

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**COULD YOUR TEAM RUN
WITHOUT YOU FOR A WEEK?**

WHY BEING NEEDED FEELS GOOD



BUT IT QUICKLY
BECOMES A TRAP



- ▶▶ You feel helpful
- ▶▶ You become the blocker
- ▶▶ Everything slows down

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THE SHIFT



STEPPING BACK
REQUIRES TWO
FOUNDATIONS



- ▶▶ Psychological safety
- ▶▶ Decision-making support

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MINDSET SHIFT 1

**CLARITY
OVER
CONTROL**

**MAKE THE BIG
STUFF
UNMISTAKABLY
CLEAR**

- ▶▶ What are we aiming for?
- ▶▶ What does “good” look like?
- ▶▶ What are the trade-offs?

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MINDSET SHIFT 2

**TRUST OVER
FIXING**

**BACK YOUR TEAM,
ESPECIALLY WHEN
IT'S MESSY**

- ▶▶ Hold back on solving
- ▶▶ Ask questions
- ▶▶ Show trust through actions

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MINDSET SHIFT 3

**SHOW UP
DIFFERENTLY**

STAY USEFUL, NOT CENTRAL

- ▶▶ Join fewer meetings
- ▶▶ More async involvement
- ▶▶ Ask what support is needed

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TWO WEEKS, WHAT WOULD
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**WHAT
CHANGED**

WHEN YOUR TEAM ISN'T DEPENDANT ON YOU, YOU GAIN SPACE TO:

- ▶▶ Coach future leaders
- ▶▶ Fix broken systems
- ▶▶ Support and sponsor others
- ▶▶ Align across functions



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TAKE ACTION

LET GO OF ONE THING NEXT WEEK

▶▶ A decision

▶▶ A meeting

▶▶ A review

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WHEN AND HOW TO STEP **BACK IN**

- ▶ Lack of confidence
- ▶ Decisions drag without clear ownership
- ▶ Zoom back in, don't take over
- ▶ Ask questions to reset direction

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STEPPING BACK DOESN'T MEAN BEING ABSENT

- ▶ Trust more
- ▶ Control less
- ▶ Lead through clarity, not command
- ▶ Watch for signals to step back in

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THANK YOU!

