

The Stumbling Block Audit

A diagnostic for leaders whose competence has become a ceiling for the people they lead

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The most capable leaders create the most dangerous stumbling blocks. Not from malice. From the assumption that the path that worked for them is structurally accessible to everyone they lead. In Romans 14, Paul does not frame the stumbling block as a character failure. He frames it as a design failure. The stone is not misplaced. The trajectory of the organization has turned it into an obstacle.

"So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall." Romans 14:13 (NLT)

The oikodome standard Paul sets in Romans 14 is not a standard of reduced output. It is a standard of architectural intentionality. The question is not whether your capability is real. It is whether the environment your capability creates is one that forms the people beneath it or one that inadvertently caps them. This audit is built to surface that gap.

70% of team engagement variance

Gallup — State of the American Manager

is attributable to the direct manager. The most consistent predictor of low-engagement teams is high individual performance at the manager level combined with low intentionality about the formation environment being created beneath them.

1

WHERE YOUR COMPETENCE HAS CREATED AN EXPECTATION YOUR TEAM CANNOT MEET

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

Where has your competence created a standard that your team is measured against but cannot yet access without you?

This is not a question about lowering standards. It is a question about whether the standard is attached to you personally or to a structure that exists independently of your presence. Name the areas where your team's output depends on your direct involvement, judgment, or correction to reach the level the role requires.

AREAS WHERE YOUR COMPETENCE IS THE CEILING

FOLLOW-UP

For each area, is the gap a training problem, a structural problem, or a dependency problem?

A training problem can be addressed with instruction and time. A structural problem requires a system or process that does not yet exist. A dependency problem means the expectation itself is built around your continued presence rather than around a transferable standard. Distinguishing between these three determines what kind of intervention the gap actually requires.

GAP TYPE FOR EACH AREA: TRAINING, STRUCTURAL, OR DEPENDENCY

2

WHAT DECISION PATTERN YOU ARE RUNNING THAT PRODUCES A CEILING

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

Which decisions that your team could own are still running through you, and why?

The stumbling block is not always a visible obstacle. Sometimes it is an invisible pathway that every decision must travel before it can land. If your team's decision-making capacity has not grown in proportion to their tenure, the bottleneck is structural. Name the decision categories that still require your review, approval, or correction before they move forward.

DECISIONS STILL RUNNING THROUGH YOU

FOLLOW-UP

What would have to be true for you to release each of these decisions to the appropriate owner?

If the answer is "they would need to be at my level," that is a dependency problem. If the answer is "we would need a documented standard," that is a structural problem. If the answer is "I am not sure I trust the outcome," that is a formation question worth examining honestly. Name the actual condition for release, not the ideal version of it.

ACTUAL CONDITION FOR RELEASING EACH DECISION

3

WHAT YOUR TEAM'S PACE OF DEVELOPMENT REVEALS ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE NORMALIZED

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

Look at the people who have been in your organization for two or more years. How have they grown, and in what direction?

Growth toward greater output capacity is one thing. Growth toward greater independent judgment and mission ownership is another. If your long-tenured people are more capable at executing your vision but no more capable of leading without you, the formation environment has produced skilled dependents rather than genuine successors. Describe the growth trajectory you are actually seeing.

OBSERVED GROWTH TRAJECTORY OF LONG-TENURED TEAM MEMBERS

FOLLOW-UP

What has your organization normalized that a new leader walking in would immediately identify as a formation gap?

The stumbling block that is most dangerous is the one that has been present long enough that no one inside the organization can see it anymore. Describe what a fresh set of eyes with genuine organizational health literacy would find in your team's formation environment that you may have stopped noticing. If you cannot answer this question, that is itself a data point worth examining.

WHAT A FRESH SET OF EYES WOULD FIND

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS AUDIT

The stumbling block Paul names in Romans 14 is not created by bad leaders. It is created by capable leaders who have not examined the formation environment their capability produces. This audit is not an indictment of your competence. It is an invitation to examine the architecture beneath it.

A leader who can name where their competence has become a ceiling, what decisions they are holding that belong to others, and what their team's growth trajectory actually reveals is positioned to build something that outlasts their direct involvement. That is the oikodome standard. Not reduced output. Better architecture.

If this audit surfaced a gap you cannot address alone, the diagnostic conversation at Kingdom Planning is the right next step.

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Anchored in Romans 14:13-19. Proverbs 22:3 (NLT): "A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions."

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