

COMPANION WORKSHEET

The Indispensability Trap

This worksheet is built to sit alongside the article of the same name. Use it after you have read the article, not instead of it. The four sections below follow the same order the article does: what is actually driving the overwork, where that shows up as a specific behavior, what it is costing you, your team, and your organization, and what you are going to do about it in the next thirty and ninety days.

Answer in the specific, not the general. A vague answer is usually the pattern protecting itself.

1 Your Motivation
What is actually driving the overwork.

2 Problematic Behaviors
Where it shows up, and what it has built.

3 Consequences
What it is costing you, your team, and your organization.

4 Action Plan
One thing to hand off now, and a rhythm to sustain it.

Michael J. Negrete, PharmD, is a healthcare leader and leadership development practitioner.

SECTION 1

Your Motivation

Overwork that keeps repeating itself is rarely a time management problem. It is usually about what stepping back would cost you emotionally. Start there, honestly, before you get to behavior.

What outcome, or person, are you protecting by staying this personally involved?

Where does this show up for you most? Check what fits, and add your own if none of these quite land.

The Fixer, the one who solves it because you can solve it fastest.

The Expert, the one who needs to be the most knowledgeable person in the room.

The One Who Always Delivers, the one who cannot tolerate being seen as unreliable.

Something else:

Complete this sentence honestly: If I truly stepped back from this, I would feel —

SECTION 2

Problematic Behaviors

None of these happen through a single decision. They accumulate. Check what is true for you right now, without editing yourself.

I keep a process in my head instead of writing it down.

I am the only signer or approver on something that could reasonably sit with someone else.

I answer questions after hours or on vacation because it is faster than waiting.

I keep absorbing the same exception instead of fixing the process that keeps producing it.

I keep postponing training someone else because the work in front of me feels more urgent.

Other:

Now name the specifics. List what currently runs through you and only you, and what would need to be true for someone else to hold it.

Runs through only me

Who could hold this in 90 days

What has to happen for that to be true

SECTION 3

Consequences

The costs land in three places. Name them specifically, not in general terms.

Cost to you (capacity). What is this actually taking from you right now?

Cost to your team (development). What are they not learning because you keep stepping in?

Cost to your organization (fragility). If you were out for a month, unannounced, what would not run competently?

Of everything above, which one would actually cause damage if it broke tomorrow?

SECTION 4

Action Plan

PART 1 · HAND ONE THING OFF

This part is a one-time move, not a habit yet. Pick one item from your audit on page 3. Hand it off for real, not partially, in the next thirty days.

What I am handing off:

Who is receiving it:

Guardrails I am setting (budget, scope, what still needs my sign-off):

Our check-in cadence:

Target date:

The tax I am willing to pay (what competent, not perfect, looks like here):

For the full mechanics of handing something off well, confirming real understanding, setting guardrails, and stepping back without checking out, see the ACCORD Delegation Framework:

<https://www.changeyourfuture.net/resources/accord-framework.html>

SECTION 4

Action Plan

PART 2 · BUILD THE ONGOING RHYTHM

Handing off one thing does not end this. The pattern rebuilds itself the moment you stop watching for it. This part is the recurring habit that keeps scanning for the next thing quietly becoming a single point of failure, before it hardens into one.

My rhythm, starting this week:

Daily —

Weekly —

Monthly —

The question worth sitting with is not how much you are carrying. It is what your team and your organization are quietly not becoming, because you keep insisting on carrying it alone.

One sentence I want to be true in ninety days: