

CHAPTER 2 • MARGIN MOVE

The Routing Map

Fifteen minutes, and a sheet turned sideways.

The problem was never that people ask things of you. It is that almost no one has ever *seen the pattern* of what gets routed to them — and you cannot renegotiate a pattern you cannot see.

How to run it

List the ten demands that most reliably arrive at your desk, your phone, or your kitchen table. Not the occasional ones. The ones that come to you *because you are you*: the things people "just ask you about," the messes that somehow become yours, the decisions everyone waits for you to make.

Then mark each one with a single letter.

- **C — Mine by Choice.** I genuinely want this one. It uses my best judgment on something I care about. Competence well spent.
- **D — Mine by Default.** It comes to me because it always has, not because it must. Someone else could carry it; the routing system simply never learned that.
- **R — Mine by Drift.** I do not even remember agreeing to this. It accreted. It became mine while I was not looking.

Do not try to fix anything yet. No resolutions, no boundary-setting emails, no reorganising your life tonight. Renegotiation is Chapter 9, and it goes better built on a clear map. Today the whole task is mapping.

The map

#	THE DEMAND THAT RELIABLY COMES TO ME	C / D / R	WHO ELSE COULD CARRY THIS?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Tally: Choice Default Drift

The gap — how many of the ten are NOT marked C:

That number is the size of your competence trap: the share of your cognitive load that came from the routing system rather than from your own choice about where to spend your best judgment.

One more thing before you put this down. Look at the far-right column. For how many of your D and R demands did you write a real name? Those names are where the load could go — and the fact that you could name them is proof the load was never as unrefusable as it felt.

What I noticed

One or two lines, written now while it is fresh. Reflection is a deposit — Chapter 7 — and this is the cheapest place in the book to make one.

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