

A photograph of three young girls sitting on a red seesaw at a playground. They are all laughing and looking towards each other. The girl on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a pink and white striped shirt. The girl in the middle has curly dark hair and is wearing a pink shirt. The girl on the right has blonde hair in a ponytail and is wearing a yellow shirt. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds and other playground equipment in the distance.

# From Playground to Purpose: Lessons From The Seesaw That Lift Us Higher

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# Why the Playground Matters

- Playgrounds are the first leadership labs
- Girls develop relational leadership early
- Early patterns shape leadership trajectories





# What the Research Shows

- Cooperative play emerges earlier
- Preference for small, trusted groups
- Strong communication and negotiation skills

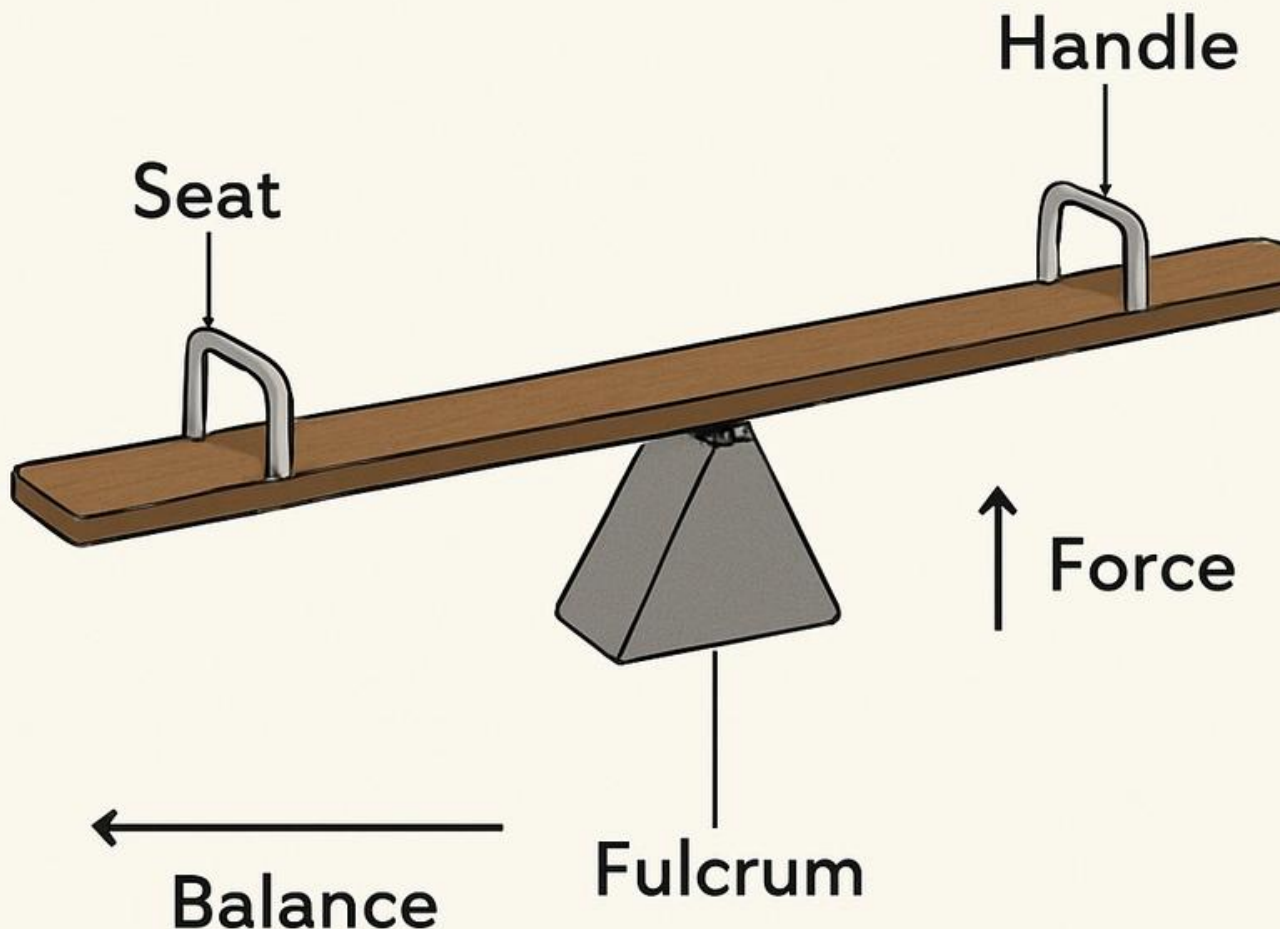
# The Hidden Cost



- Collaboration misread as passivity
- Relational labor becomes invisible
- Leadership not always rewarded

# The Seesaw as a Framework for Leadership

## The Seesaw



- Requires partnership
- Balance and adaptation matter
- Trust enables movement

# Leaders Cannot Rise Alone

- Collaboration enables lift
- Shared governance matters
- Distributed leadership sustains change



# The Right People Elevate You



- Mentors explain the system
- Sponsors open doors
- Peers sustain momentum

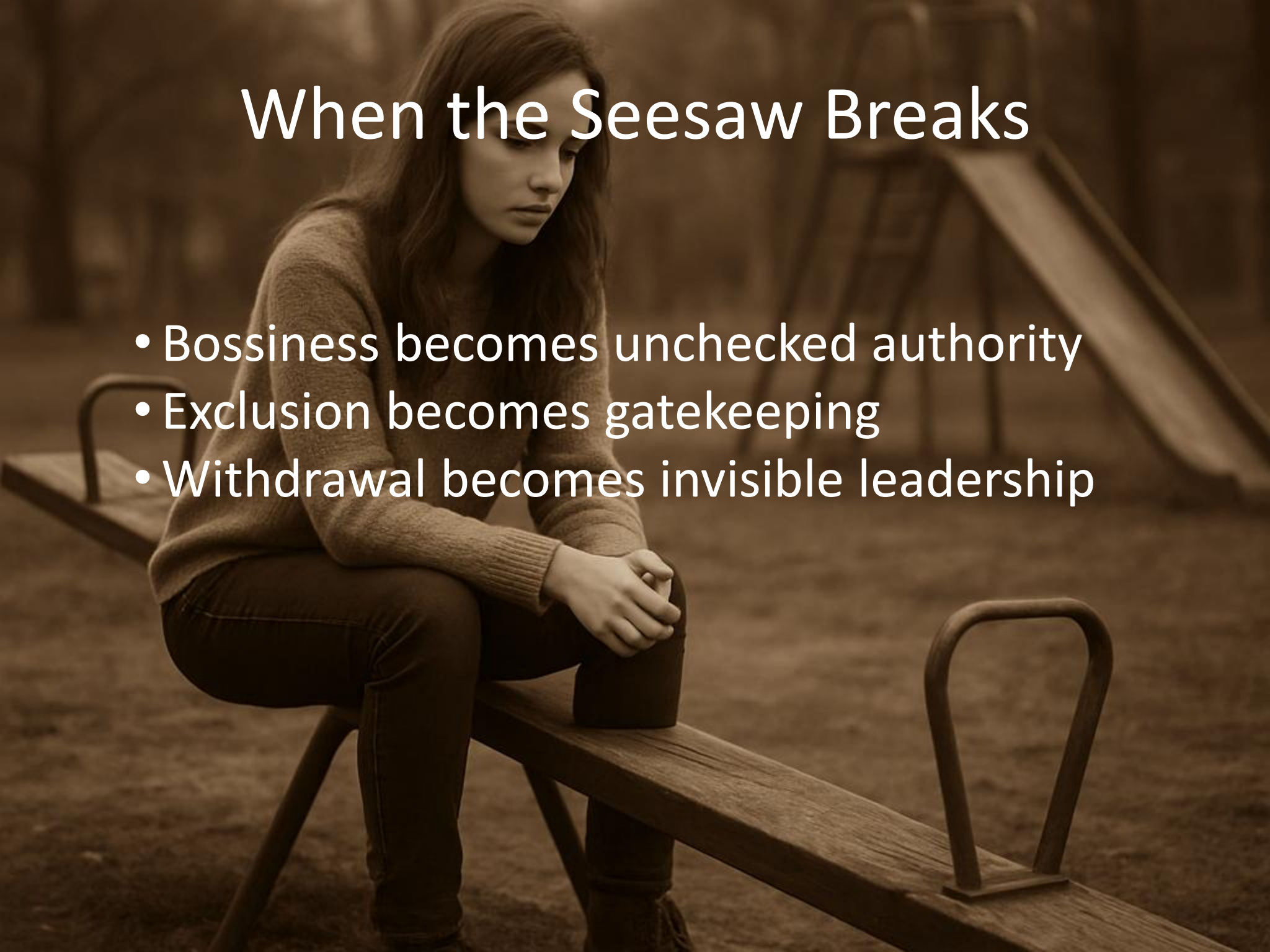
A young girl with curly hair in a ponytail, wearing a pink shirt and khaki shorts, sits on the left side of a wooden seesaw. A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a blue shirt and jeans, sits on the right side. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a lush green park with trees and grass.

# Trust as the Fulcrum

- Psychological safety
- Credibility and care
- Trust enables risk-taking

# When the Seesaw Breaks

- Bossiness becomes unchecked authority
- Exclusion becomes gatekeeping
- Withdrawal becomes invisible leadership



A photograph of two women sitting on a wooden seesaw in a park. The woman on the left is Black with curly hair, wearing a rust-colored blazer and blue jeans, laughing heartily. The woman on the right is white with straight hair, wearing a light grey sweater and blue jeans, smiling. The background is a lush green field with trees under a warm, golden light.

# Lift as We Rise

- Leadership is collective elevation
- Lifting others strengthens systems
- Shared success is sustainable

# Practical Applications

- Sponsor emerging leaders
- Share platforms and visibility
- Reward collaboration



# From Playground to Purpose

- Collaboration is power
- Trust is infrastructure
- Leadership is reciprocal



# Questions and Answers

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