The *Art* of Delegation

Strategies for Guiding People Toward Effective Self-Management

Foggy Sunrise
Eagle Harbor, Door County

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With Jeff Russell

The master doesn't talk, he acts.
When his work is done, the people say
"Amazing! We did it all by ourselves."

Lao-Tzu
Chinese Poet and Philosopher

Evening Showers
Cruz Bay, St. John - U.S. Virgin Islands

What is Delegation?

Delegation is . . . **temporarily** assigning both **task responsibility** and **authority** to an individual or team who then <u>**voluntarily**</u> agrees to use this authority to accomplish the desired outcomes of the task.

✓ *Authority* — the limited right to use the organization's resources and direct the efforts of others if required to achieve a desired outcome.

✓ *Responsibility* — the obligation to perform tasks and being held accountable for the result.

✓ *Accountability* — being fully responsible for the final results attained once accepting responsibility for completing the task.

Effective Delegation . . .

1. Focuses on <u>results</u>, not processes.

2. Gives people <u>choices</u> in the *how*.

3. Helps build greater <u>responsibility</u> for quality results.

4. Takes more up-front <u>time</u>, but often produces better results.

5. Begins with a shared <u>vision</u> and mutual <u>commitment</u> to that vision.
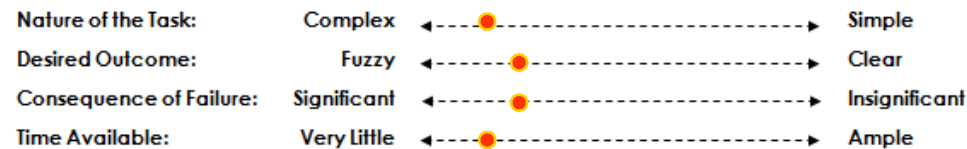
The Initial Conditions

- *Selecting the Task* — What task is most appropriate to delegate?

- *Clear Objectives* – What are you trying to accomplish with delegation?

- *Pick the Right People* – Select those with the abilities and a concern for doing it right

- *Willingness to Let Go* – Are you comfortable with giving up *your* way of doing things?

What and When to Delegate . . .

Consider the following factors concerning the **task, environment, person delegating to,** and **the person who is delegating** when selecting a task to delegate. Place an × on the dotted line for each task, environment, person, and delegator characteristic. The more that the characteristics of the task, environment, person delegating to, and person delegating fall on the **right** side of each scaled continuum, the easier it will be to delegate the task and for the employee to *accept* the delegated task with commitment.
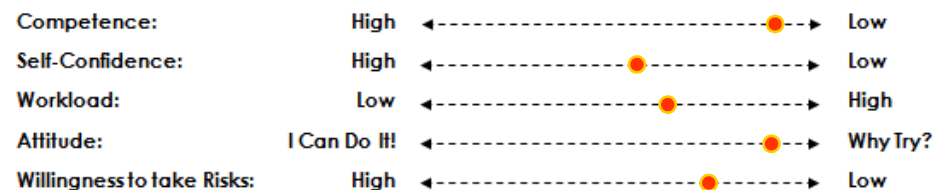
Characteristics of the Task

Nature of the Task:	Complex	←----●------------------------→	Simple
Desired Outcome:	Fuzzy	←-------●---------------------→	Clear
Consequence of Failure:	Significant	←-------●---------------------→	Insignificant
Time Available:	Very Little	←----●------------------------→	Ample

Characteristics of the Performance Environment

Environment:	Changing	←----●------------------------→	Stable
General Morale:	Low	←--------------●--------------→	High
Location of Power:	Centralized	←-●---------------------------→	Distributed
Resource Availability:	Limited	←----------●------------------→	Sufficient
Culture:	Entitlement	←------●----------------------→	Personal Responsibility

Characteristics of the Person Selected to Receive the Delegated Task

Competence:	High	←-----------------------------●--→	Low
Self-Confidence:	High	←---------------------●-------→	Low
Workload:	Low	←--------------------------●---------→	High
Attitude:	I Can Do It!	←-----------------------------●--→	Why Try?
Willingness to take Risks:	High	←------------------------●-------→	Low

[Note: For the personal characteristics, if your goal is to develop the competence and confidence of the individual, you may elect to delegate even when competence and confidence are low.]

Characteristics of the Person Delegating the Task

Degree of Task Ownership:	High	←-------●---------------------→	Low
Willingness to Let Go:	Low	←------●----------------------→	High

❺ Provide Consequences

What's the benefit or reward for doing it right?

What are the consequences of failure?

Is the delegation "temporary" or "permanent?"

❹ Identify Resources

What resources within and outside of the organization are available to the person to enable him or her to succeed?

What role will the delegator play throughout the performance period?

Who else could be useful?

What kind of financial resources are available?

❸ Evaluate Results

Measures of Success

Who will ensure quality compliance?

How and when will performance data be gathered?

How will performer and you know if he or she is successful?

❷ Set Boundary Conditions

Timeline

Recommend Only

Consider This!

DO NOT do This!

Budget Limits

Quality

Things to Avoid

History on Issue

❶ Establish Shared Vision

A Shared Vision of the Desired End Result

It's not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?

-Henry David Thoreau

# Step One: Create a Shared Vision

- Do you both have a *shared* vision of the end result?

- How does the "receiving" person describe the *great* performance result? [Does it closely match your vision?]

- What is the *reason* or *purpose* of the delegation?

- Discuss the *importance* of achieving the desired outcomes.

- *Be realistic*. Does the receiving person believe that he or she will be successful? [Are your expectations realistic and do they allow for small wins?]

Step Two: Set Boundary Conditions

- **What boundaries or parameters should the employee work within?**

    - Time, Money, Quality, Things to Avoid, etc.

- **What authority will the person have?**

- **What things should the person avoid? Be wary of? Not do? Prepare for?**

- **Is there any past history the person should know about?**

- **What is the frequency of communication between the both of you?**

Step Three: Develop Performance Measures

- How will **success** be measured? Do the both of you agree with the measure?

- How will the **employee** know when he or she is successful?

- How will **you** know?

- How and when will **performance data** be gathered?

- How will the both of you **stay "in touch"** throughout the task?
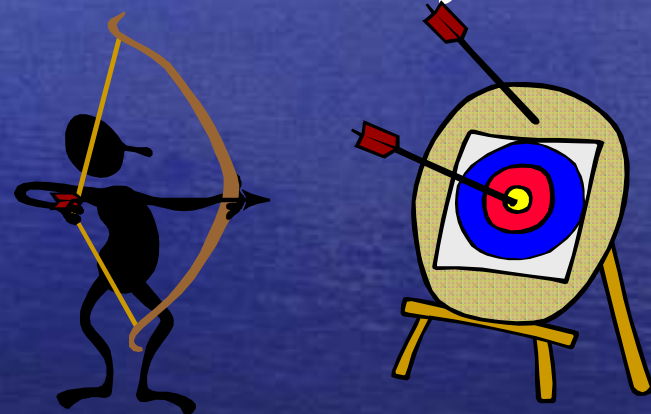
Step Four: Provide Access to Resources

- What **resources** within/outside of the company will enable him or her to succeed?

- What **role will you play** as a manager, supervisor, or coach?

- Who and what else could be a **useful resource**?

- What kind of **financial resources** are available?

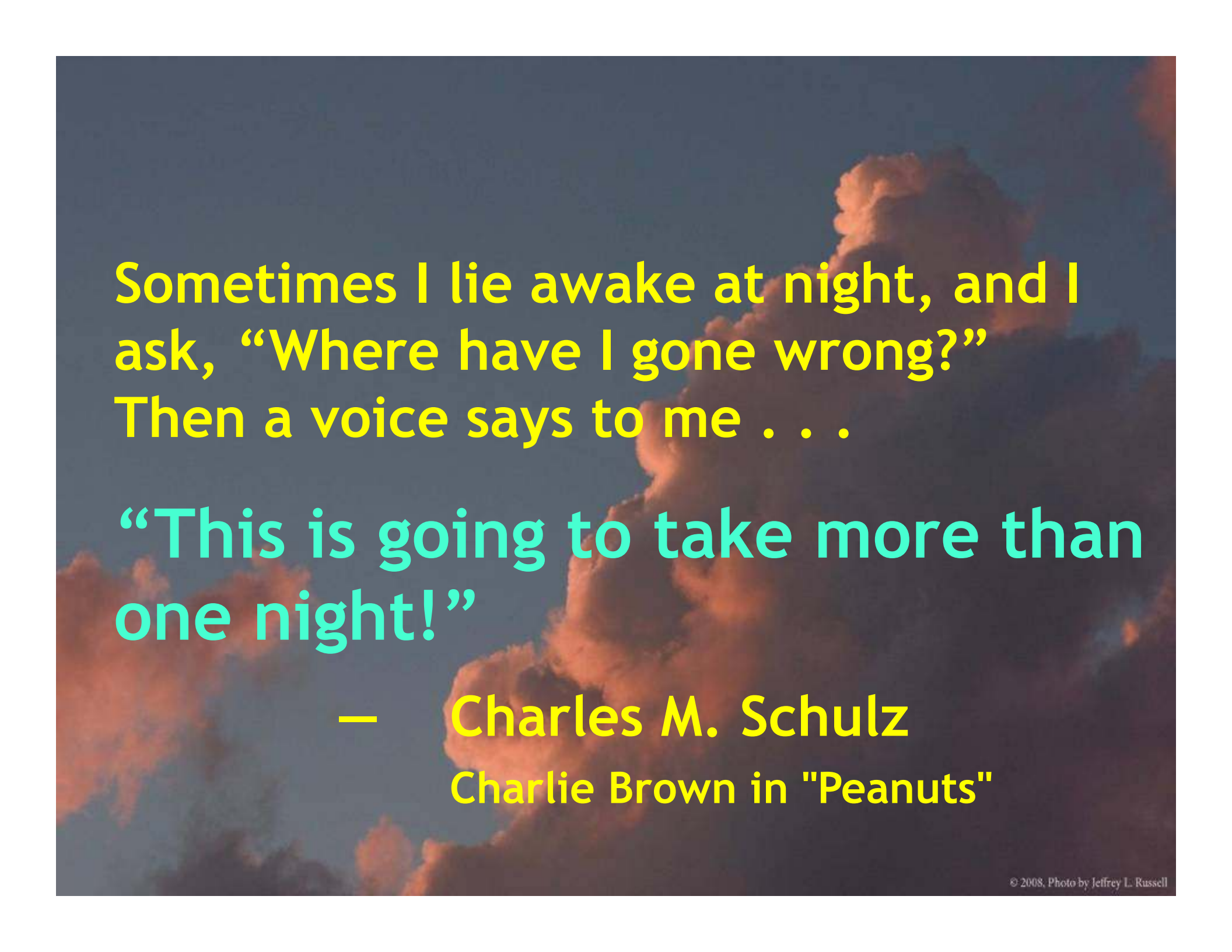- How will you know if the **employee** has the right resources?

Sunrise over the Santa Lucia Range

Quality is impossible if people are afraid to tell the truth

— W. Edwards Deming
Leader of the Quality Movement

Step Five: Provide Positive Consequences

- What's in it for the receiving person?
- **Why** should he or she accept a delegated task?
- What **rewards** are you prepared to make available if he or she is successful with the task?
- How will you respond to **failure**? What are the consequences of failure?
- How much failure can you **tolerate**?

Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask, "Where have I gone wrong?" Then a voice says to me . . .

"This is going to take more than one night!"

—   Charles M. Schulz

Charlie Brown in "Peanuts"

Thank You!

Let your journey towards improved delegation begin!

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After the Rain
Howth Harbor, County Fingal

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