

BUSY ISN'T THE PROBLEM

IT'S WHAT YOU'RE BUSY WITH.

"I don't know what else to do... I'm flat out, but it still feels like I'm missing things."

That was how a senior leader opened a coaching session with me recently.

Their diary was full. The team relied on them. Pressure was coming from all directions. On paper, they were doing everything you would expect.

But it didn't feel like it was working.

So, we did something simple - we stopped. We created space to think. Even 30 minutes a week, protected and uninterrupted, can change how you approach the rest of it.

Nothing changed about the workload. But by the end, there was more clarity. A sharper sense of what mattered, and what didn't.

Being busy isn't the problem.

It's what you're busy with. Before adding more, it's worth asking:

- Does this move a priority forward?
- Am I the only person who can do this?
- What would happen if it didn't get done this week?

For many leaders, busyness has become the norm - full calendars, constant meetings, very little breathing space.

It's understandable. Expectations are high and everything feels urgent.

But over time, low-impact work creeps in. Tasks that feel important but don't move things forward. Meetings without purpose. Decisions that stay with you because no one else has the clarity to take them on.

Before long, you're working hard - just not always on the right things.

"Low-impact work will always fill the space - unless you're deliberate about what you stop."

Creating space to think (and to stop).

When things get busy, thinking time is often the first casualty. Not quick decisions between meetings, but time to step back and ask:

What actually needs my attention - and what doesn't?

Effective leaders don't just decide what to do. They decide what to stop. Without that, low-value work expands to fill the gaps.

Making time for your team.

When pressure builds, conversations become task-focused.

"Where are we up to?"

"What's the update?"

Important, but limited.

Better questions create better outcomes:

What are you thinking?

What do you need from me?

These conversations build trust, confidence, and accountability - and stop everything landing back with you.

Saying what needs to be said.

Feedback is often delayed when time is tight. But when things go unsaid, clarity suffers and small issues grow. Good feedback is simple and specific:

- What did you notice?
- Why does it matter?
- What needs to happen next?

Handled early, these conversations create momentum.

A more effective way to lead.

The shift from busy to effective isn't about doing more.

It's about being deliberate. Creating time to think. Letting go of what doesn't add value.

Focusing on conversations that move people forward.

So perhaps the better question is:

Is this moving the right things forward - or just filling my time?

PEOPLE SPARK

For a conversation about creating more space and impact in your leadership

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