WORKBOOK

Is This Mine to Carry?

A four-part audit of Insight, the third domain of spiritual emotional intelligence.

This workbook is for a decision you have been circling for a while — the one that comes back on the drive home. Before you work on the decision itself, you are going to find out whether it is a decision at all, and whether it is yours.

Write the thing down in one sentence before you start. Not the context. The thing.

PART ONE — Confusion or exhaustion

These feel identical from the inside, and they call for opposite responses. Confusion means you are missing information. Exhaustion means you are carrying too much. More research fixes the first and makes the second worse.

1. Name three specific facts you are missing. Not areas — facts. A number, a date, an answer somebody could give you in one sentence.
2. If you cannot get to three, stop. It is exhaustion. Write that down and do not research this any further.
3. List everything you are currently carrying — every commitment, role, project and obligation with your name on it. Keep going past the point where it feels silly.
4. Count them. Then ask the only question that matters here: how many of these can one person actually hold at this stage of their life?

The exhausted person experiences exhaustion as a failure of clarity and reaches for more information, which takes more capacity than they have. That is the trap, and it is almost invisible from inside it.

PART TWO — Whose table is this

Deciding picks between options already on the table. Discerning asks whether the table is yours. Business is very good at the first and almost never does the second.

1. Write down the options as you currently understand them.
2. Who put each one there? You, a client, a market, an old version of yourself, somebody's expectation?
3. For any option you did not put there yourself: what would it cost to take it off the table entirely?

4. Now the harder one. Is this decision yours to make at all, or are you making it on behalf of someone who has not asked you to?

PART THREE — The pattern in how you pick things up

Most people have one characteristic move. Mine is an Eight's: see something shiny in the sand, pick it up, turn it into a business. The move itself is usually a strength. The cost is that it happens before any discerning gets done.

1. List the last four things you took on — jobs, projects, roles, ventures, commitments.
2. For each: how long between first noticing it and committing to it?
3. What did each one have in common? Something about how it arrived, or what it promised, or what it let you avoid.
4. Write one sentence: "I tend to pick things up when _____."

If you know your Enneagram number, use it as a prediction rather than a label. It will not tell you who you are. It will tell you, in advance, what you reach for when you are squeezed — which buys you a few seconds of warning.

PART FOUR — The next step, not the plan

A plan requires a picture of an outcome several years out that nobody can honestly give you. While you wait for that picture you do nothing, and call the nothing prudence.

1. What is the one thing you could do this week that you would not regret however the rest turns out?
2. Write down why it feels too small to be the answer.
3. Do it anyway, this week, and write down what changed — in the situation and in you.

Most people can answer the first question immediately and then refuse to act on it, because it feels too small to count. It is the answer. It is just small.

What to do with what you find

If Part One said exhaustion, the work is not on the decision — it is on the list. Something comes off it before anything gets clearer, and you will almost certainly have to put down something good rather than something bad. If Part One said confusion, go and get the three facts, and notice how quickly it resolves once you do. Either way, do Part Four this week. The in-between is not wasted time, but it is not a place to live either.
