Impediment Removal

Recently in one of my coaching session, a budding Scrum Master asked, "How does impediment removal change for a Scrum Master as the Scrum Team matures?"

This got me thinking. Responsibilities of a Scrum Master do change as the team matures. So how does this one particular responsibility - Impediment Removal, change for a Scrum Master as the team matures?

Early on, Scrum Master should start looking for patterns in impediments. Impediments can be unique, similar or repetitive.

- **Unique impediments** are, well, unique in their occurrence, type of challenges they pose, and how they are solved. For example, not having a team area to work in, is a unique problem. Once a team-area is made available, that problem or anything similar to that is not going to come up again for a Scrum Team
- **Similar impediments** are those that do not occur in exactly the same way, but can be solved leveraging solution to another impediment. For example, if the Scrum Team A's product integrates with Scrum Team B's product at enterprise level, and Scrum Master has established a way for Team A & B to collaborate, the same way can be used to collaborate with any other Scrum Team. The exact dependencies and things to manage may be different, but teams can adopt similar practices
- **Repetitive impediments** are those that keep coming up again and again - in the same form, with the same solution. For example, Scrum Team's build breaks because some common libraries were not loaded properly or in timely manner by the infrastructure team - the solution is to ensure loading of correct libraries, validating they are correct and then running the builds.

As a Scrum Master, look for these three patterns. Repetitive impediments can most of the time be automated. Get them automated. Period. Then move on to automate as much part of Similar impediment(s) as possible. This will reduce team's dependency on you to be present to remove these repetitive and similar impediments. The responsibility eventually becomes managing unique impediments. Even with those, a mature team will resolve many itself. So eventually, the span of responsibility will dwindle, and the Scrum Master can move on to a wider role of enterprise transformation, etc.

This is how "Impediment removal" responsibility of a Scrum Master would change as the team matures.