

BUSY, CAPABLE AND INVISIBLE (AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT)

**The Confidence Spark • NHS Elect | Louise
Thompson | Leadership Coach & Former
Director of Communications for the NHS**

Hi! I'm Louise Thompson

- I'm a former Director of Communications, who has held regional and national leadership roles in the NHS
- I came to the NHS from the tech sector in Silicon Valley (and had somewhat of a rough entry!)
- But working in the NHS became the defining moment of my leadership career and something I remain so proud of
- I went on to achieve the Executive Healthcare Leadership Nye Bevan award from the NHS Leadership Academy
- And I have worked with many brilliant NHS professionals as a leadership coach
- **Today, I want to help you...**



ESCAPE THE BUSY TRAP



**AND START
SHOWING UP
STRATEGICALLY
AND VISIBLY**





EVERYTHING IS URGENT

**Do you recognise
this feeling?**

It's Tuesday morning and your plans for the week have already gone out of the window

You've got back to back meetings most days, you've had to reschedule your one to ones with the team (AGAIN), and you can't keep on top of your emails. What's worse? You don't know how you'll find time for that one strategic project...



YOU'RE STUCK IN THE BUSY TRAP!

**And it comes for us all if
we're not careful...**

**When you know you can handle the strategic,
but all you seem to get done is the tactical...**

Here's what the busy trap manifests as:

Constant firefighting. Saying yes to everything.
Prioritising urgency over impact. Mistaking
activity for value.



BUT AT WHAT COST?

**To your health, wellbeing,
happiness and career growth?**

This is the true cost of staying stuck in “busy”

- Feeling reactive and drained.
- Losing confidence and clarity.
- Missing space for strategic thinking.
- Starting to question whether you’re “cut out” for your role.



This isn't a confidence problem. An ability problem. Or a strategic lack.

It's an operating mode.

That defaults to **BUSY**, instead of **STRATEGIC**.

And that is quietly costing you credibility, value and visibility where it really counts.



IT'S TIME TO MAKE A SHIFT

**And start leaning into a
different operating mode.**

**Your career is for the long haul. And the NHS
needs YOU to thrive.**

So you need practical and sustainable ways to
show up at your best.



PURPOSE.
PRIORITIES.
PAUSE.

**Your blueprint for reclaiming your time and
your value at work**

Let's dive in!



IDENTIFY YOUR PURPOSE

**What does success look
like and why?**

**Do you know WHY you do what you do? And
WHY it matters to your organisation?**

- What outcomes really matter this year?
- Where do I add the most value?
- What would success look like for ME? Not just my team or boss?



IDENTIFY YOUR PRIORITIES

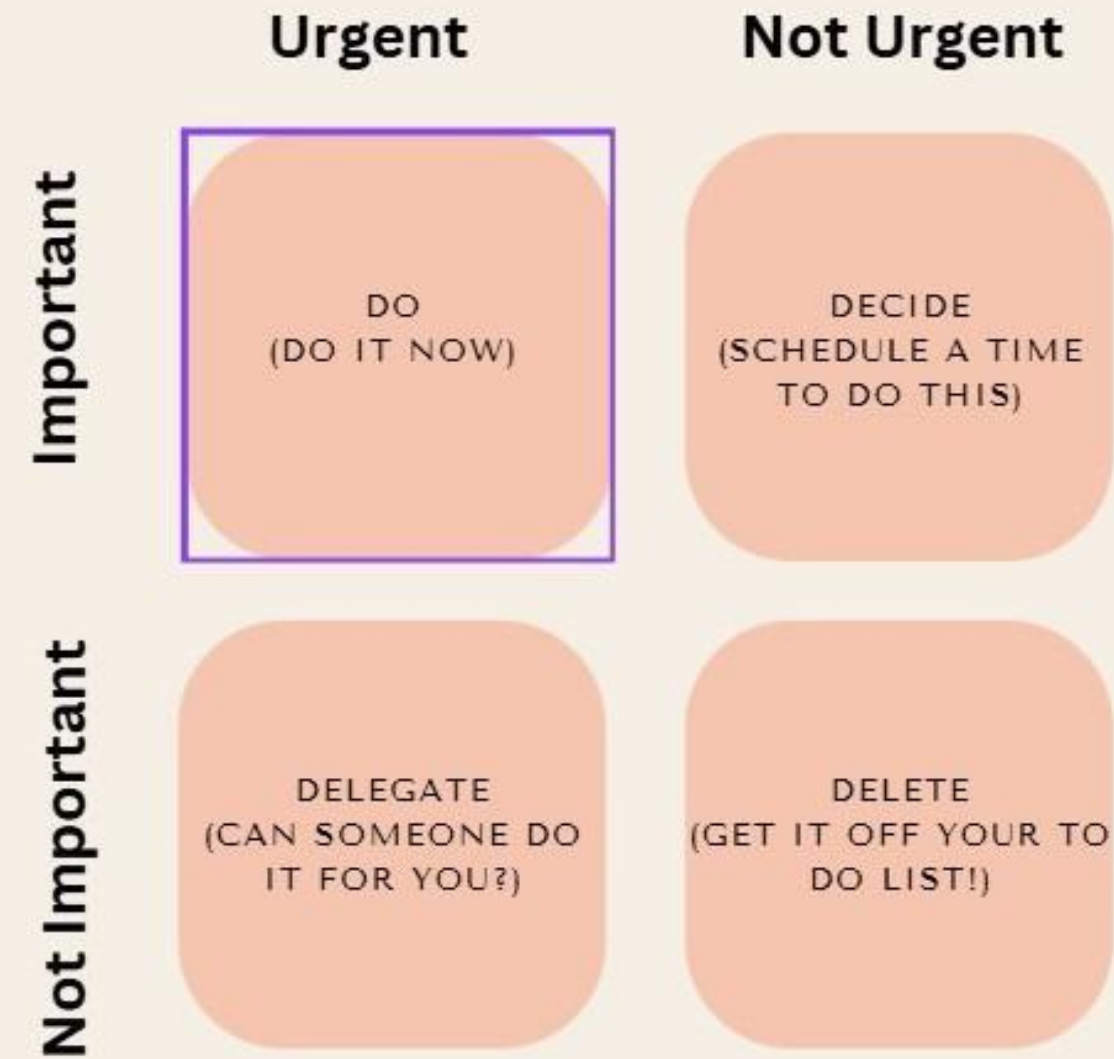
**Do you know where your
times go and what you
spend it on?**

**Connect your priorities to your purpose, then
AUDIT your time against these!**

Traffic Light Calendar Audit

- Green = High-value strategic work
- Amber = Supportive or necessary tasks
- Red = Firefighting or busy work

The Urgent Important Matrix Quadrants



**SEPARATE THE URGENT FROM
THE IMPORTANT**

**Use the Eisenhower Matrix as your
planning and priorities tool**

- **ACKNOWLEDGE** (*GRACEFULLY*)
- **EXPLORE** (*BE CURIOUS AND EMPATHETIC*)
- **STATE YOUR CURRENT PRIORITY** (*LINKED TO OUTCOMES*)
- **DECLINE CLEARLY** (*WITHOUT OVER-APOLOGISING*)
- **OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE OR A FUTURE OPTION** (*IF APPROPRIATE*)



**PROTECT YOUR PRIORITIES WITH
CLEAR BOUNDARIES**
(And learn to say no gracefully)



PAUSE (CREATE SPACE FOR CLARITY)

Do you know where your
times go and what you
spend it on?

Reflection is not indulgent. It's intentional
(self) leadership in action.

Every Friday, take 30 minutes and ask yourself:

1. What went well this week?
2. What drained my energy?
3. What deserves my focus next week?
4. What can I say no to or delegate?



YOUR WEEKLY LEADERSHIP RESET
PURPOSE KEEPS YOU ANCHORED.
PRIORITIES KEEP YOU FOCUSED.
PAUSE KEEPS YOU GROUNDED.



THIS IS WHERE VISIBILITY (VALUE) BEGINS

**When you stop drowning, you can start
being seen for the value you provide**

- Off the reactive treadmill, out of other people's to-do lists
- That's when you get the headspace for the work that actually matters
- And the clarity and confidence to share it with the stakeholders who shape how you're seen: your manager, the wider leadership team, the services around you



MAKE YOUR VALUE VISIBLE

(It's not showing off...)

Reframe your communication with key stakeholders

- "I ran the project" → "here's what shifted as a result"
- "I cleared the backlog" → "here's the risk we removed"
- "Activity was up" → "here's what it meant for patients"



WHAT'S ONE SMALL SHIFT YOU'LL MAKE NEXT WEEK?

(Try the free Friday Reset on my website
for a quick and easy tool to get started...)

LET'S CONNECT!

WWW.LOUISETHOMPSONCOACHING.COM

WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/LOUISETHOMPSON

TIKTOK AND INSTAGRAM @LEADWITHLOUISE

LOUISE@LOUISETHOMPSONCOACHING.COM

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