Leading Smarter

Building sustainable systems
& developing people

Jenna Pearcy

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Don’t lose the determination.

Protect the ambition.



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This is not about becoming more productive so you can carry even more. It is about recognizing when you have become the system.

MY WORK

Improving how work actually gets done.

TODAY

Understand capacity.
Build systems.
Delegate.
Have the hard conversation.



Capacity

TIME CAPACITY

The clock is fixed.

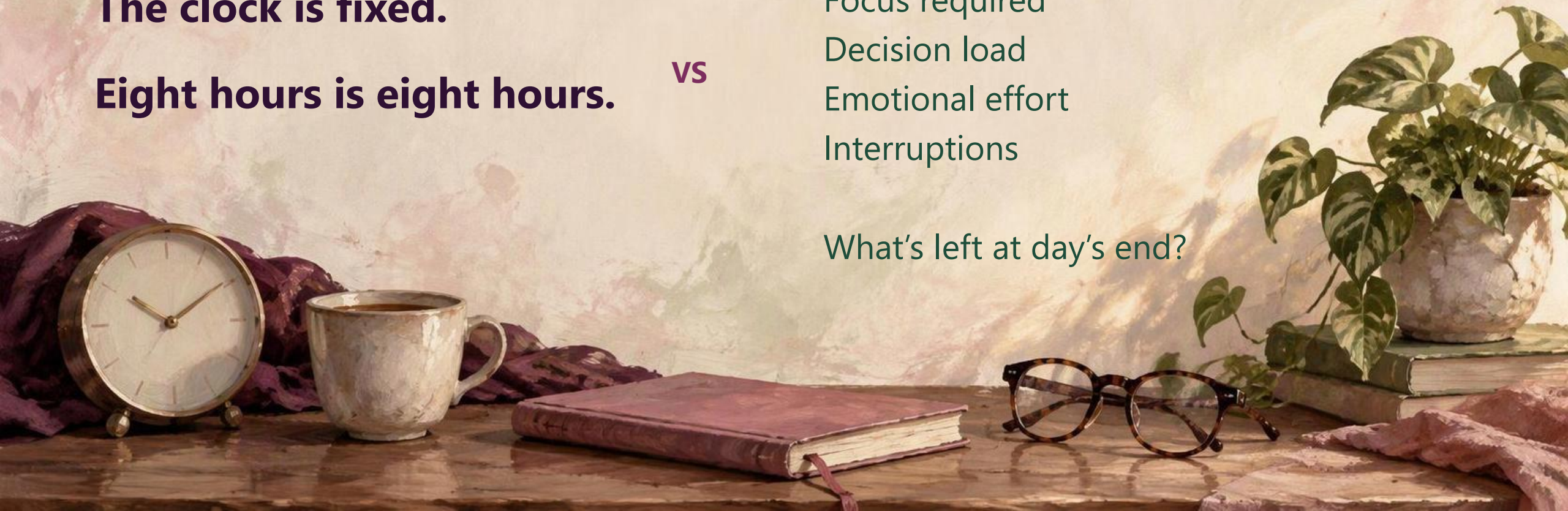
Eight hours is eight hours.

VS

ENERGY CAPACITY

Focus required
Decision load
Emotional effort
Interruptions

What's left at day's end?





Capacity is a muscle.

It grows through intentional challenge and repetition.

Work that once required intense concentration becomes lighter as skill, confidence, and habits strengthen.

Systems, delegation, and feedback lower the energy cost of getting results.



“I can’t keep dealing with the same issue.”

1. Why does this problem keep coming back to me?
2. Why am I answering questions over and over again?
3. Why does everything depend on me?

Stop being the solution to every problem!

Build the support.

THE FALSE OPTIONS

Work harder or quit.

THE SUPPORT

Clarity
Systems
Delegation
Feedback



ACT I

“It’s not you, it’s me.”

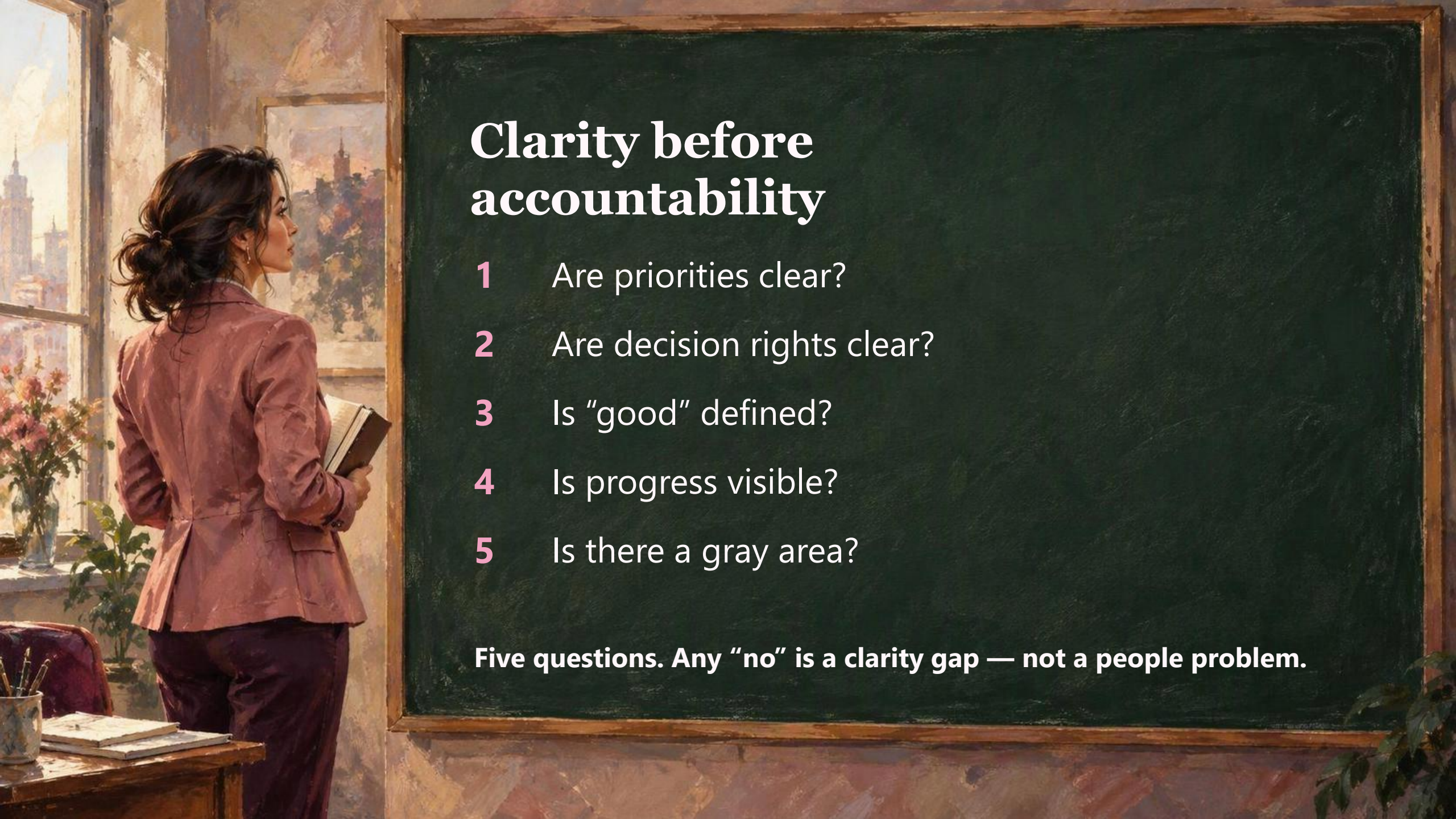
1 CLARITY

2 SYSTEMS

3 DELEGATE

4 SOLICIT FEEDBACK



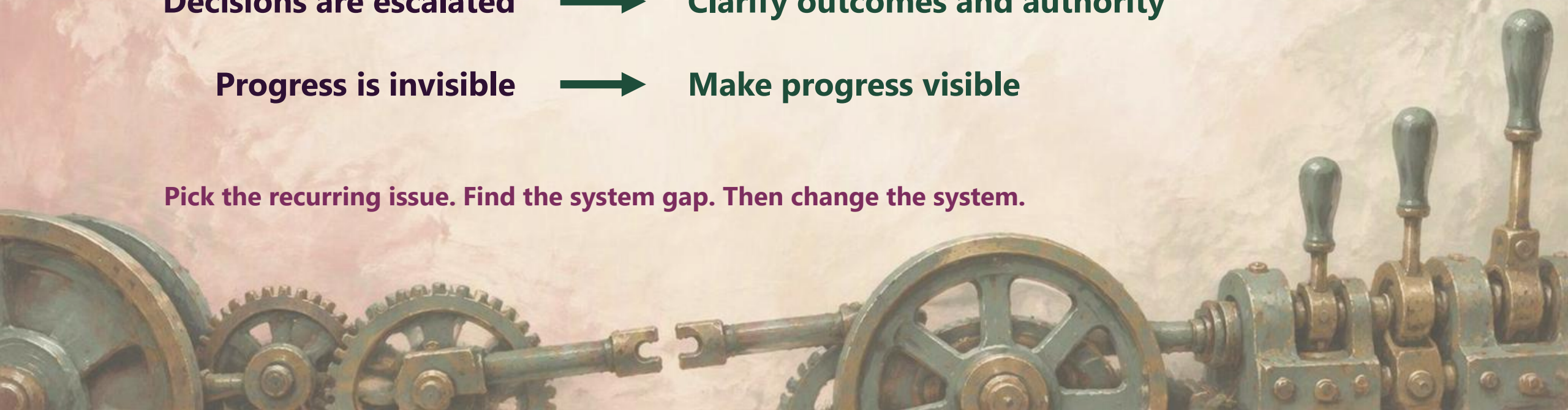

Clarity before accountability
1 Are priorities clear?
2 Are decision rights clear?
3 Is “good” defined?
4 Is progress visible?
5 Is there a gray area?
Five questions. Any “no” is a clarity gap — not a people problem.

SYSTEMS

Diagnose the recurring problem

COMMON SYSTEM GAPS		IMPROVEMENT LEVERS
Process is not repeatable	→	Standardize and document the process
Tools create bottlenecks	→	Remove the friction in the tool
Decisions are escalated	→	Clarify outcomes and authority
Progress is invisible	→	Make progress visible

Pick the recurring issue. Find the system gap. Then change the system.



I don't have ducks or a row,
I have squirrels
and they're everywhere!

DELEGATE

Delegation builds people and capacity

1. What am I holding that blocks higher-value work?
2. Who needs a growth opportunity?
3. What outcome and authority can I transfer?

"Can I invest the time to teach them?" **Yes.**

Teaching once costs less than answering forever.



Solicit Feedback



How to receive feedback well

Know your triggers

Understand

Validate

Really listen

Acknowledge

Ask questions

Be curious

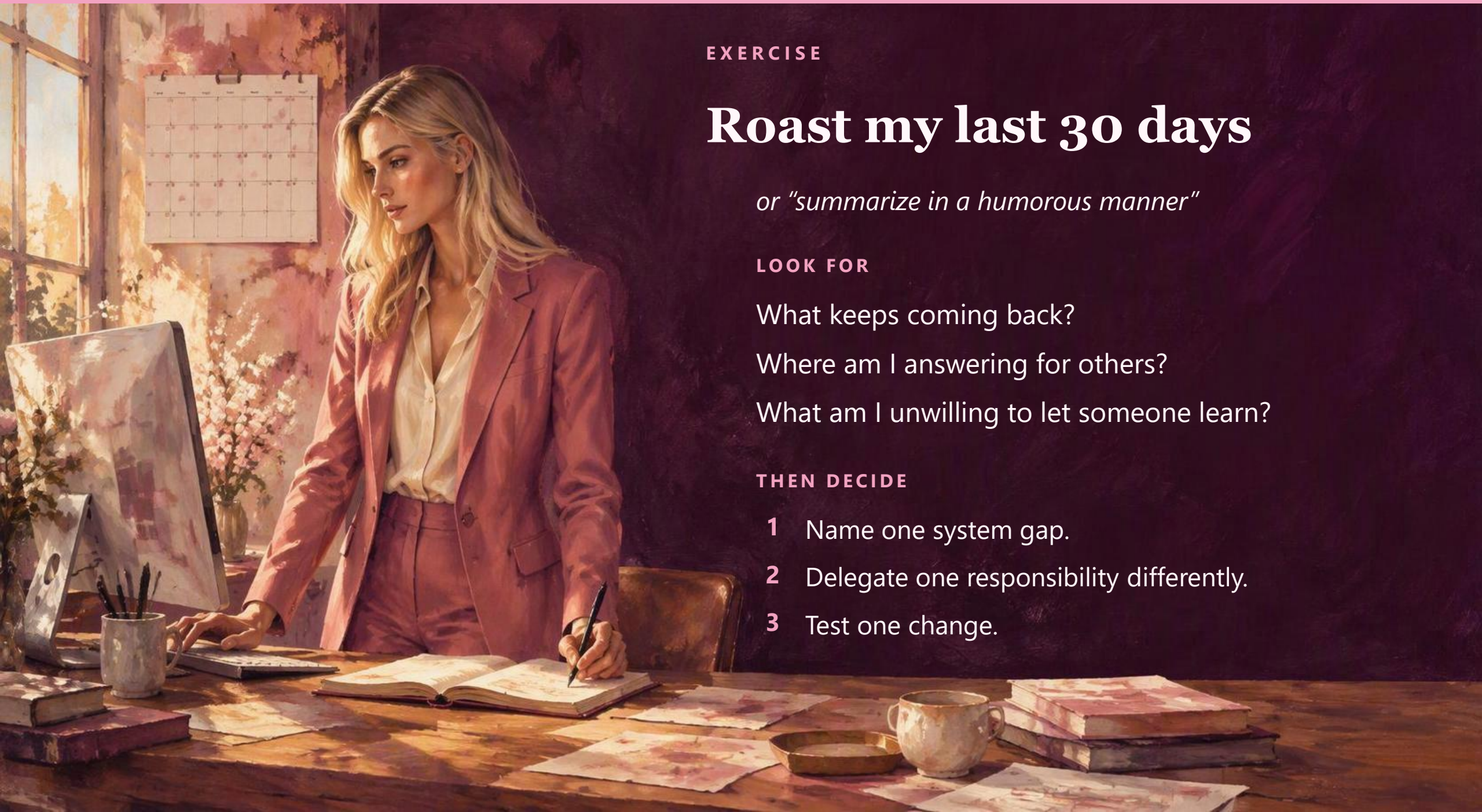
Fight the urge to reply
or explain yourself

Have an exit
strategy

Be thankful

What makes you defensive?





EXERCISE

Roast my last 30 days

or "summarize in a humorous manner"

LOOK FOR

What keeps coming back?

Where am I answering for others?

What am I unwilling to let someone learn?

THEN DECIDE

1. Name one system gap.
2. Delegate one responsibility differently.
3. Test one change.

Copilot feedback

SEPTEMBER GRADE

Impact: A+
Systems Thinking: A+
Number of Issues Personally Adopted Like Stray Cats: A+++
Ability to Leave a Problem Alone: Error 404 Not Found
Probability Jenna Accidentally Became a Utility-Wide Escalation Path: 97%

FINAL VERDICT

September wasn't a month.
It was a live-action demonstration of what happens when a competent process-improvement director discovers an unlimited supply of organizational problems. 😆

Copilot feedback (continued)

THE BIG INSIGHT

I think your September development challenge was not:

"Can Jenna build systems?"

You absolutely can.

The challenge was:

"Can Jenna tolerate the temporary inefficiency that comes with forcing the system to work instead of stepping in herself?"

Those are very different leadership skills.

September showed a lot of evidence of system design.

Less evidence of system enforcement.

MY ONE-SENTENCE ASSESSMENT

September was the month you stopped thinking like a process improver and started thinking like a systems governor. The remaining growth opportunity is trusting those systems enough to let them carry some of the load, even when doing it yourself would be quicker.

ACT I COMMITMENT

Write all three of these down

1. **What clarity or system gap will you fix?**
2. **What will you delegate differently?**
3. **Where do you need to solicit feedback?**

These supports create capacity.





ACT II

“It’s not me, it’s you.”

VALIDATE FIRST

Still a system issue — clarity, expectations, are authority are unclear.

THEN ADDRESS IT DIRECTLY

The system is clear and the pattern continues. Now it is a behavior issue.

Act II protects capacity: address behavior directly instead of absorbing responsibility that belongs elsewhere.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Three directions of accountability

DOWN

Manager to employee

Delegated decisions keep returning

ACROSS

Peer to peer

Handoff issues create rework

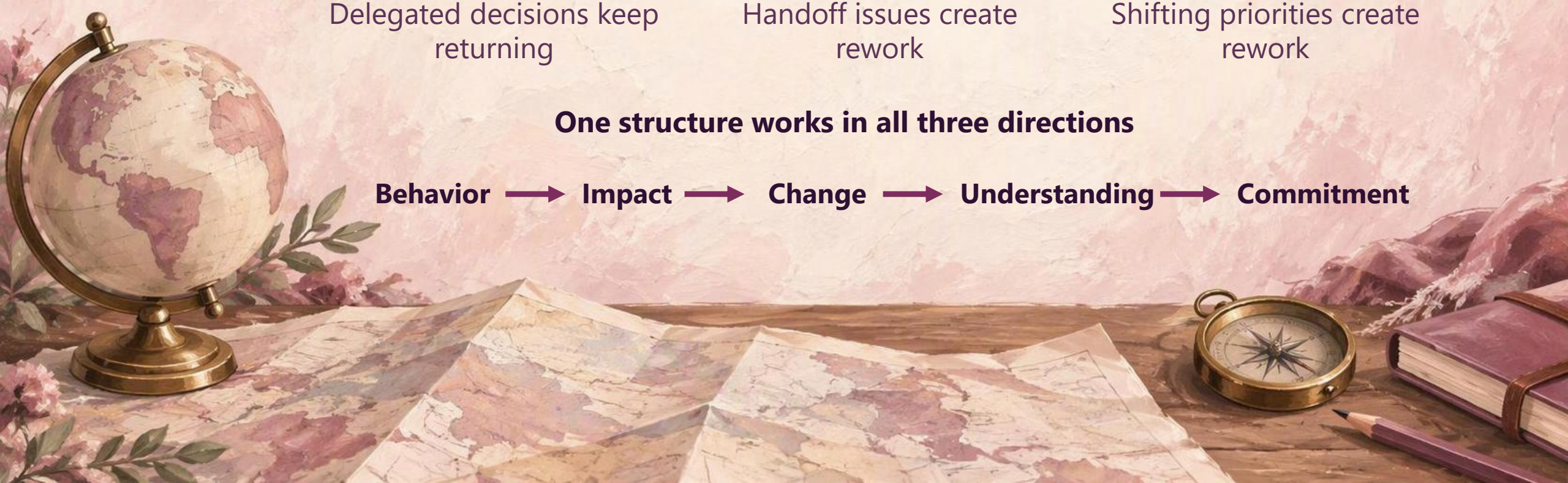
UP

Employee to leader

Shifting priorities create rework

One structure works in all three directions

Behavior → Impact → Change → Understanding → Commitment



What is your intent?

What do you hope to achieve?



FEEDBACK

The feedback system

When the system is clear, make accountability operational.



Behavior

What happened?

Impact

Why it matters

Change

What is needed?

Understanding

What did they hear?

Commitment

What will they do?

TAKE 3 MINUTES

One system.
One conversation.

PICK ONE SYSTEM

Clarify one gap in priorities, decisions, standards, visibility, or ownership.

CHOOSE ONE CONVERSATION

Use Behavior → Impact → Change → Understanding → Commitment.

Write it down.
Take three minutes.



Sustainable leadership creates capacity beyond you

Keep your ambition alive. Build support.

CLARITY	Define expectations before holding people accountable.
SYSTEMS	Trust the system enough to let it carry the work.
DELEGATION	Transfer ownership and give others room to grow.
FEEDBACK	Seek it. Give it with intent. Agree and track commitments.

One system. One conversation.

What will you do differently tomorrow?

Let’s connect!

Scan to connect

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