



***FORWARD
IN FOCUS***

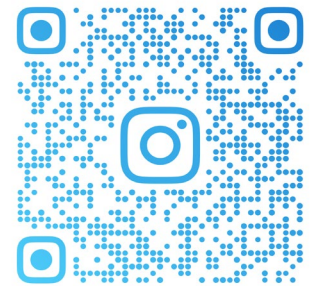
FROM DOING TO LEADING

Making the Shift from Expert to Leader

September 15, 2026 | 2:15pm | Room 007AB

Michael Dowling

www.theunlikelyleader.com



MICHAELDOWLING440

Agenda

- The system that got you here
- Three old stories that keep leaders stuck
- The leadership operating system
- Three systems that create capacity
- The leader you choose to become

You weren't promoted into
more work.

You were promoted into a
different role.

“I thought I needed to
prove my leadership.”

NIELSEN ENTERTAINMENT

The more decisions I owned, the more I believed
I was demonstrating my value.

Instead, I became the bottleneck.

Does this sound familiar?

- 01 — Constantly reactive
- 02 — Still doing too much yourself
- 03 — **Busy all day—but unsure what moved**

Leadership changes how you create value

AS AN EXPERT

Speed

Expertise

Responsiveness

Personal output



AS A LEADER

Clarity

Decision quality

Capacity in others

Collective outcomes

THE IDENTITY QUESTION

If I'm no longer the person
doing everything,

**how will people know
that I'm valuable?**

Leadership is not about making yourself indispensable.

01

My responsiveness proves my value.

REACTIVITY

Bring the problem to me—and I'll take it from you.

02

A good leader is responsible for everything.

PRESSURE

Accountability does not require personal ownership of every decision.

03

**Doing the work is how
I prove my worth.**

CONTROL

It can be hard to separate being valuable from being central.

Three stories. One unresolved identity.

OLD STORY

My responsiveness proves my value

I'm responsible for everything

Doing the work proves my worth

DEFAULT

React to everything

Carry every priority

Hold onto decisions

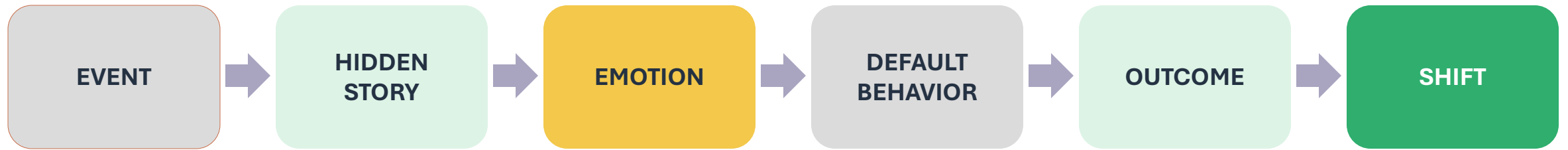
RESULT

Dependence

Confusion

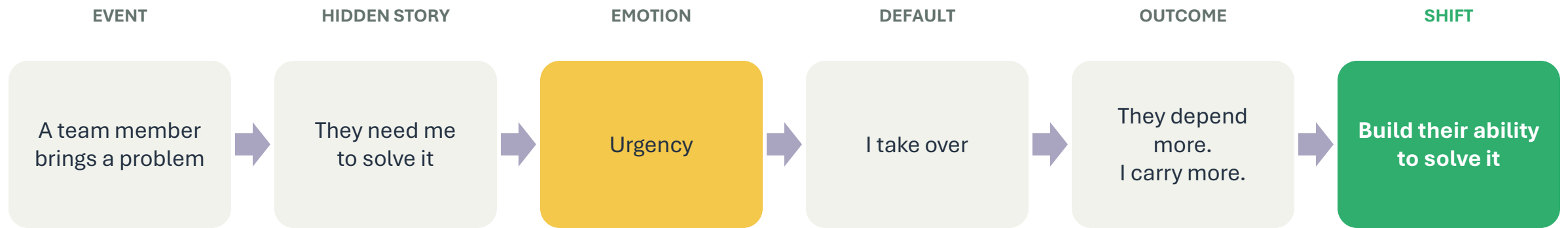
Disempowerment

THE LEADER OPERATING SYSTEM



Something happens. Your internal system decides what happens next.

A solved problem can still create dependence



We often respond to the story—not simply the work.

A new interpretation creates a new choice

OLD STORY

They need me to solve it.

I must make every decision.

If I let go, I'll lose control.



SHIFT

They may need me to help them think.

I must create a reliable decision system.

If I never let go, judgment cannot grow.

REFLECTION

Where are you still carrying the work?

- 1 What decision could someone else own?
- 2 What issue do you keep reacting to?
- 3 What belief is causing you to hold on?

Internal shifts need external systems

OLD STORY	LEADERSHIP SHIFT	SYSTEM
THIS NEEDS ME	Decide where decisions belong	DECISION FLOW
EVERYTHING MATTERS	Create fewer, clearer signals	PRIORITIES
I MUST ENSURE IT GETS DONE	Transfer outcomes—not tasks	OWNERSHIP

Put each decision where it belongs

YOU DECIDE

Strategic
Irreversible
High risk

THEY DECIDE + INFORM

Operational
Reversible
Within clear boundaries

WE DECIDE TOGETHER

Ambiguous
Cross-functional
Developmental

If decision flow is unclear, pressure flows upward.

Your team needs fewer, clearer signals

01 What matters most now?

02 What can wait?

03 What are we deliberately not doing?

Prioritization gives people permission to ignore something.

Transfer the outcome—not merely the task

01

OUTCOME

What does success look like?

02

CONSTRAINTS

What boundaries matter?

03

SUPPORT

When should they involve you?

Am I solving the work—or my discomfort with letting go?

FROM

proving your value



TO

**creating value
through others**

The quality of leadership is revealed in what can happen beyond you.

What will you release?

What will you build?

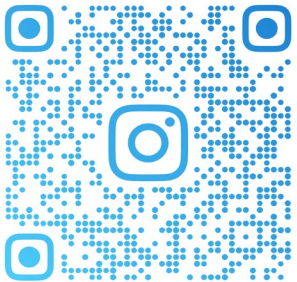
Create clarity where there is confusion.
Ownership where there is dependence.
Capacity where everything once depended on you.

Build beyond yourself.

Thank you

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