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# Working on the Right Things

Defend your priorities

Design your time

Focus your energy

Miro board for the workshop:

[https://miro.com/app/board/o9J\\_kwrwRhs=/](https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_kwrwRhs=/)

We can all be leaders

Management is a role.

Leadership is how you show up in the world.

## Leadership is inherently creative

... but the **way we're working is holding us back**. Rapid growth solves problems, and also **creates new ones**.

- Outgrowing old systems
- No more time to give but the organisation wants to grow
- Push and pull in different directions
- Bad role models (e.g., “I’ve been here a long time and this is how things work”)
- Utility tools that distract us (e.g., Slack, email)

## Defend your priorities

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Intentionally work on the  
most important and  
impactful things

Discipline is remembering  
what you want.

David Campbell  
Composer and Conductor

**What do you want?**

Reflect on these statements.

**In 6 months I want to feel ...**

**In 6 months the impact I want to have is ...**

The answers are your **north star**.

## Make it concrete

Think about your north star. How will you say “yes” to the things that will get you there?

Write down your top 3 priorities. These will be your guides as you make decisions about where to invest your energy.

- It may be helpful to first brainstorm all the ways you could get to your north star outcome(s)
- When you have that list, ask yourself:
  - How efficiently will this help me achieve the outcome?
  - Is there anything that will block me? If yes, is it outside of my sphere of control (or influence)?
  - Does this sound awesome? Am I excited to take it on? Will it inspire me when times are tough?

## Make it actionable

Consider your north star and top 3 priorities.

What **specific actions** could you take to deliver on your top 3 priorities?

Write some green stickies, one per action.

I've already written some ideas for you. We'll talk more about those specific actions in a few minutes.



## Make it real

- Put together a **proposal** that describes your goal and 3 priorities. What does working against those look like? Include tradeoffs -- what will you say “no” to?
- **Validate with your leadership** team (do they agree?) and refine.
- **Make it public**: proactively communicate your new priorities.
- **Book time** to hand off tasks (delegate).

## Design your time

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Work on the right things  
at the right time

The essence of strategy is  
what you **choose not to do.**

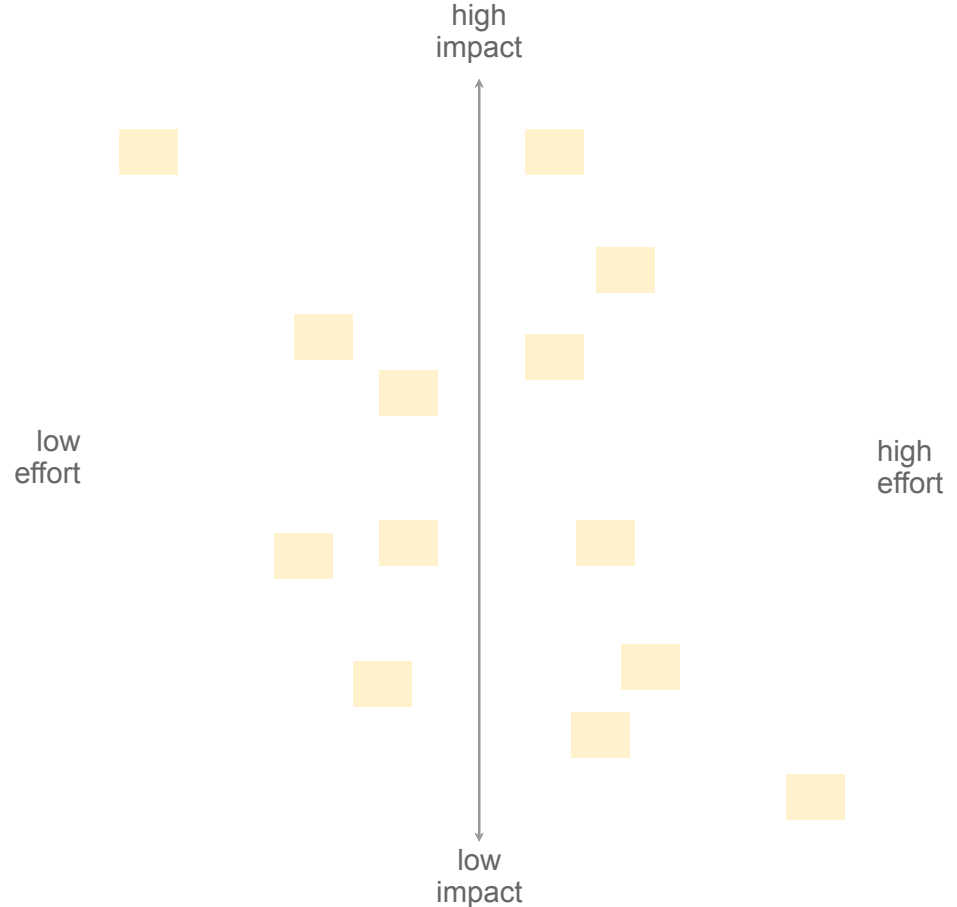
Michael Porter  
Harvard Business School

## Build an effort/impact matrix

Write down **all the things you do**, one per stickie.

**Evaluate against your priorities** and place each stickie on the 2x2.

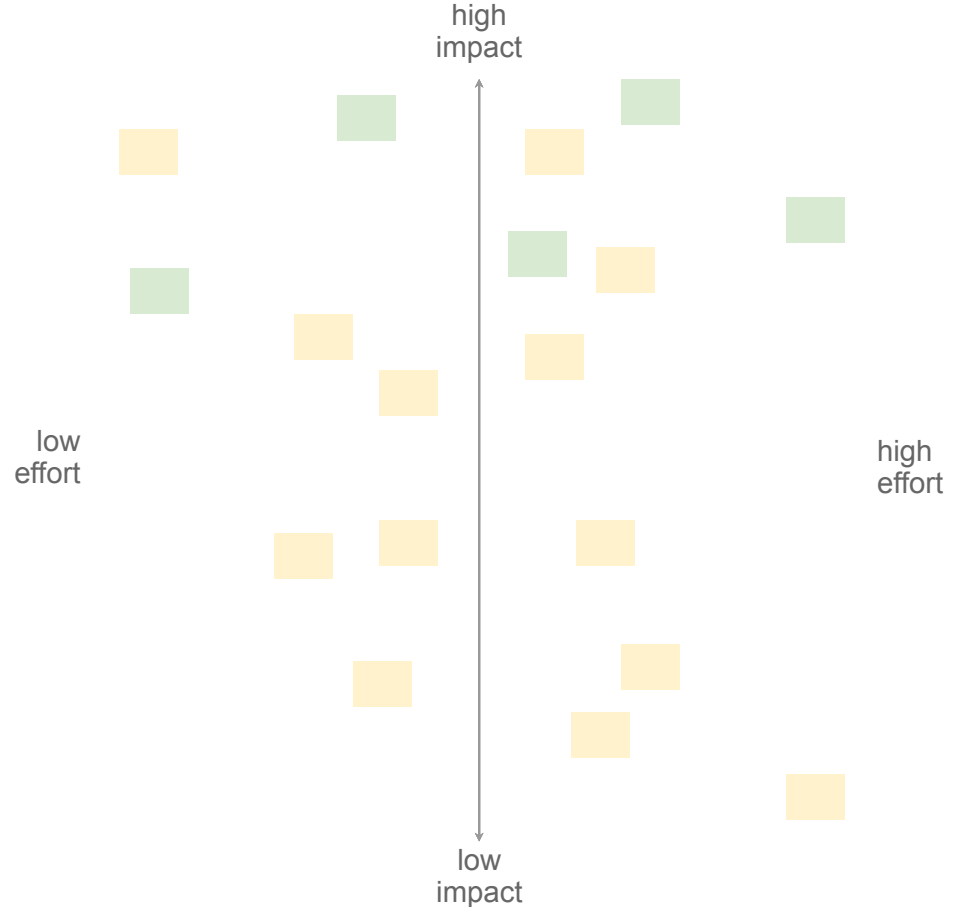
- Are there any you can immediately **stop doing**? Pull them off to the side.
- If they all cluster in one quadrant, can each be broken down into **smaller tasks** and evaluated individually?



## Add in priority-driven actions

Move the green stickies you wrote in support of your priorities in support of your priorities.

Ideally each stickie on the matrix will be roughly the same level of abstraction; you may need to refine or break them down into smaller actions.

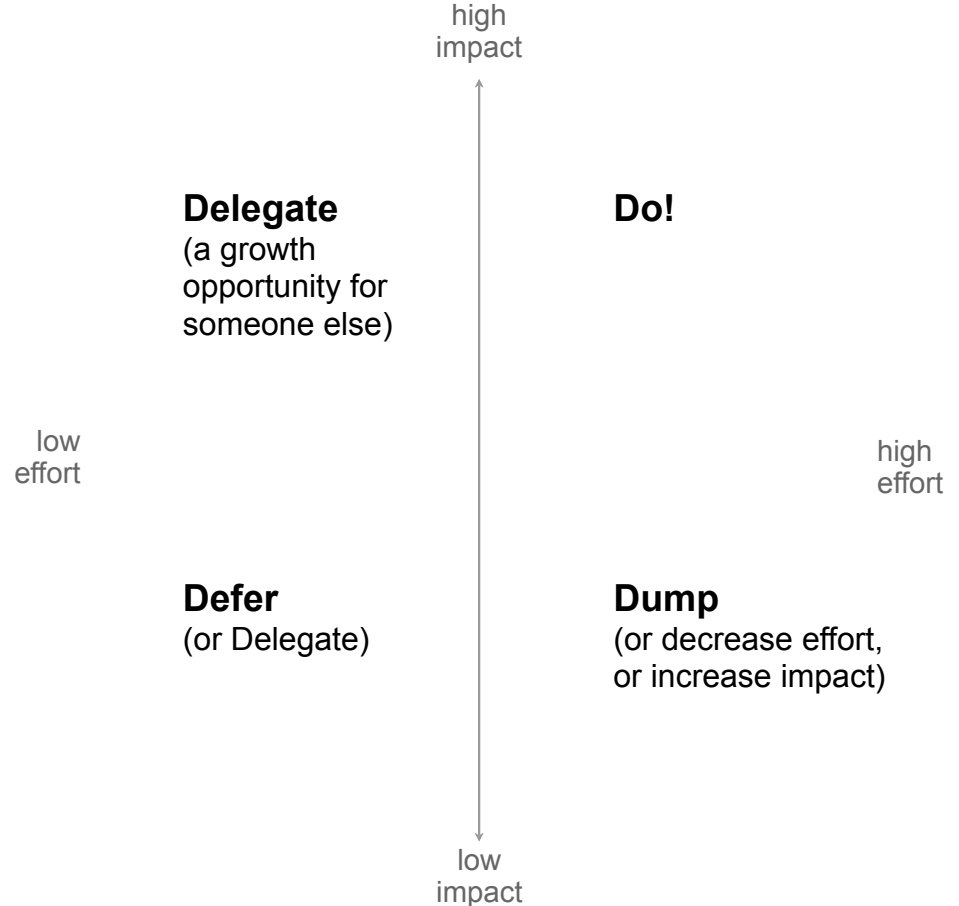


Evaluate the stickies in each quadrant.

Make an action plan for each stickie.

Follow through on the plan.

*(It's just that easy...  
and also just that difficult)*



## Focus your energy

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Balance tasks that energise you vs. those that drain you

It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.

Eleanor Roosevelt

## Choose what and when

When do you **naturally have a lot of energy**? What time of day is it easier to do tasks that require mental effort? Experiment and notice.

- Do an [energy map](#). Block time to work on important tasks that drain you when your natural energy levels are high.
- Remember your [effort/impact matrix](#)! Drop (or Delegate) lower-priority or lower-impact tasks.
- Own your calendar!

## Get things done: own your calendar

<b>Make time for yourself</b>	<b>Meetings</b>
<p>Schedule 30 minutes first thing in the AM to organise your day</p> <p>Book <a href="#">triage time</a> [see the <a href="#">GTD</a> methodology]</p> <p>Block off your calendar for reading / research</p> <p>Block off your calendar for tasks requiring flow / concentration</p> <p>Schedule periodic times to check email and/or Slack ... and stick to it</p> <p><a href="#">Try out Clockwise!</a></p>	<p>Decline meetings where there isn't a clear agenda</p> <p>Decline meetings where you don't gain and/or add value</p> <p>Leave meetings after 10 minutes if they're not useful and relevant</p> <p>Read the after-meeting notes</p>



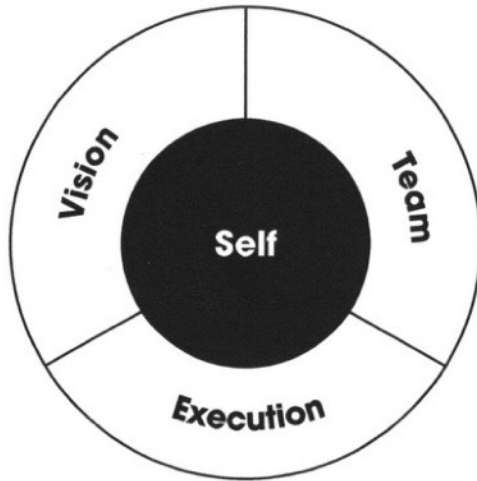


Q&A

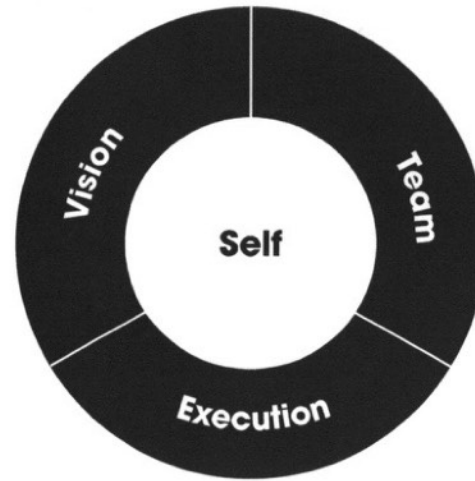


# Appendix: Energy Mapping

Identifies the 4 pillars of leadership: **Self**, **Vision**, **Team**, and **Execution**.



Responsibility to yourself



Role in your organization

Identifies the four pillars of creative leadership:

<b>Self</b>	<b>Vision</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Execution</b>
Awareness	Thinks big	Builds connections	Maintains focus
Authenticity	Creates a narrative	Catalyzes performance	Guides work
Creativity	Inspires change	Develops people	Drives decisions
Discipline	Defines quality	Architects organisations	Develops process
Growth	Advocates for design	Cultivates culture	Creates partnerships
Resilience			

## Self

Leadership begins within—with your relationship to yourself and the responsibility you take for your development. As a leader, it's critical that you **balance self-compassion** for where you are **with intentionality** for where you're going.

**Awareness:** Cultivates self-awareness by creating time for reflection; Demonstrates self-compassion for where you are; Attuned to how others receive you

**Authenticity:** Leads from a place of integrity and sustainability; Exhibits comfort being yourself in a range of contexts; Aligns with your values

**Creativity:** Approaches leadership creatively; Seeks inspiration and shows up as inspired and inspiring; Creates space for creating and creativity; Finds flow in your day-to-day

**Discipline:** Takes responsibility for your emotions and emotional wellbeing; Owns your time; Demonstrates prioritization, focus, decisiveness, and follow-through

**Growth:** Prioritises your own development and learning; Embraces a growth mindset for yourself and others; Leads with curiosity

**Resilience:** Remains effective in the face of adversity and bounces back from setbacks; Builds practices and support systems for personal resilience; Establishes boundaries

## Vision

Visionary leaders **identify possible futures** that serve customer needs and align strategically with business needs. As a design leader, you seek opportunities to apply design practices to the vision for not **only the customer experience** but also the **business and the organisation**.

**Thinks big:** Creates an inspiring and actionable vision; Challenges status quo through a strategic lens; Increases the value of design across the product, business, and organisation

**Creates a narrative:** Engages others through strong storytelling and presentation skills; Develops a powerful narrative so that others see themselves in the vision and feel engaged

**Inspires change:** Masters social dynamics to influence others across all levels of an organisation to gather support and momentum for ideas

**Defines quality:** Has a high standard for quality; Defines what “good” craft looks like by establishing a bar for execution and explaining the principles behind those decisions

**Advocates for design/UX:** Advocates for holistic, human-centered approaches internally and externally; Develops internal UX understanding and capabilities

## Team

Effective people managers build loyal teams by **establishing trust** and creating **authentic connections**. As a people-oriented leader, you lead and **connect through values**, and play a critical role in developing a **healthy culture**.

**Builds connections:** Develops meaningful working relationships with individuals; Has high emotional intelligence and excellent listening skills; Recruits and retains key talent

**Catalyzes performance:** Creates clear expectations and catalyzes individual performance; Manages poor performance with speed and care; Creates accountability and incentive systems

**Develops people:** Sees and develops new growth opportunities for high-performers; Demonstrates genuine interest in individual's success; Advocates effectively for others

**Architects organisations:** Builds a shared identity and purpose for the team; Develops clear organisational structures, career paths, and roles

**Cultivates culture:** Focuses on creating an environment where creativity thrives; Models and encourages healthy, productive working behaviors

## Execution

High-output leaders **operationalise the vision** in ways that resonate with customers and support the business. As a nimble leader, you **navigate the complexities** of teams and initiatives with **decisiveness and flexibility**.

**Maintains focus:** Ensures projects create business impact; Plans, prioritises, and manages focus across initiatives; Drives results and productivity at project or initiative level

**Guides work:** Creates and maintains feedback loops (e.g., reviews, critique); Actively engages in ensuring the quality of the work is meeting and exceeding the bar

**Drives decisions:** Comfortably navigates complexity, risk, and tradeoffs to make rapid, critical decisions; Recognises modes of decision-making including consulting, advising, and delegating

**Develops process:** Iterates on product development processes that help deliver on the mission and ensure excellence; Ensure effective team resourcing practices

**Creates partnerships:** Cultivates cooperative relationships with cross-functional teams and leaders; Manages conflict effectively



## Energy mapping

Which areas of focus generate energy?

Which areas deplete energy?

What could you do to balance out your energy more?

