

THE DEBRIEF

THE RIGHT ALTITUDE · FLIGHT MANUAL SERIES

Feedback for Reese, my deputy.

Prepared for Jordan Hale

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This feedback strategy is based on the observer's perceptions and self-assessment. It is a preparation tool, not a performance evaluation.

THE READ

This isn't a Reese problem. It's a system you built and now need to dismantle. You trained Reese to check with you, you reinforced it every time you gave a clean answer to a question they could have answered themselves, and — by your own admission — part of you likes being the person they come to. That last part is the whole game. Until you own that, every conversation you have with Reese about ownership will read to them as 'do more' while the actual signals you send say 'keep bringing it to me.' They're not confused. They're responding accurately to a contradictory environment.

What Reese probably doesn't see: their reliability has become a ceiling. They think being the person who always checks, always loops you in, always gets it right is the behavior that earns the promotion. It's the opposite. The thing that makes them a great number-two is the exact thing disqualifying them from being the owner of Atlas. They're protecting their competence by never being the sole name on a decision that could go wrong — and that self-protection reads, from where you sit, as someone not ready to carry the weight.

The pattern underneath: Reese suspects this is an issue (you've hinted), agrees when raised, and then defaults back the moment the next real decision lands. That's not defiance. That's a habit with no new instruction strong enough to override it — and no permission structure that makes owning it feel safe. Your hints gave them a vague aspiration. They need a hard line and a visible runway.

Feedback that lands isn't about the words. It's about the timing, the trust, and the follow-through. Say it. Mean it. Stay in the room.

— Don