

The PM Newsletter



Are You Truly Being A Good Leader?

Are you sure about being a good leader, or just the most patient one in the room?

Most leaders I know don't wake up questioning whether they're strong.

They're too busy being needed. Too many fires to put out. Too many people counting on them. And slowly, silently, that becomes the default setting: keep it together, lead from the front, don't break.

But somewhere between the daily firefighting and high-stakes decisions, a quieter question surfaces:

Am I really leading well, or just outlasting the chaos better than most?

Being a "good leader" gets reduced to growth charts, people metrics, and team morale on paper. But leadership is rarely measured in the moments that feel easy.

After years of working with founders and leadership teams, here are 5 hard

truths I've seen unfold again and again - the kind that separate resilient leadership from high-functioning exhaustion:

1. You are cutting through tough conversations

Every leader is well known with the emotional weight of holding off "that" conversation - with a co-founder, a key hire, or even a long-time client. You justify it in your head: *Let's wait for the right time. Maybe it'll resolve itself.* But it never does.

Great leaders chase clarity. They initiate hard conversations *before* they become resentments. They don't enter them to win, rather to align. And even if their voice shakes, they say what needs to be said.

Because silence costs more than discomfort ever will.

2. You can separate discomfort from danger

Most of us manage with low-grade anxiety - it comes with the job. But seasoned leaders develop a skill: **they know when that feeling is just tension... and when it's actual threat.**

They don't mistake unease for intuition. They know that hiring someone better than them might feel uncomfortable, but it isn't dangerous. That saying no to a tempting offer might feel risky, but it's not wrong.

This kind of discernment isn't instinct. It's trained over time. It's what lets them make calls, others are afraid to face.

3. You have designed clear mental boundaries

In the early days, you *have* to hold it all. Every decision, every issue, every emotion. But the problem is, some of us leaders never unlearn that. Years in, they're still defaulting to "I'll take care of it."

But here's the truth: **if your business still needs you to be everywhere, it's not scaling, it's surviving on your nervous system.** Great leaders build boundaries to protect what makes them capable of showing up.

They learn to say: *This isn't mine to hold anymore. And that's a good thing.*

4. You're not addicted to being needed

Let's talk vulnerably for a minute here - During the initial days, it felt good to be the person everyone turns to. But it also traps you in a loop. You become irreplaceable and resent it. You crave freedom, but quietly fear how things will function without you.

To become a sustainable leader, it is important to build systems that don't worship your presence. You are here to make others powerful, not dependent. Ideally you should envision a stage where you trust your team to take the lead, even if it means stepping out of the spotlight.

Because legacy isn't built through control. It's built through letting go.

5. You still have something untouched.

This one's the hardest to protect. When everything's on the line — investor expectations, team morale, growth numbers, it's easy to lose yourself in it all. But every truly resilient leader I've met has *one thing* they protect:

A non-negotiable morning hour. An untouched creative space. A deeper reason they haven't let burnout swallow them whole.

They hold onto something that reminds them: *I am more than my business*. Because when everything feels like it's on fire, **that's what keeps them human.**

We admire leaders who endure. But endurance without reflection turns you into a silent shell.

So ask yourself: **Are you leading well... or just leading long?**

There's no judgment in the answer. Only a starting point.

These are the kind of conversations that I am holding around through the week, follow along the journey!

Until next time, Pramod Maloo

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