



EPISODE 114

The Six Ideas That Rose to the Top

Maya, Marcus, and researcher Lena distill thirteen episodes of Skip Level into three patterns: doing becomes directing, visibility is a skill, and nobody is coming. Each pattern is graded against the research behind it, then the six strongest ideas are counted down, with four actions to put them to work this week.

KEY STRATEGIES & IDEAS

The three patterns underneath the first thirteen episodes, the evidence that supports them, and the six ideas that rose to the top.

1. Pattern One: Doing Becomes Directing

Two levels up, your output stops being the product; your judgment is. Promotion committees grade what you choose, what you end, and what you escalate. The CEO Genome Project (more than seventeen thousand executive assessments) found decisive leaders twelve times more likely to be high performers, and ninety four percent of poor decisiveness scores were for deciding too little, too late. Waiting for complete clarity is usually procrastination wearing a respectable suit.

2. Pattern Two: Visibility Is a Skill

Your work cannot speak; you are its voice. Exley and Kessler (Quarterly Journal of Economics) gave four thousand adults the same test with the same scores: men rated their performance sixty one out of one hundred, women forty six, even when an employer would see the rating. Visibility is a set of behaviors: a short written update on a rhythm (what shipped, what it saved or earned, what comes next) and reporting outcomes, not activity.

3. Pattern Three: Nobody Is Coming

No one is assigned to your advancement, and nobody is coming to develop your team either. The strongest evidence is the cost of waiting: people who ask, build a case, and make their ambitions known pull ahead of equally able people who wait to be noticed. A two levels up leader directs, guides, and develops the team on purpose, inside the daily work, because that development is unassigned too.

4. Grade the Evidence Before You Use It

Executive presence is taught everywhere and accounts for twenty six percent of what it takes to earn a promotion (Coqual), yet ten programs define it ten ways: real, but vague. Contrast the Harvard Business School, MIT, and University of Washington finding that AI explanations made reviewers' judgment worse, overruling human experts. Decide first, in writing, then make the tool argue against you.



5. The Six That Rose to the Top

The countdown, six to one: lead in with the answer. Pre-wire every room that matters. Beat the information tax by asking for the raw version. Sponsorship over mentorship (sponsors deliver nearly five times the promotion lift, per Fair360). The override: your judgment outranks the machine's explanation. And number one: build a business case framed around what the organization gains (Bowles and Babcock), then do not fill the silence.

ACTION & REFLECTION STEPS

- ☐ Hand off one thing you still do yourself, completely, and do not take it back when it wobbles.
- ☐ In your next meeting that matters, state your recommendation in the first two sentences, before the background.
- ☐ Pick the thing you have been waiting to be given, and make the ask this week, with the case framed around what the organization gains. Then do not fill the silence.

My case in one sentence:

- ☐ Start a judgment log. Once a week, write down one decision you made, what you chose, what you ended, what you escalated, and what happened.

My first entry (decision / chose / ended / escalated / outcome):

Think two levels up. — Maya & Marcus