DELEGATE WITH CONFIDENCE

And Actually Let Go

Wes Saade, M.D.

ASPIRE

If you find yourself swamped with projects and tasks, but unsure how to delegate to your team confidently, you are not alone. It can be difficult to let go of key projects for many reasons. And while I address some of these issues more in depth on my blog, I would like to specifically share with you here an easy formula I use for handing off important tasks and projects with confidence.

I originally heard this concept from my mentor, John Maxwell, and it has proven to be very effective in my leadership. It's simple, really. It involves dividing a project into three parts: the first 10%—the middle 80%—and the last 10%. As the leader, you are involved in the first 10% and the last 10%. The biggest challenge comes in the middle 80% when you fully release it to the person you are delegating to, but here's how.

10%

The First 10%
Set the parameters together.

During the initial phase of the project, work *together* with the person you are delegating to. Establish the end-goal and set the boundaries for getting there. Open a dialogue to clarify each person's expectations. As the leader, this is your opportunity to forecast any potential problems or challenges, so you can be virtually hands-free during the middle phase.

Your approach here is to:

✓ **Ask what the person thinks about the idea.**
✓ **Ask if the person will take it on.**
✓ **Set the parameters together.**

The Middle 80%
Get out of the way.

The goal at this stage is for you to leave the project. So, "What if they mess it up?" Then, you will assess it together in the last 10%, provide guidance and training, and adjust expectations for the next time. But here, you must be willing to let go and accept some potential losses. Over time you will build upon each experience and trust one another more and more with the middle 80%.

Your job here is to:

✓ **Let go. Actually, let go.**
✓ **Approve key elements, only as required.**
✓ **Receive updates, only as needed.**

80%

10%

The Last 10%
Wrap it up together.

Re-enter the project, as the leader. Let the person you delegated the project to present to you what they've accomplished. Assess the finished product as well as their capacity to lead it, and make improvements as needed. Use any missed targets as teachable moments or ways to measure their capabilities for future projects. Then, put the finishing touches on it together.

Your role here is to:

✓ **Congratulate the person in charge.**
✓ **Thank them for partnering with you to get it done.**
✓ **Give them credit for the work in front of others.**

For further details on how to implement this formula, see my blog post:
The Best Way to Delegate: 10-80-10

Additional posts on delegation:
4 Things Leaders Should Never Delegate
The Hardest Question Regarding Time Management
How to Make More Time for What Really Matters