

Authority is a role. It does not require elevation.

Authority answers a simple question:

Who is responsible?

Elevation answers a different one:

Who is above whom?

The two are often confused.

When someone holds authority, others may experience them as “above” — not necessarily because the leader claims superiority, but because power affects perception.

Past experiences with hierarchy shape how authority is interpreted.

And when elevation enters the room — whether enacted or assumed — something shifts.

People begin holding back.

Fewer ideas are voiced.

Fewer risks are taken.

Engagement drops.

Authority clarifies responsibility.

Elevation rearranges value.

Leadership requires the first. Not the second.