



STUFF YOU CAN USE

Hi saoumyaa!

Ministry leaders don't usually struggle with passion. They struggle with capacity.

In most cases, a capacity issue is actually a delegation issue. Delegation can be a misunderstood word in leadership, but I'll be hosting a live workshop on Zoom in a couple weeks all about this topic! If you want to join us to learn, discuss, and grow together, [sign up for that workshop](#) for just \$9.97!

I've spent time with a lot of pastors and ministry leaders, and most of them aren't unwilling to delegate. In fact, they're exhausted and overloaded, but quietly thinking...

- "It's faster if I just do it myself."
- "What if they mess it up?"
- "I don't want to burden volunteers."
- "I'll just have to fix it after they try."

And so they keep carrying the full load. But here's the tension:

**The very thing that feels risky — delegation — is the same thing that can make your leadership sustainable.**

Research is clear about that too:

- **Harvard Business Review** reports that leaders who delegate effectively see higher engagement, better decision quality, and increased innovation on their teams.
- **The Center for Creative Leadership** consistently identifies poor delegation as a primary reason leaders plateau. They simply cannot scale their influence.
- A study in the **Journal of Applied Psychology** found that empowering leadership reduces burnout — for both leaders and team members.

In other words, poor delegation creates pressure, healthy delegation reduces it.

So, what's the difference?

## The Real Problem: We Think Delegation Is About Tasks

Most ministry leaders treat delegation like task redistribution:

- "Can you set up chairs?"
- "Can you run slides?"

- “Can you call the vendors for this event?”

That’s not delegation.

That’s assignment.

Delegation that actually works transfers ownership — not just activity.

Let me walk you through four principles that change everything.

## 1. Delegate Outcomes, Not Tasks

When you delegate tasks, people wait.

When you delegate outcomes, people lead.

Self-determination theory shows that autonomy is one of the core drivers of intrinsic motivation. In other words, when people feel responsible for the result — not just the checklist — their creativity and commitment increase.

What might that look like? What if instead of saying...

“Plan the women’s retreat.”

You said...

“Our goal is to create a retreat where women feel spiritually renewed and relationally connected. You own that outcome.”

Do you see the shift?

The first creates compliance.

The second empowers someone to lead.

## 2. Provide Clarity Without Controlling the Process

Delegation usually fails in one of two extremes.

- You’re too vague.
- You’re too controlling.

Gallup reports that only about half of employees strongly agree they know what’s expected of them. In church environments — where roles are often fluid and informal — that number is likely worse.

The sweet spot must follow this formula to exist...

Clear expectations + creative freedom

You need to first clarify...

- What success looks like.
- The timeline.
- The boundaries they can’t cross.
- The budget and resources they can access.

Then step back.

Micromanagement is often just anxiety in leadership form.

Clarity is what reduces that anxiety — for everyone.

### 3. Match Authority to Responsibility

Nothing breeds quiet resentment faster than this sentence...

“I need you to lead this... but check with me before making any decisions.”

Research on empowering leadership shows that when authority matches responsibility, initiative increases and turnover decreases. If someone owns the outcome, they must have decision-making power appropriate to that ownership.

If you are trying to delegate in a way that empowers another leader, ask yourself...

- Can they say yes without me?
- Can they solve problems without running every detail through me?
- Would I override them at the first discomfort?

If the answer to these questions is yes, you haven't delegated.

### 4. Support the Person, Not Just the Project

Delegation is not “set it and forget it.” But it's also not surveillance.

Rather, healthy leaders check in to empower — not to evaluate.

- Instead of... “Show me what you've done.”
- Try... “What roadblocks can I help remove?”

That simple shift communicates trust.

It tells them:

- I believe you can do this.
- I'm here if you need me.
- This is yours.

That posture builds leaders, not just events or programs.

## A Hard Truth for Ministry Leaders

**If your church cannot function without you at the center of every decision, that's not faithfulness. That's fragility.**

Ephesians 4 describes leadership as equipping the saints for the work of ministry — not doing all the ministry yourself.

Delegation is not abdication. It is multiplication.

And the health of your future ministry depends on it.

### Go Deeper in Leadership Labs!

Grow your ministry by leveling up your delegation skills.

👉 **Sign up for our next Leadership Labs live workshop [here](#)!** These workshops are designed to help you **learn, experiment, and grow your leadership skills.** With Leadership Labs, you'll get...

- Live 60-minute Leadership Labs with me (Yulee!) and some special guests
- Live group discussion

- Note sheets for each session
- A practical leadership "experiment" to help you apply what you've learned in your ministry

And it's only \$9.97 for each workshop! Sound like something you could use? Then **sign up [here](#)** and let's grow our leadership skills together!

 [Sign Up Here](#)

**STUFF** YOU CAN **USE**

**Yulee Lee, PhD**

Chief Operating Officer

 [yulee@stuffyoucanuse.org](mailto:yulee@stuffyoucanuse.org)  
 [growcurriculum.org & stuffyoucanuse.org](http://growcurriculum.org & stuffyoucanuse.org)



P.S. Love this leadership content? You can find more of Yulee's leadership gems at [dryuleelee.com](http://dryuleelee.com), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Substack](#).

*Grow* 



Sent to: [saoumyaa@stuffyoucanuse.org](mailto:saoumyaa@stuffyoucanuse.org)

[No longer want to receive these emails? Unsubscribe Now.](#)

Stuff You Can Use, 19825-B North Cove Rd. #1015, Cornelius, NC 28031, United States