

Leading with Balance: “Building Skills, Wellbeing & Impact”

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GENDER BIAS

Understanding Gender Equity Barriers

Systemic Discrimination and Bias

One of the most prominent gender equity barriers is systemic discrimination and bias. This form of discrimination manifests in various sectors, including the workplace, education, and healthcare. For example, women often face unequal pay, limited career advancement opportunities, and biases in hiring and promotions. Systemic biases also affect educational attainment and access to resources, perpetuating inequality. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive reforms and policies that promote fairness and eliminate discriminatory practices.



Cultural Norms and Stereotypes

Cultural norms and stereotypes constitute another significant barrier to gender equity.

Societal expectations and traditional gender roles can limit opportunities for individuals based on their gender. For instance, stereotypes about women's roles in the family and workplace can hinder their professional growth and perpetuate gender-based discrimination. Challenging these cultural norms and promoting gender-inclusive attitudes are essential steps in breaking down these barriers and achieving gender equity.



Impact of Gender Equity Barriers

Economic Disparities:

- Gender equity barriers contribute to significant economic disparities. Women, on average, earn less than men for similar work, and they are underrepresented in leadership positions across various industries. These economic inequalities can lead to a cycle of poverty and limited access to opportunities for women and marginalized groups. Addressing these disparities involves implementing equal pay initiatives, promoting women to leadership roles, and creating economic policies that support gender equity.

Health and Safety Concerns:

- Gender equity barriers also impact health and safety. Women and gender minorities often face unique health challenges, including inadequate access to healthcare services and higher rates of gender-based violence. For instance, domestic violence and sexual harassment remain pervasive issues that undermine safety and well-being. To address these concerns, it is crucial to improve access to healthcare, support survivors of violence, and enforce laws that protect individuals from gender-based abuse.

Strategies to Overcome Gender Equity Barriers

Implementing Inclusive Policies

Implementing inclusive policies is a key strategy in overcoming gender equity barriers. Organizations and governments should develop and enforce policies that promote gender equality in the workplace, educational institutions, and other settings. For example, policies that mandate equal pay, provide parental leave, and ensure anti-discrimination protections can help address systemic barriers and support gender equity.

Promoting Education and Awareness

Education and awareness play a vital role in addressing gender equity barriers. By educating individuals about gender biases and stereotypes, society can work towards changing attitudes and behaviors. Schools, workplaces, and community organizations should offer training programs and workshops that focus on gender equity, inclusion, and respect. Increasing awareness helps individuals recognize and challenge discriminatory practices and fosters a more equitable environment.

Engaging in Advocacy and Support

Supporting Gender Equity Initiatives

Supporting gender equity initiatives is another effective way to address gender equity barriers. Engage with organizations and movements dedicated to promoting gender equality. These initiatives often work on various fronts, including advocacy, policy development, and direct support for affected individuals. By contributing to these efforts, you help amplify their impact and drive progress toward gender equity.

Participating in Community Actions

Participating in community actions is a powerful method for addressing gender equity barriers. Local advocacy groups and community organizations often organize events, campaigns, and projects focused on gender equity issues. Getting involved in these activities, such as attending rallies, volunteering, or supporting awareness campaigns, can help drive change at the grassroots level and contribute to broader societal shifts.

Addressing gender equity barriers is essential for achieving a fair and just society. Systemic discrimination, cultural norms, economic disparities, and health and safety concerns all contribute to these barriers. By implementing inclusive policies, promoting education and awareness, supporting gender equity initiatives, and engaging in community actions, individuals and organizations can work together to overcome these obstacles. Advancing gender equity requires collective effort and dedication to creating a more equitable world for everyone.



Navigating Gender Bias & Systemic Barriers

Gender bias manifests in assumptions about competence, likability, and commitment.

Tips to counter bias:

Document Contributions: Maintain records to challenge biased narratives.

Address Bias Directly: Raise concerns respectfully when safe.

Build Coalitions: Collaborate with allies to promote equity.

Advocate Institutional Change: Push for blind reviews, diverse panels, and standardised evaluations.

Choose Battles Wisely: Focus energy on impactful issues.



Gender Barriers

- Relationships, respect, workplace authority and education are common ways men and women are pitted against each other.
- Overcoming barriers in gender communication isn't simple, but can be made clear with a little patience and understanding.
- This barrier arises because men and women have different ways of thinking and communication.



Building Gender Balance and Inclusive Leadership

Aim for at least three women on the leadership team.

- Research shows that having a minimum of three women in senior leadership roles helps shift team dynamics and normalises gender diversity in decision-making. Set measurable targets and regularly review progress.

Democratise access to critical stepping-stone roles.

- Ensure that development opportunities, high-visibility projects, and succession pipelines are accessible to all, not just those who “fit the traditional mould.” Use transparent criteria for selection and proactively sponsor underrepresented talent.

Challenge assumptions and biases about what great leaders look like.

- Review leadership competency frameworks and promotion criteria for biased language or outdated norms (e.g., valuing assertiveness over collaboration). Provide unconscious bias and inclusive leadership training for all decision-makers.

Cultivate a culture of belonging and invest in support mechanisms.

- Create mentorship and sponsorship programmes, employee resource groups, and flexible working policies. Encourage open dialogue about inclusion and measure belonging through regular feedback and engagement surveys.

Normalise paternity and shared parental leave.

- Promote equitable parental leave policies that support all parents. Encourage leaders—especially men—to model taking leave, helping to reduce the stigma and rebalance caregiving expectations.

Offer skills training and re-entry support for those returning from a career break.

- Develop structured “returnship” programmes, refresher training, and tailored career coaching to rebuild confidence and ensure smooth reintegration into the workplace.



Overcoming Gender Bias in the Workplace

- Implementing diversity and inclusion training programs
- Establishing transparent and unbiased hiring and promotion processes
- Encouraging mentorship and sponsorship opportunities for all genders
- Promoting flexible work arrangements to accommodate diverse needs
- Regularly reviewing and addressing pay disparities
- Fostering a culture of open communication and zero tolerance for discriminatory behaviour
- Providing resources and support for work-life balance
- Celebrating and recognising diverse achievements and contributions



Female “power”

Is it required to be a “Super Woman?”



A female leader in a Supreme Audit Institution does not need to wear the cape of Superwoman; true strength lies in embracing *authenticity*, seeking support and leading with clarity.

Lasting impact grows from balance, not burden.





Group Exercise: : Common Challenges for Female Leaders in the SAI

Objective: *To identify and discuss the common challenges faced by female leaders within the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) and to develop practical actions to address these challenges.*

Instructions: As a group, discuss the key challenges that female leaders in your SAI commonly experience.

- Consider challenges related to leadership opportunities, work–life balance, organisational culture, communication dynamics, confidence, or professional development.
 - Identify Actions for each challenge identified and agree on specific actions or strategies that could help address or overcome it.
 - Think of both individual actions (what female leaders can do themselves) and organisational actions (what the SAI can do to provide better support).
 - Record Your Ideas & nominate one group member to provide feedback to the wider group.
 - This person will briefly summarise your group's main challenges and suggested actions (in about 5 minutes).
- Feedback Session: Each group will present their findings to the rest of the participants.



Leading in Male-Dominated Institutions

Women in SAIs face unique challenges.

Success strategies include:

- Lead with Expertise.
- Build Strategic Relationships.
- Communicate with Authority.
- Engage Informal Networks.
- Amplify Diverse Voices.

Earning Support:

- Deliver consistent results.
- Support others' success.
- Communicate proactively.
- Acknowledge contributions.
- Maintain integrity and genuine interest in colleagues.



7 Valuable Lessons for First-Time Leaders

People get the wrong idea about leadership.

Leadership isn't:

- × Expecting respect without earning it
- × Thinking you have all the answers
- × Using your title to get your way
- × Micromanaging every detail
- × Avoiding tough decisions
- × Being the loudest voice
- × Bossing people around
- × Hogging the spotlight

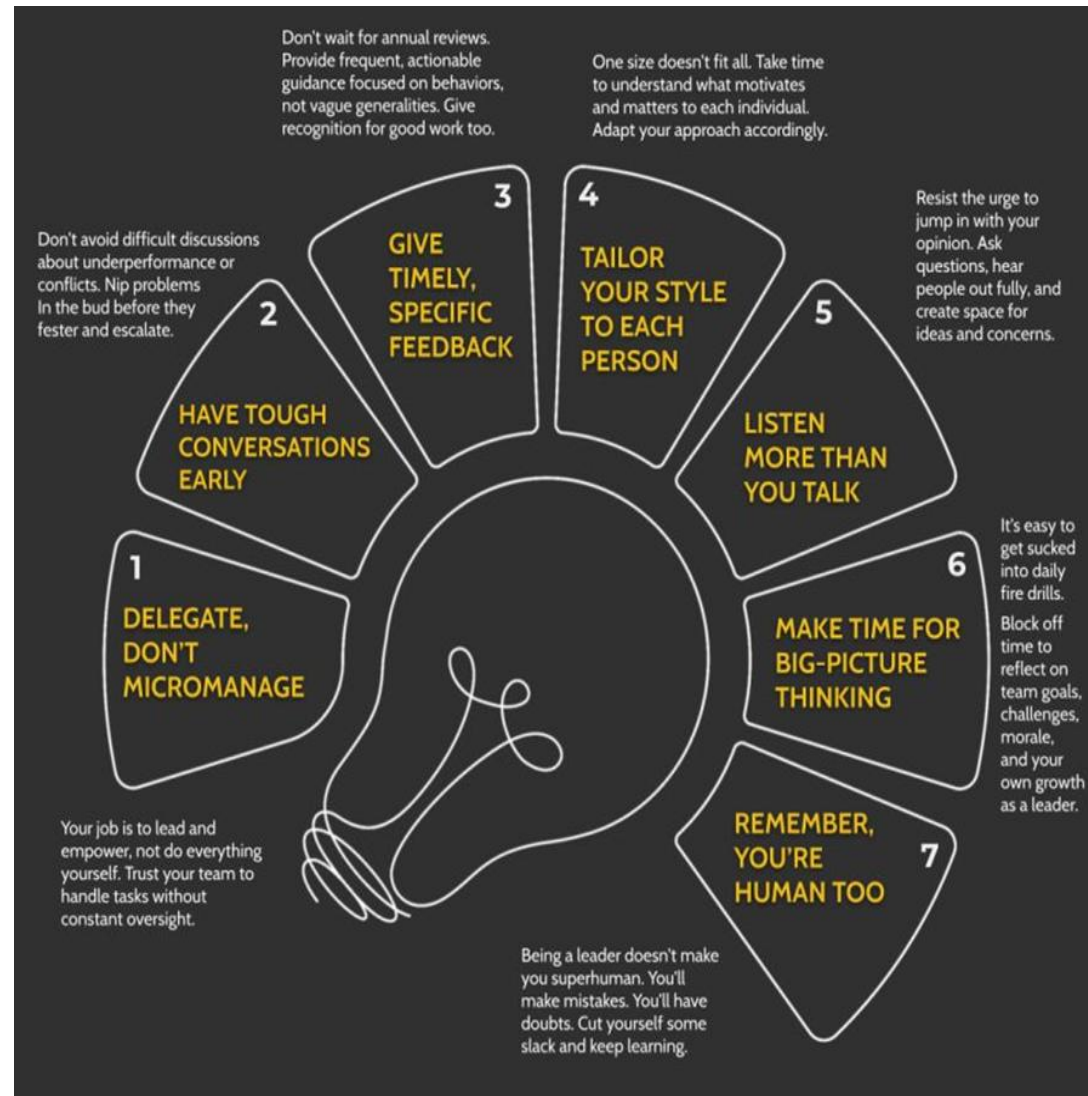
Leadership is:

- ✓ Empowering others
- ✓ Adapting to changes
- ✓ Helping your team grow
- ✓ Facing challenges head-on
- ✓ Giving constructive feedback
- ✓ Listening more than you speak
- ✓ Earning respect through actions
- ✓ Continuously learning and growing

You have a chance to impact people's careers & lives.

You should be willing to:

- Put your team's needs before your own.
- Push yourself out of your comfort zone.
- Admit when you're wrong or need help.
- Stay true to your values under pressure.
- Have the tough conversations with care.
- Give your team room to shine and grow.



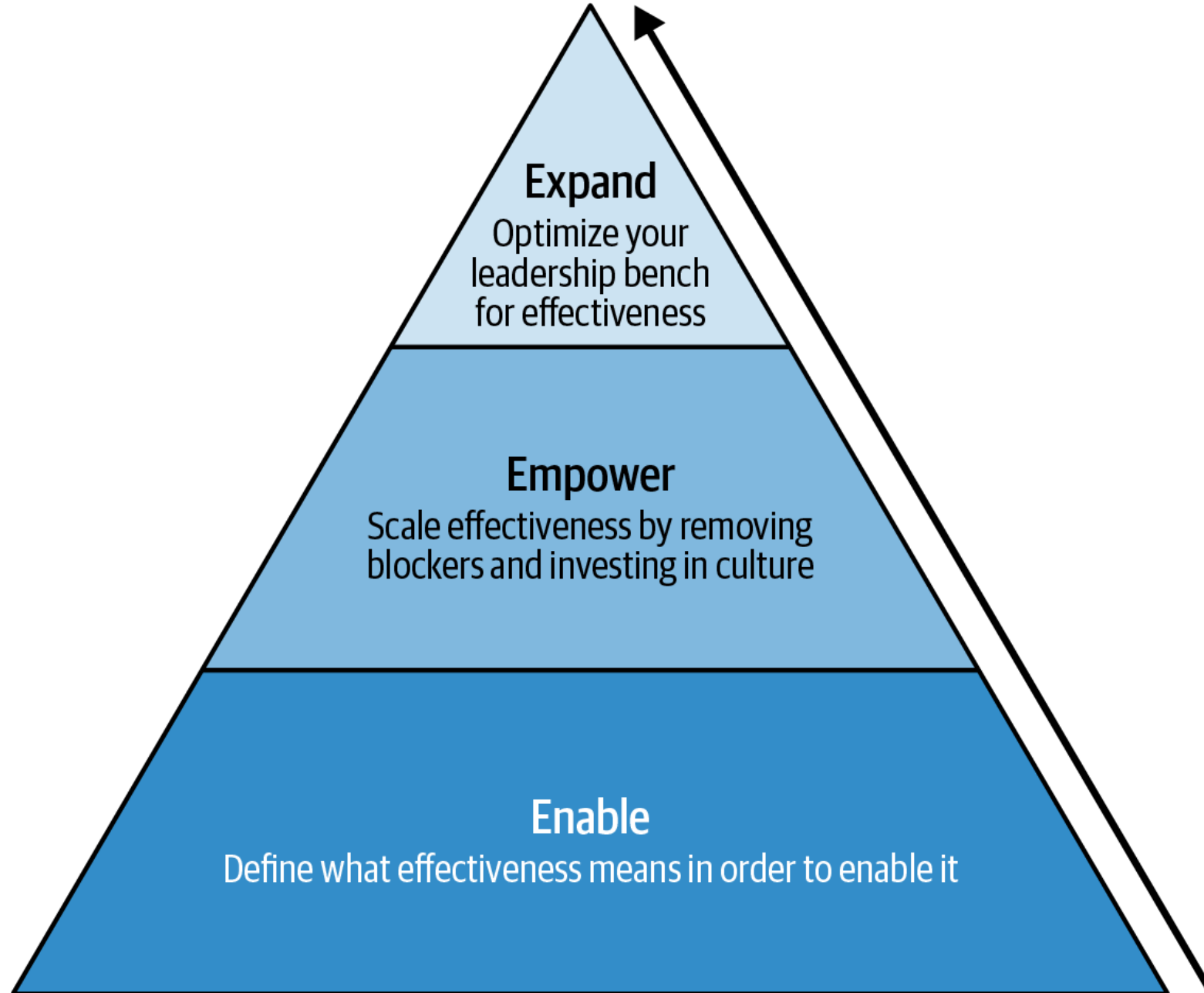
Leadership isn't about being perfect. It's about being real, vulnerable and human; sometimes we make mistakes. That's okay.

- When you make a mistake, learn from it, apologise, and try to do better.
- Leadership is a journey, not a destination. Embrace the challenge and enjoy the ride. Your impact is greater than you know.



Source: Justin Wright (LinkedIn)

The three E's of effectiveness



Self-Awareness

Know yourself and grow your impact.

- Leadership starts with self-awareness; your style shapes success.
- Lead with insight, because how you lead is how they thrive.
- Self-aware leaders build stronger teams and better results.
- Your leadership style echoes, make it count.
- Understand yourself to unleash your team's potential.



Self-Assessment

Attendees complete the Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Instructions: For each statement, choose the option that best represents how true it is for you. Use the following scale:

- A = Strongly Agree (4 points); B = Agree (3 points); C = Disagree (2 points) & D = Strongly Disagree (1 point)

The questionnaire consists of the following sections:

Section 1: Leadership Style

Section 2: Resilience

Section 3: Emotional Intelligence

Section 4: Self Awareness

Section 5: Personality and Approach

➤ Calculate your final score (add up your points for all 16 statements)

❖ Maximum of 64 & Minimum of 16

Leadership Style

Self-Reflection

SCORING:
A = 4 points
B = 3 points
C = 2 points
D = 1 point

1. I prefer to involve my team in decision-making rather than deciding alone.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

2. I focus on long-term vision and motivating others towards it.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

3. I set clear expectations and closely monitor results.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

4. I adapt my leadership approach depending on the situation or person.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Total Score: _____



Resilience

Self-Assessment

SCORING:

A = 4 points

B = 3 points

C = 2 points

D = 1 point

5. I remain calm and composed under pressure.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

6. When faced with setbacks, I quickly focus on solutions.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

7. I view challenges as opportunities to grow.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Total Score: _____



Emotional Intelligence

Self Assessment

SCORING:

A = 4 points

B = 3 points

C = 2 points

D = 1 point

8. I am aware of how my emotions affect my behaviour and decisions.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

9. I can recognise when others are stressed or upset, even if they don't say so.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

10. I manage conflicts by listening and finding common ground.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Total Score: _____



Self-Awareness

Self-Assessment

SCORING:

A = 4 points

B = 3 points

C = 2 points

D = 1 point

11. I regularly seek feedback from others on how I lead.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

12. I reflect on my strengths and areas for improvement.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

13. I understand how my background and values influence my leadership.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Personality and Approach

Self-Assessment

SCORING:

A = 4 points

B = 3 points

C = 2 points

D = 1 point

14. I enjoy taking initiative and driving change.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

15. I find it easy to balance empathy with assertiveness.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

16. I prefer structured, planned work over spontaneous problem-solving.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Total Score: _____



Scoring Guidelines

Guideline on score achieved

Score Range	Interpretation
52–64	You demonstrate strong, adaptive leadership with high resilience and emotional intelligence. You are likely a transformational or situational leader.
40–51	You show good leadership potential with moderate self-awareness and emotional balance. Continued reflection and feedback can help you grow further.
28–39	You may rely on a more structured or directive leadership approach. Consider developing greater adaptability and emotional insight.
16–27	Indicates a need to focus on self-awareness, stress management, and leadership flexibility. Coaching or mentoring could be beneficial.

Score Range: 52–64

You demonstrate strong, adaptive leadership with high resilience and emotional intelligence. You are likely a transformational or situational leader.

Suggested Development Actions:

- Continue to model inclusive and empowering leadership, supporting other emerging female leaders through mentoring or coaching.
- Share best practices in leadership and emotional intelligence across teams or departments.
- Take on strategic or cross-functional projects to further enhance influence and organisational impact.
- Engage in advanced leadership development programmes or international SAI leadership exchanges to broaden perspective.



Score Range: 40–51

You show good leadership potential with moderate self-awareness and emotional balance. Continued reflection and feedback can help you grow further.

Suggested Development Actions:

- Seek regular feedback from peers and team members to deepen self-awareness and refine leadership style.
- Participate in leadership and communication workshops, focusing on emotional agility and conflict management.
- Take on stretch assignments or short-term leadership roles to strengthen adaptability and confidence.
- Identify a mentor or role model within the SAI community to support career and leadership growth.



Score Range: 28–39

You may rely on a more structured or directive leadership approach. Consider developing greater adaptability and emotional insight.

Suggested Development Actions:

- Engage in emotional intelligence and self-awareness training to enhance interpersonal effectiveness.
- Practise situational leadership, adapting your approach to different team dynamics and contexts.
- Join leadership circles or peer learning groups to exchange experiences and build collaborative confidence.
- Work with a coach to identify triggers, develop resilience, and expand leadership flexibility.



Score Range: 16–27

Indicates a need to focus on self-awareness, stress management, and leadership flexibility. Coaching or mentoring could be beneficial.

Suggested Development Actions:

- Begin with a personal development plan focusing on stress management, confidence building, and emotional regulation.
- Seek professional coaching or mentoring support to strengthen leadership identity and self-belief.
- Attend workshops on mindfulness, communication, and resilience to build foundational skills.
- Gradually take on small leadership responsibilities to apply learning in a supportive environment.







Key Competencies

Strategic Decision-Making

Making informed, timely decisions with long-term vision.

Empathetic Communication

Building connections through listening and constructive dialogue.

Innovative Thinking

Supporting creativity and adaptability for continuous improvement.

Emotional Intelligence

Recognizing/managing personal and team emotions effectively.

Resilient Leadership

Demonstrating strength and flexibility in challenging situations.

Team Empowerment

Guiding and mentoring to support team growth and collaboration.

L

Listen

Encourage input. Ensure all voices are heard.

E

Empower

Give authority and confidence to others.

A

Adapt

Anticipate change and be flexible.

D

Decide

Make confident, informed choices.

E

Encourage

Motivate and support your team.

R

Respect

Value everyone's contributions.

S

Strategize

Plan effectively to achieve goals.

H

Honesty

Be truthful and transparent.

I

Inspire

Ignite passion and shared purpose.

P

Persevere

Persist through challenges.

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Effective Leadership

Understanding Balanced Leadership

Balanced leadership entails harmonising the development of technical and interpersonal skills with the maintenance of personal and organisational wellbeing

- For SAIs, leaders face unique pressures, such as demanding audit schedules, ethical responsibility and public accountability, requiring them to lead effectively without burnout.
- **Components of balanced leadership:** professional skills, wellbeing, and purposeful impact.
- **Challenges unique to SAIs:** workload intensity, stakeholder expectations, ethical dilemmas.



Balanced Leadership

Key skills that strengthen a leader's capability to manage stressors while nurturing team morale.

Key leadership skills that facilitate balance include:

- **Emotional Intelligence:** Self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy to navigate complex audit environments.
- **Adaptive Decision-Making:** Flexibility to adjust leadership style in response to changing demands.
- **Effective Communication:** Fostering transparent and supportive communication channels.

Promoting Wellbeing:

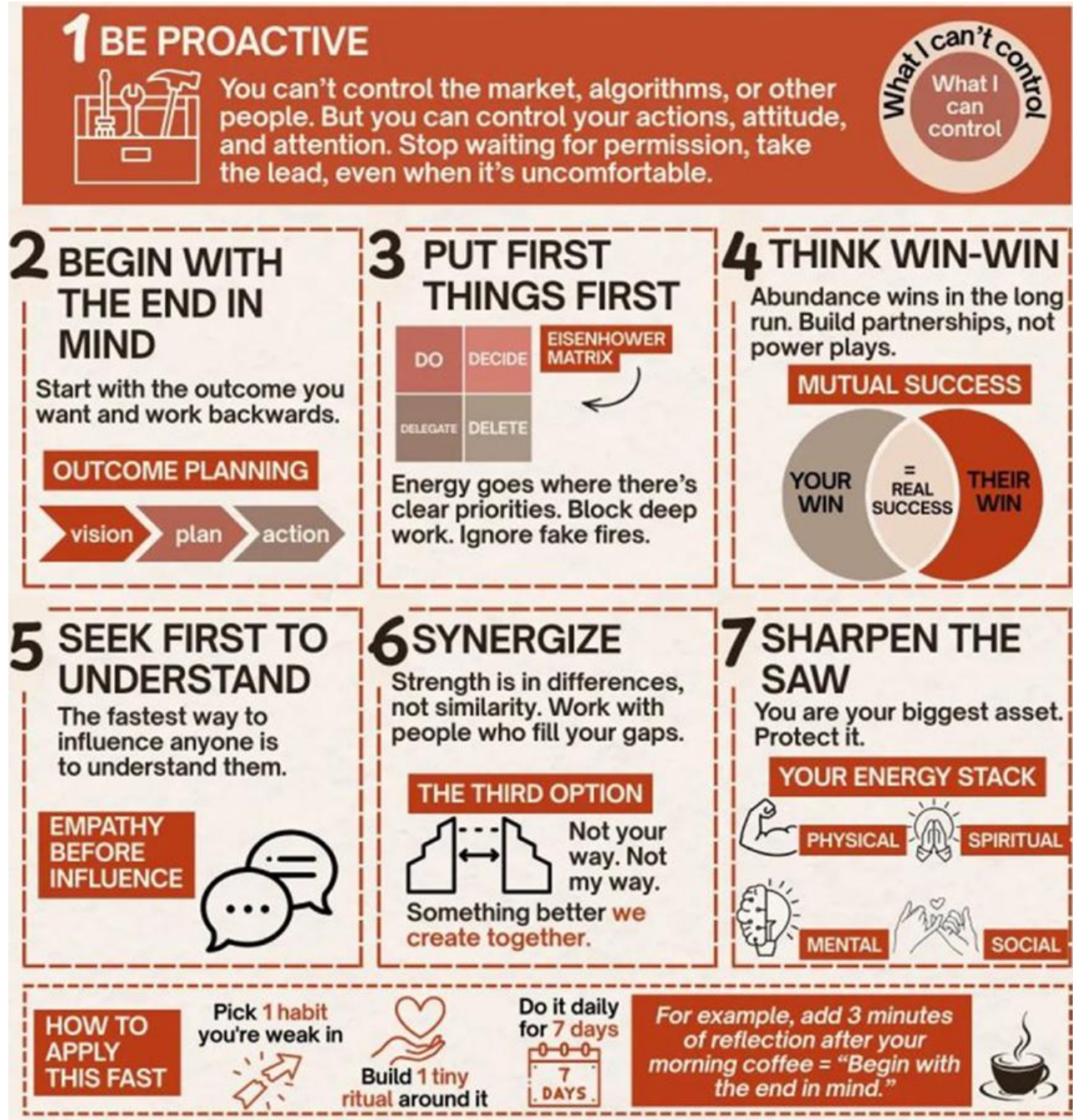
- Sustaining mental and physical well-being is vital in audit settings where pressure is chronic.
- Recognising signs of stress and burnout among teams.
- Developing supportive workplace practices: flexible scheduling, peer support, healthy boundaries.
- Introducing simple wellbeing exercises and mindfulness practices tailored for busy professionals.

Enhancing Impact:

- Balanced leadership also ensures that organisational goals are met ethically and sustainably.
- Aligning leadership actions with SAI mandates and ethical standards.
- Fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.
- Leveraging leadership balance to boost audit quality, stakeholder trust, and long-term institutional reputation.

7 Habits you need to be an Effective Leader

Steven Covey's timeless habits simplified for today's workplace



The Mindset of a High-Impact Leader

The best leaders I've worked with share something surprising. It is how they act every single day. Small habits that created a huge impact. Things that take zero talent, just the choice to lead better. Here are 9 mindsets of high-impact leaders that anyone can use:

1. Check your gut before big decisions

↳ That weird feeling? It means something. Your body knows things your mind doesn't see yet.

2. Start before you feel ready

↳ Waiting for perfection is just fear. Try something small today. You'll learn more by doing.

3. Turn frustration into fuel

↳ Getting frustrated shows you what's broken. Use that energy to fix it instead of complaining.

4. Ask "How can I help?" every day

↳ This question changes everything. Clear the path for your team. They'll move faster.

5. Listen without interrupting

↳ Stay quiet and really hear people. The answer often comes when you stop trying to fix things.

6. Connect work to real people

↳ Show who their work helps. People work harder when they see their impact on others.

7. Learn from every mistake

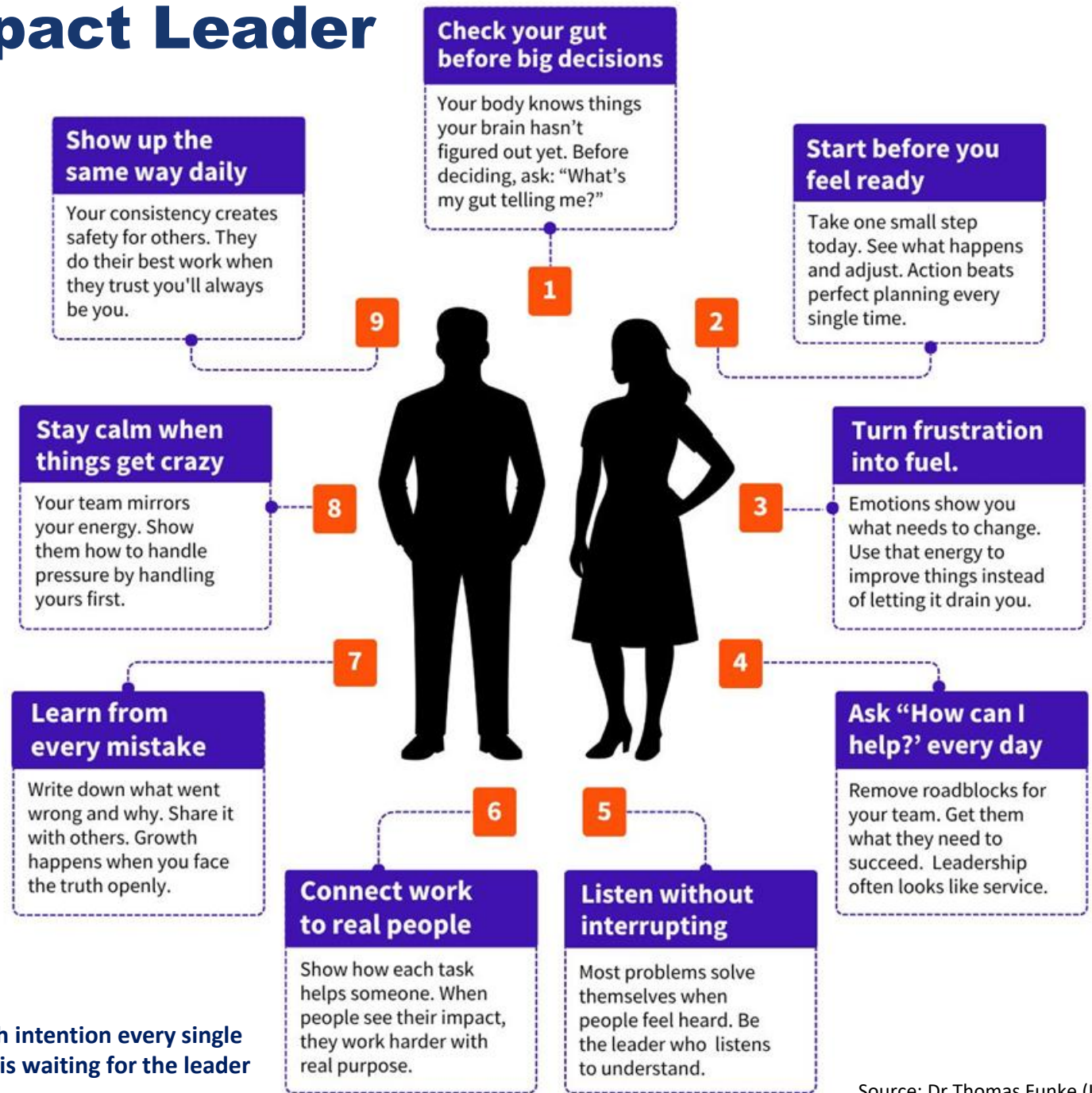
↳ Share what went wrong. When you're open about failures, others feel safe to grow too.

8. Stay calm when things get crazy

↳ Your team watches how you handle stress. If you stay calm, they will too.

9. Show up the same way daily

↳ Be someone people can count on. When they trust you'll be you, they do their best work.



Leadership isn't about being perfect. It's about showing up with intention every single day. Start with one mindset. See how things change. Your team is waiting for the leader you're becoming.

Mental Models for Effective Leadership

4 effective models every leader should know

Leadership isn't about output; it's about learning to manage:

- Your mindset
- Your priorities
- Your pressure
- Your people

These 4 mental models can help to reframe how you work, and now how you lead:

Parkinson's Law: Work expands to fill the time you give it.

- ↳ Give it a day? It takes a day.
- ↳ Give it 90 minutes? It takes 90.

Creating deadlines (even if they're fake) aids progress.

Yerkes-Dodson Law: Some pressure boosts performance. Too much breaks it.

- ↳ Too little = disengaged.
- ↳ Too much = overwhelmed.

Sustainable performance balances high pressure with moments of reprieve.

Comfort Zone Model: Growth doesn't live in comfort, or chaos.

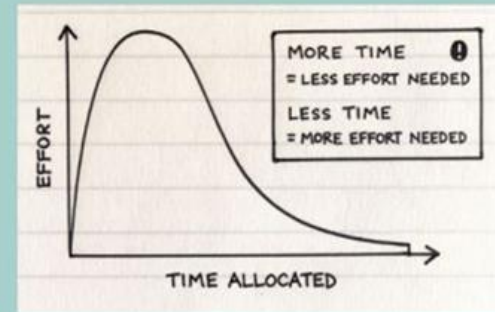
- ↳ That slightly uncomfortable stretch zone is where learning thrives.
- Build moments of discomfort (for yourself and team).

Situational Leadership: One-size-fits-all doesn't work.

- ↳ Sometimes people need direction.
- ↳ In other moments, they need autonomy.

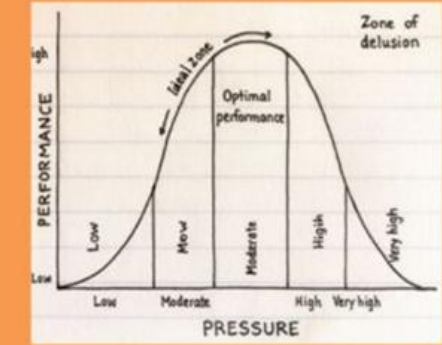
❖ Great leaders adjust to meet the moment.

PARKINSON'S LAW



Work will expand to fill the time you give it. Time-box work and create deadlines (whether to others or yourself)

YERKES-DODSON LAW



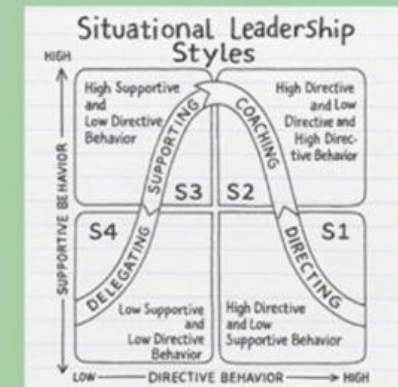
There is an optimal level of pressure for sustained high performance. Balance high & low periods to avoid burnout

COMFORT ZONE



New challenges move us to our stretch zone (where learning happens), but can push us into panic (where we freeze).

SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

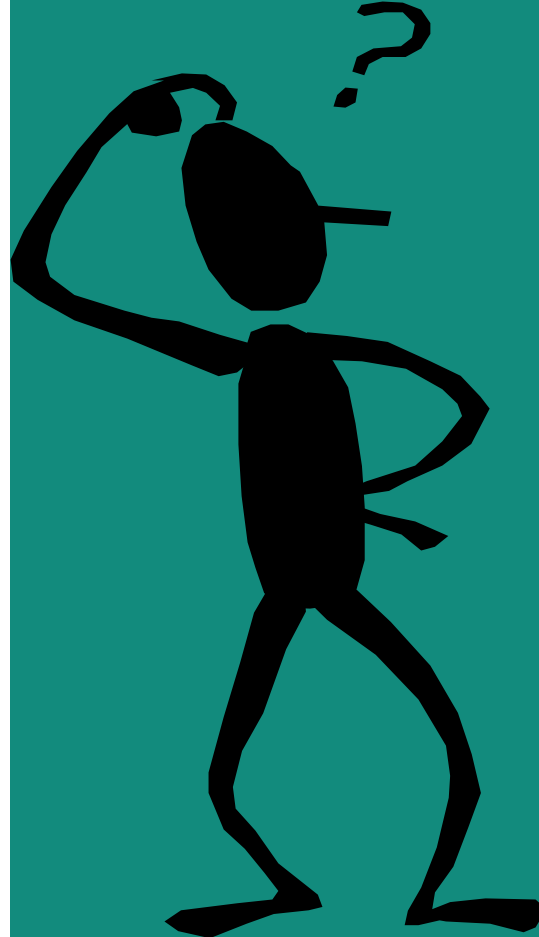


Each person and moment requires a different style of leadership to learn.

Leadership & Management

MANAGEMENT IS:

- The Process of working with and through others to achieve organisational objectives efficiently and ethically



LEADERSHIP IS:

- 'Influencing employees to voluntarily pursue organisational goals' (Kreitner & Kinicki)
- The ability to articulate a vision and influence people to willingly follow one's guidance towards the achievement of goals



Managers vs Leaders

MANAGERS

- Administer
- Maintain
- Control
- Ask how and when
- Initiate
- Accept the status quo
- Do things right

LEADERS

- Innovate
- Develop
- Inspire
- Ask what and why
- Originate
- Challenge the status quo
- Do the right things



Management vs Leadership

In Action

Management

- *Planning and Budgeting*: by developing detailed procedures, timetables for accomplishing desired results and allocating the required resources to execute the plans.
- *Organising and staffing*: by putting in place needed structures, systems and processes for executing the plans, staffing the structure with needed personnel, delegating work responsibilities and authority to help guide and monitor the implementation of policies and plans

Leadership

- *Establishing direction* by developing a vision for the future and strategies for producing the needed change required to achieve the vision:
- *Aligning people* by communicating direction in order to influence and get the cooperation of all groups, teams and coalitions that may be needed to accomplish the vision and strategy.

Management vs Leadership

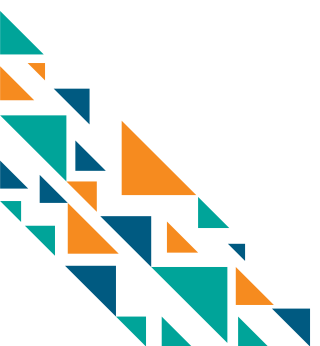
In Action (continued)

Management

- *Controlling and problem solving by way of monitoring results, identifying performance gaps and organising to address the problems.*

Leadership

- *Motivating and Inspiring people by providing the needed energy to prevail over political, bureaucratic and resource challenges to change. Satisfying basic unfulfilled and human needs.*



Old-fashioned Manager vs New Manager

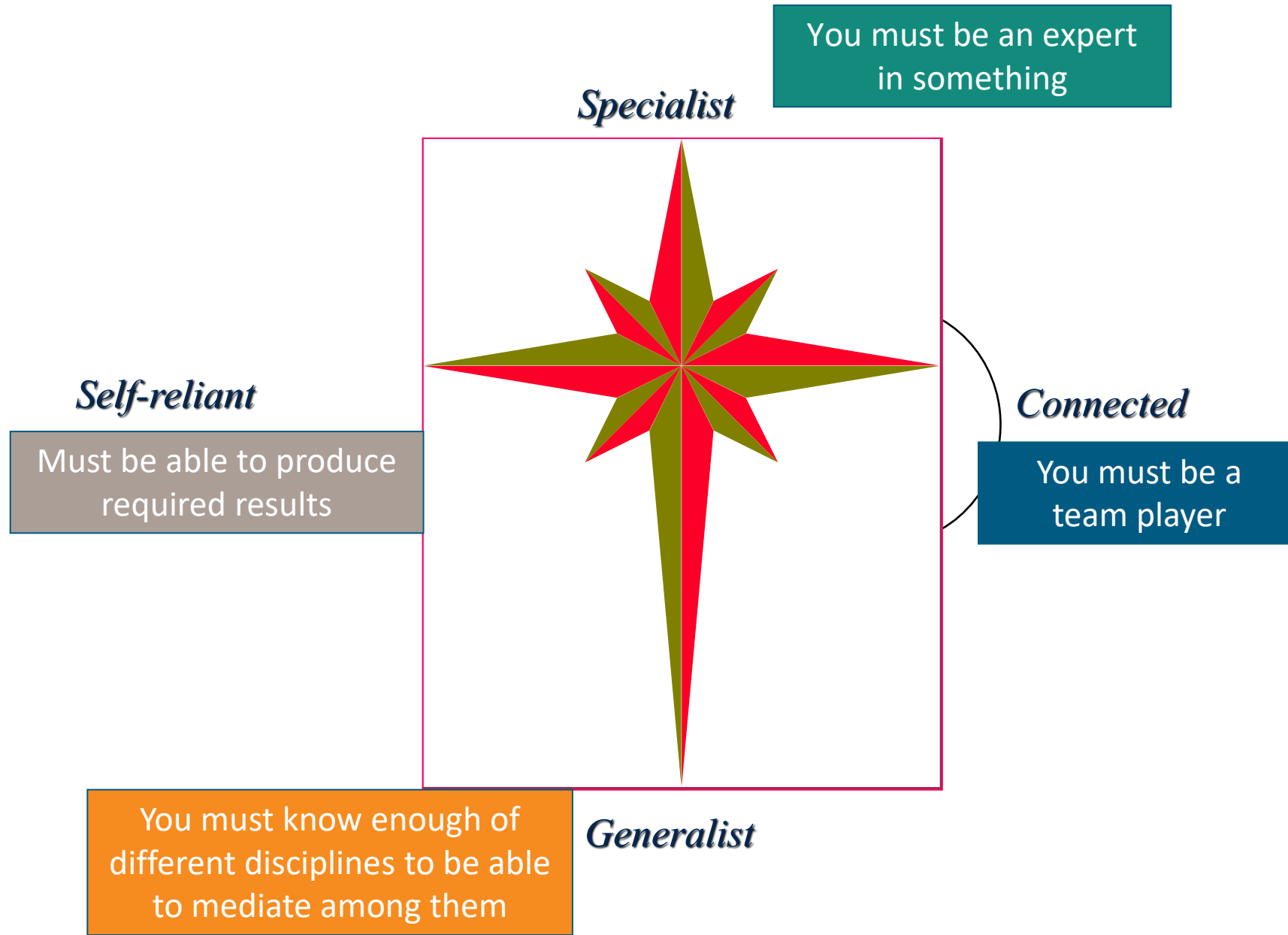
Old-fashioned Manager

- Operates in a climate of predictability & stability
- The boss
- Covets authority
- Hoards information
- • Treats people as all the same

The Manager of Today & the Future

- *Thrives on chaos*
- *The coach*
- *Empowers employees*
- *Shares information*
- *Is sensitive to differences*

THE NEW COMPASS POINTS IN A MANAGER'S CAREER



Areas of Leadership



Lead like a world-class CEO

3 Pillars every leader needs to master

The path to great leadership isn't what most expect. It takes more than charisma, intelligence, or vision. Exceptional leadership comes down to three critical pillars:

Pillar 1: Self-Leadership

- ↳ Your team's ceiling is your floor.
- If you're not growing, you're stuck.
- ↳ Emotional control is about responding, not reacting.
- ↳ The best decisions come when you're at your best.
- Prioritize sleep, exercise, and mental clarity.

- ↳ Your actions speak so loudly, people can't hear what you're saying.

Pillar 2: People Leadership

- ↳ Trust is built in drops but lost in buckets. Every interaction either builds or erodes it.
- ↳ Great leaders don't create followers; they create more leaders.
- ↳ The way you handle someone's mistake shapes how the entire team innovates.
- ↳ Culture isn't what you say, it's what you consistently reward and tolerate.

Pillar 3: Strategic Leadership

- ↳ Vision without execution is hallucination. You need both to succeed.
- ↳ The best strategies aren't complex; they're crystal clear and consistently executed.
- ↳ Innovation happens at the edges of your comfort zone.
- ↳ Your calendar never lies; it shows what you truly prioritize.

Want the shortcut to exceptional leadership? There isn't one.

Becoming an exceptional leader starts with small shifts.
A 1% improvement each day compounds to 37x growth in a year.

SELF-LEADERSHIP	PEOPLE LEADERSHIP	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP
Self-Awareness Recognize how your actions and emotions impact others.	Empathy Understand and support your team's emotions, challenges, and needs.	Vision Set a clear, inspiring direction for long-term success.
Clarity Align decisions with your values and long-term goals.	Communication Be clear, transparent, and inspiring in every interaction.	Decision-Making Weigh risks and rewards to make smart, timely choices.
Resilience Stay calm under pressure and recover quickly from setbacks.	Trust & Accountability Follow through on commitments and hold others responsible.	Insights Use data, trends, and experience to inform strategy.
Growth Mindset Embrace challenges as opportunities to learn and improve.	Delegation Empower your team by assigning responsibilities and not micromanaging.	Systems Thinking See how all parts of the business connect and impact each other.
Discipline Stay focused, consistent, and committed to your goals.	Feedback Help others grow with clear, constructive, and compassionate input.	Innovation Encourage fresh ideas and bold thinking to stay competitive.
Confidence Trust your abilities while remaining open to feedback.	Collaboration Encourage teamwork, shared problem-solving, and mutual success.	Adaptability Lead with confidence through change and uncertainty.
Balance Manage stress, set boundaries, and protect your well-being.	Conflict Resolution Address issues directly and find productive solutions.	Risk Management Anticipate challenges and develop proactive solutions.
Accountability Take ownership of your actions and lead by example.	Culture Building Create an inclusive, respectful, and fair work environment.	Resourcefulness Maximize time, talent, and budgets for sustainable growth.

Leadership Skills

Becoming a Leader Worth Following

8 Leadership Skills for Success

- 1 Listen more than you talk.
- 2 Communicate with transparency.
- 3 Connect with each team member.
- 4 Be reliable & trustworthy.
- 5 Show emotional intelligence.
- 6 Handle tough conversations.
- 7 Invite & give helpful feedback.
- 8 Inspire & empower your team.



4 Core Traits of Effective Leaders



Self-Awareness – Recognizing your emotions, strengths & weaknesses.

How to Develop It

- Journal often: Write down your thoughts and feelings to identify patterns.
- Seek feedback: Ask for honest input from mentors, colleagues & friends.

Communication – Listening & sharing information effectively.

How to Develop It

- Practice clarity: Keep messages simple & direct.
- Encourage questions: Make space for others to seek clarification.

Influence – Guiding others with your vision & ideas.

How to Develop It

- Share stories: Use personal experiences to illustrate your points.
- Build relationships: Connect personally with team members to gain trust.

Adaptability – Learning fast & adjusting to changing situations.

How to Develop It

- Embrace change: Say yes to experiences outside your comfort zone.
- Reflect daily: Spend 10 mins reviewing what worked & what didn't.



5 Problem-Solving Tools for Leaders

Challenges are part of leadership. But with the right tools, you can navigate them clearly.

“Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines.” (Robert H. Schuller)

Here are 5 advanced problem-solving frameworks to elevate your leadership:

1. Root Cause Analysis [RCA]

→ Identify the real source of issues to prevent future problems.

2. Design Thinking

→ Use creativity to develop user-centered solutions.

3. SWOT Analysis

→ Evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to plan strategically.

4. Six Thinking Hats

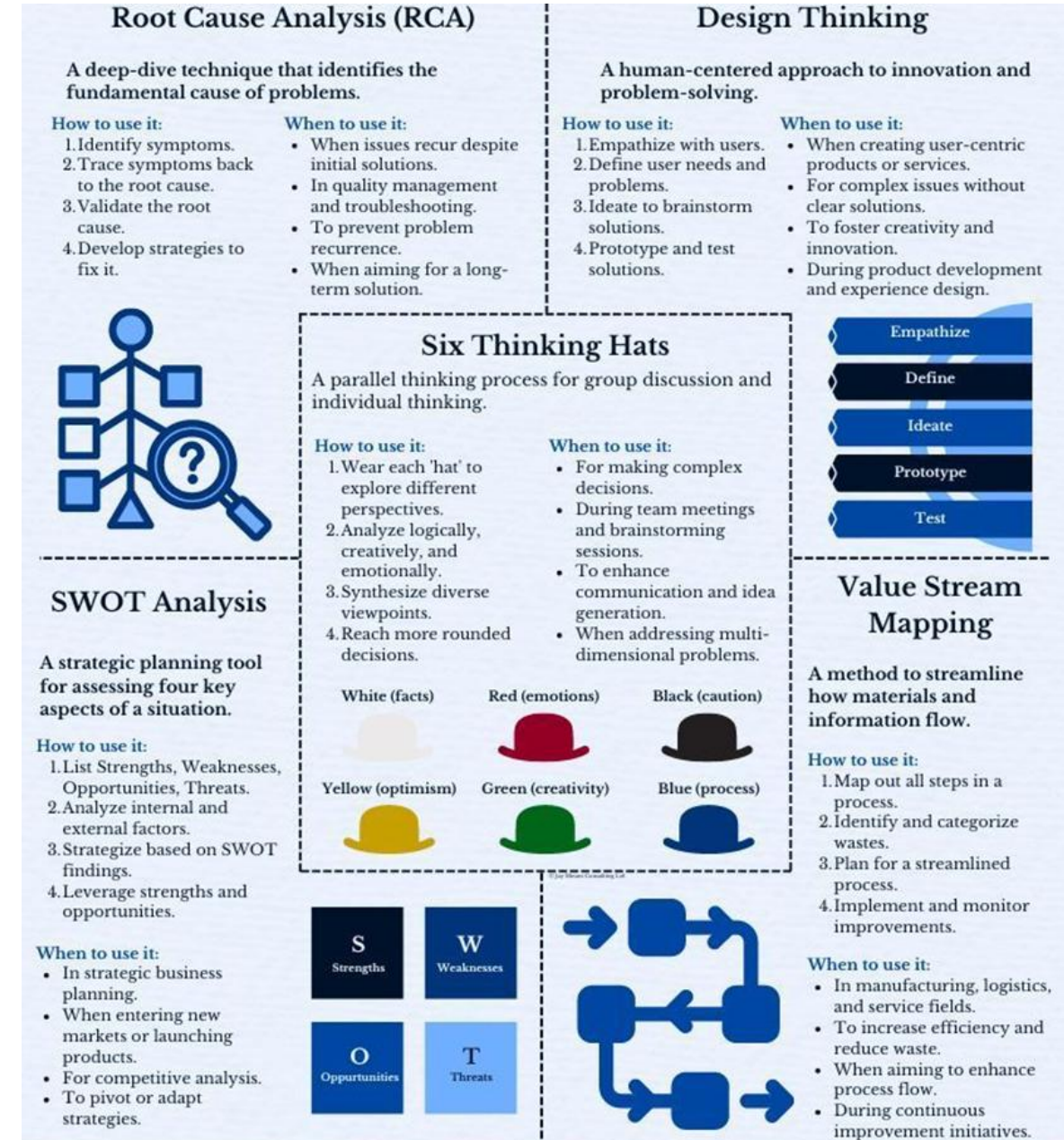
→ View problems from multiple perspectives for balanced decisions.

5. Value Stream Mapping

→ Visualize and improve processes to deliver maximum value.

Great leaders see problems as opportunities for growth. Use these frameworks to find innovative solutions. Face challenges with clarity and creativity.

“Every problem has a solution. You just have to be creative enough to find it.” (Travis Kalanick)



IN SUMMARY

- Leadership and management are both about achieving results through and with other people.
- Managers have formal power by virtue of their positions, however, informal leaders who work for or against the organizational objectives can be found.
- Leading and managing are complimentary roles that the same person can deploy guided by situational variables.





Unpacking Leadership Styles

Overview



10 Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles are different ways to guide and inspire a team. Knowing these styles helps you choose the best approach for different solutions. This makes you a more effective and adaptive leader.



Source: Eric Partaker (LinkedIn)

10 Leadership Styles

1 Adaptive

How can we adjust?

Encourages flexibility in complexity. Useful in changing environments. Example: Navigating a market shift.

Autocratic

Follow this plan.

Makes quick, firm decisions. Useful in crises or when fast decisions are crucial. Example: Handling an emergency situation.

3 Coaching

Have you tried this?

Develops people's skills for the future. Good for personal growth. Example: Mentoring a junior team member.

Democratic

What do you think?

Values everyone's input. Best for collaborative environments. Example: Deciding on a team project direction.

5 Inspirational

Let's aim higher.

Motivates with vision and passion. Great for uniting teams. Example: Rallying a team around a new company vision.

Laissez-Faire

You've got this.

Gives team independence. Ideal for skilled, self-driven teams. Example: Managing a group of experienced researchers.

7 Servant

How can I support?

Puts team's needs first. Great for creating supportive cultures. Example: Focusing on team well-being.

Strategic

Here's my vision.

Aligns actions with long-term goals. Ideal for guiding through growth. Example: Developing a 5-year business plan.

9 Transactional

Meet these goals.

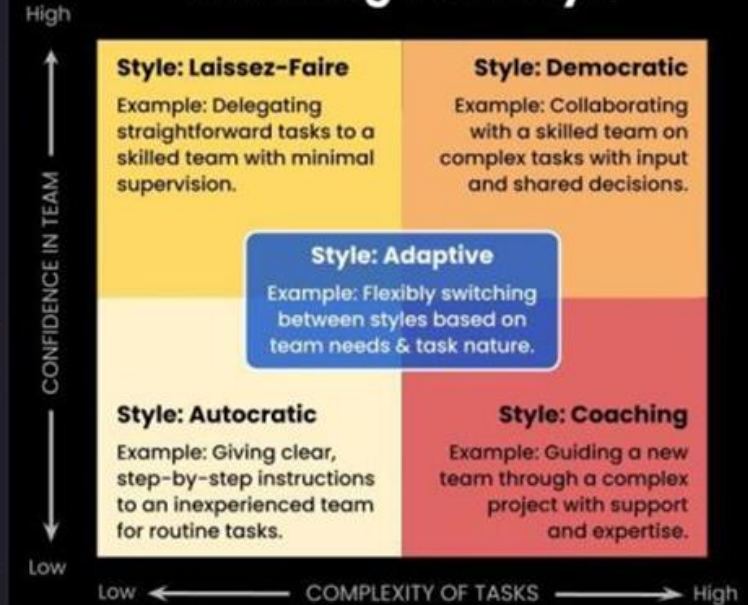
Rewards or penalizes based on performance. Effective for goal-oriented tasks. Example: Meeting sales targets.

Transformational

Let's change the game.

Use when leading a team through innovative projects or significant changes. Example: Executing a new business strategy.

Choosing Your Style



Emotional Intelligence Model

(h/t Daniel Goleman)

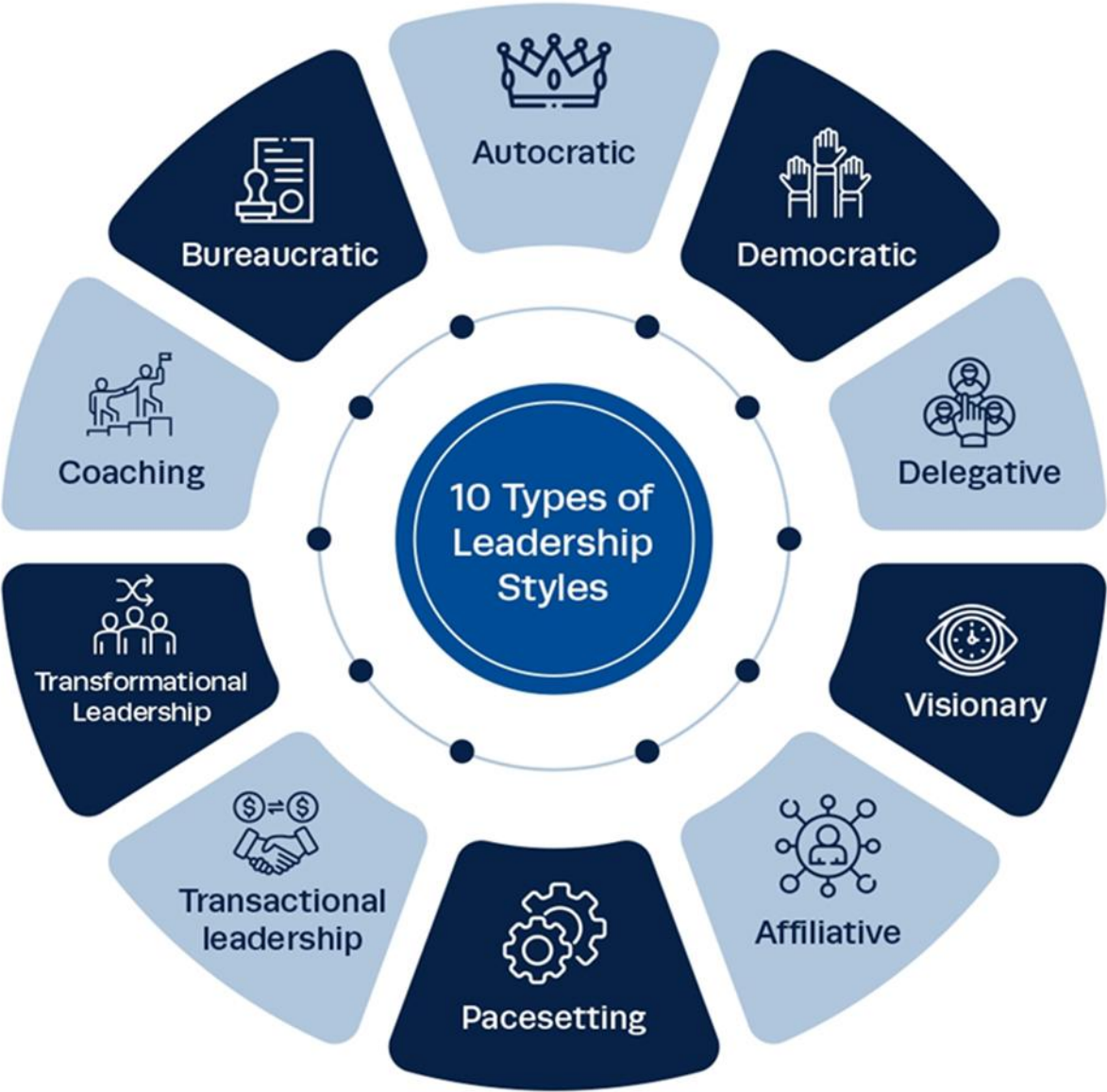
A high EQ helps you match your leadership style to the situation. Manage yourself before leading others.



Leadership styles expanded

Where do you fit in? Are you flexible or rigid in your leadership?

Leadership Style	Main Characteristic
Autocratic	Individual control over all decisions and little input from group members
Democratic	Reaches consensus through group participation
Delegative	Leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions
Bureaucratic	A clear chain of command with established rules and procedures
Visionary	Inspires people and brings them towards a vision
Affiliative	Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds
Pacesetting	Sets high standards for performance
Coaching	Helps people develop for future progress
Transactional	Leaders rely on a system of rewards and punishment to motivate their employees
Transformational	Approach that causes change in individuals and social systems







Toxic Boss vs Great Leader

What you say matters!

Ownership  Toxic Leader: Figure it out. Not my problem. High EQ Leader: Let's work through this together.	Collaboration  Toxic Leader: Do what I say. No questions. High EQ Leader: "I value your input. Let's discuss."	Support  Toxic Leader: That's a YOU problem. High EQ Leader: How can I support you?
Time Crunch  Toxic Leader: I don't have time for this. High EQ Leader: Let's prioritize and find a solution.	Appreciation  Toxic Leader: You're lucky to have a job. High EQ Leader: "I appreciate your contributions."	Problem-Solving  Toxic Leader: Fix it, or I'll find someone who can. High EQ Leader: Let's troubleshoot this together.
Empathy  Toxic Leader: I don't care how you feel. High EQ Leader: Your well-being matters to me.	Accountability  Toxic Leader: That's not my fault. It's yours. High EQ Leader: Let's take ownership and learn from this.	Recognition  Toxic Leader: You should just be grateful. High EQ Leader: I want you to feel valued here.
Innovation  Toxic Leader: I don't pay you to think. High EQ Leader: Your ideas are valuable.	"We are dangerous when we are not conscious of our responsibility for how we behave, think, and feel." ~Marshall B. Rosenberg 	

How to Lead People Older, Younger and Different than you

	 1946–1964 BOOMERS Loyal Experienced Resilient	 1965–1980 GEN X Independent Practical Flexible	 1981–1996 MILLENNIALS Competitive Collaborative Growth-Oriented	 1997–2012 GEN Z Purpose-Driven Tech-Savvy Inclusive
WHAT THEY VALUE	Stability, respect, and a meaningful legacy	Freedom to work independently and efficiently	Growth, flexibility, & doing purposeful work	Feeling included, heard, and making an impact
HOW THEY LIKE TO WORK	Clear structure, steady pace, proven systems	Self-led, results-focused, no micromanaging	Collaborative, fast-paced, mix of remote & in-person	Flexible, async, & tech-enabled
HOW THEY PREFER TO CONNECT	In-person or phone calls with clear direction, formal tone	Email, direct and efficient	Casual (chat) & quick video check-ins	Short-form, digital-first, quick replies
WHAT THEY APPRECIATE MOST	Recognition, retirement plans, healthcare	Autonomy, clear expectations, space to deliver	Career growth, wellness, hybrid freedom	Mental health support, DEI, flexible schedules
HOW THEY WANT FEEDBACK	Scheduled reviews, respectful tone	Straightforward & tied to outcomes	Frequent, coaching-style convos	Quick, clear, & casual, don't overdo it
WHAT MOTIVATES THEM TO STAY	Feeling respected, job security, contributing experience	Being trusted to figure it out & own results	Purpose, progress, meaningful challenges	Feeling seen, safe, & free to contribute ideas
WHAT BREAKS THEIR TRUST	Being micromanaged or sidelined	Slow processes, too many rules	No feedback, no growth path	Rigid rules, no voice, being overlooked
HOW TO SUPPORT THEM BEST	Acknowledge their experience, give clear direction	Give them space, trust their way of working	Be real, coach often, show a growth path	Invite input, be clear, & create safe space to speak up

Source:



Follow **Justin Hills** for effective leadership insights

The most effective leaders know a secret: It's not about doing more; It's about doing the right things. This is where the 80/20 Rule becomes your superpower. Here's how to use it to transform your leadership:

1. Vision

Look at your goals. Which ones truly move the needle? Those deserve your best hours.

2. Skills

Focus on what you do exceptionally well. That's where you create unique value.

3. Systems

Identify the processes that power your success. Small improvements here multiply results.

4. Revenue

Know which clients or products drive growth. Give them more attention, not less.

5. Learning

Choose learning that solves real challenges. Theory is nice but results are better.

6. Ideas

Not every innovation needs to be huge. Look for small changes with big impact.

7. People

Some team members create outsized results. Help them soar higher.

8. Time

Your calendar reveals your real priorities. Cut anything that doesn't drive value.

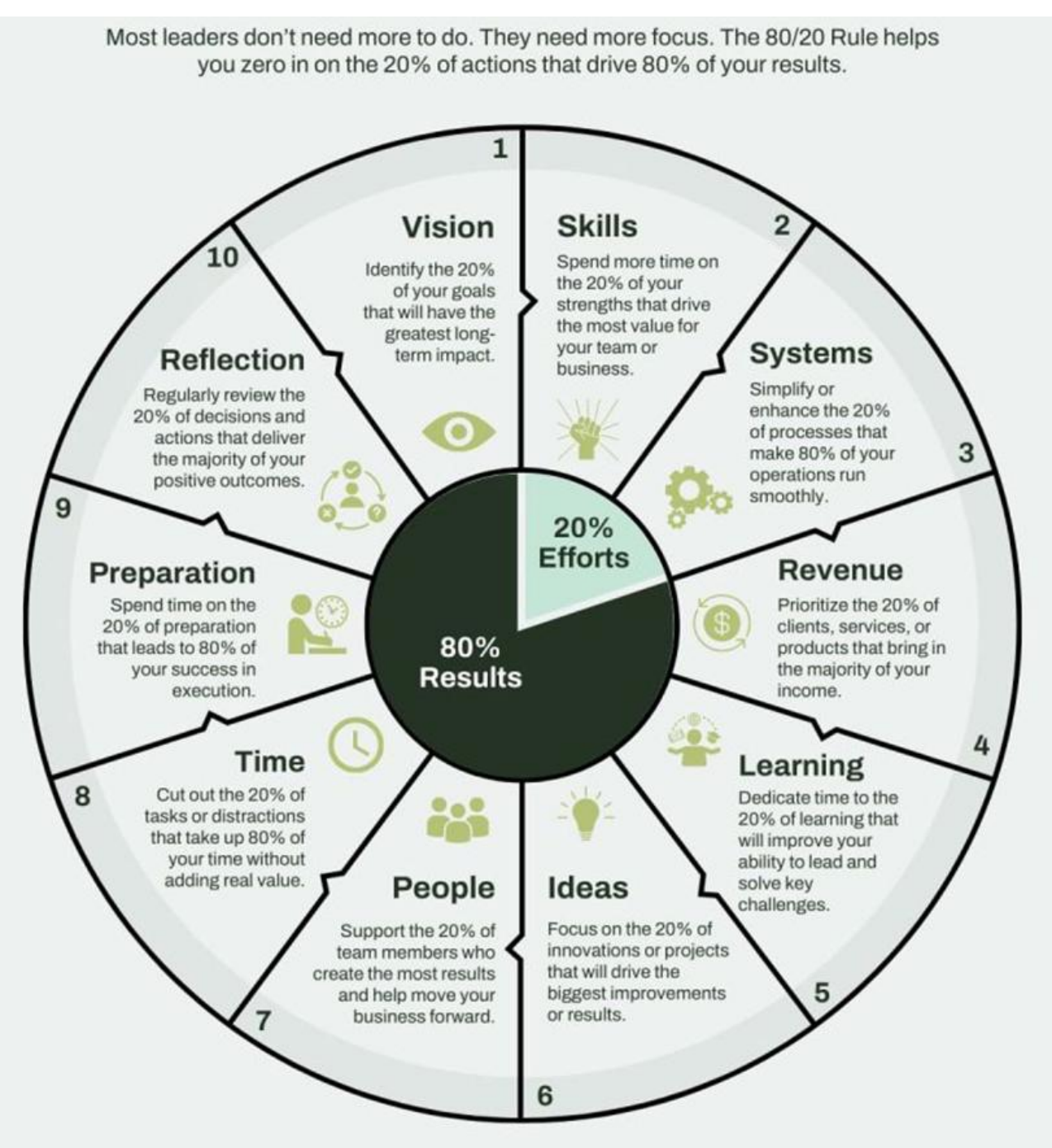
9. Preparation

The right preparation prevents chaos. But don't let perfect block progress.

10. Reflection

Review what's working weekly. Adjust your focus when needed.

I know... It feels counterintuitive. It's scary to let go. But the moment you stop trying to do it all is the moment you'll start making your biggest impact. You've got this. One step at a time.



10 CRITICAL ERRORS DESTROY ONCE-GREAT COMPANIES:

1. Overcontrolling Your Team

- ↳ The tighter you grip, the more talent slips away.
- ↳ Set clear expectations, then give your people room to shine.

2. Constantly Creating Urgency

- ↳ Making everything "urgent" burns out your team.
- ↳ Your team needs space to think deeply and deliver quality work.

3. Failing to Recognize Hard Work

- ↳ People don't leave companies; they leave leaders who don't value hard work.
- ↳ Make recognition a daily habit, not a yearly event.

4. Disrespecting Work-Life Balance

- ↳ Burning out your team isn't a badge of honor.
- ↳ Model the boundaries you want your people to maintain.

5. Poor Communication

- ↳ Unclear communication breeds anxiety and mistakes.
- ↳ Take the extra time to ensure everyone understands the 'what' and the 'why'.

6. Not Providing Resources

- ↳ You wouldn't send soldiers into battle without equipment.
- ↳ Invest in your team's success. They'll return it tenfold.



Top 10 Leadership Mistakes (continued)

6. Not Providing Resources

↳ You wouldn't send soldiers into battle without equipment.

↳ Invest in your team's success. They'll return it tenfold.

7. Tolerating Toxic Behavior

↳ One toxic player can poison your entire culture.

↳ Address issues immediately. Your best people are watching.

8. Ignoring Feedback

↳ Your team sees things you don't.

↳ Create safe spaces for honest feedback, then act on it.

9. Withholding Information

↳ Information gaps get filled with assumptions and fear.

↳ Share context generously. It builds trust and better decisions.

10. Indecisive Leadership

↳ Constantly changing direction exhausts your team.

↳ Make clear decisions and stick to them.

The good news? These mistakes are fixable. What I've learned from experience: Great leadership isn't about being perfect. The key is recognising and correcting quickly



Accountability

Leadership is about holding yourself and your team accountable.

Hold yourself accountable by:

- Being honest.
- Setting clear goals.
- Owning up to mistakes.
- Creating a positive work culture.

Hold your team accountable by:

- Communicating expectations clearly.
- Modeling what you want to see.
- Addressing issues promptly.
- Providing regular feedback.

But remember:

Accountability without empathy is harsh.
Empathy without accountability is ineffective.

The magic happens when you blend both: It's not always easy. But it's always worth it.

Source: Amy Gibson (LinkedIn)

LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY DO'S AND DON'TS

By Amy Gibson

HOLDING YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE

Initiative

- ✓ **DO:** Take proactive steps to ensure your tasks are completed.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Wait for others to remind you or push you into action.



Reflection

- ✓ **DO:** Regularly assess your own progress and adjust as needed.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Rely solely on external feedback or deadlines to stay on track.



Integrity

- ✓ **DO:** Maintain your integrity even when no one is watching.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Compromise your personal values for ease or convenience.



Learning

- ✓ **DO:** Regularly reflect on your decisions and learn from them.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Dismiss past experiences as irrelevant or unimportant.



Excellence

- ✓ **DO:** Hold yourself to high standards in all your work.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Allow yourself to become complacent or cut corners.



Ownership

- ✓ **DO:** Fully own the tasks you undertake, from start to finish.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Hand off responsibility to others when things get tough.



HOLDING YOUR TEAM ACCOUNTABLE

Alignment

- ✓ **DO:** Ensure your team's goals are aligned with clear expectations.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Assume everyone is on the same page without confirmation.



Engagement

- ✓ **DO:** Stay actively involved in your team's progress.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Delegate and disappear, expecting results without involvement.



Guidance

- ✓ **DO:** Provide your team with the direction they need to succeed.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Micromanage. Be available to support but give them room to learn.



Responsibility

- ✓ **DO:** Make sure each team member understands their specific role.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Overlook the importance of defining individual responsibilities.



Feedback

- ✓ **DO:** Offer constructive feedback with kindness to help your team improve.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Hold back on feedback or avoid addressing issues.



Conflicts

- ✓ **DO:** Address conflicts or issues within the team promptly.
- ✗ **DON'T:** Let problems simmer or escalate without intervention.



Institutional Change and Equity

Women leaders drive accountability and credibility through:

- Leading by Example.
- Promoting Transparency.
- Championing Quality.
- Engaging Stakeholders.

Enabling Practices:

- Flexible work arrangements.
- Transparent promotion processes.
- Parental leave for all.
- Sponsorship programmes.
- Enforced anti-discrimination policies.
- Pay equity audits.
- Leadership development initiatives.



Emotional Intelligence

Cheat Sheet for Leaders

We only see about 10% of Emotional Intelligence: The calm voice. The empathetic response. The steady presence, no matter the situation. But the real strength is what's beneath the surface:

- ✓ Knowing when to speak, and when to listen
- ✓ Resolving conflict before it sparks
- ✓ Staying aware of your own emotions
- ✓ Making others feel seen and valued
- ✓ Reading a room in seconds

And often, all of that happens at once. They're not superhuman. They've done the inner work:

- They know their triggers
- They've mapped their patterns
- They've learned to pause between feeling and reacting

That changes everything. Because when you understand yourself at that depth, you create space for others to be fully human too.

- ✓ You ask better questions
- ✓ You listen for what's unsaid
- ✓ You respond instead of react

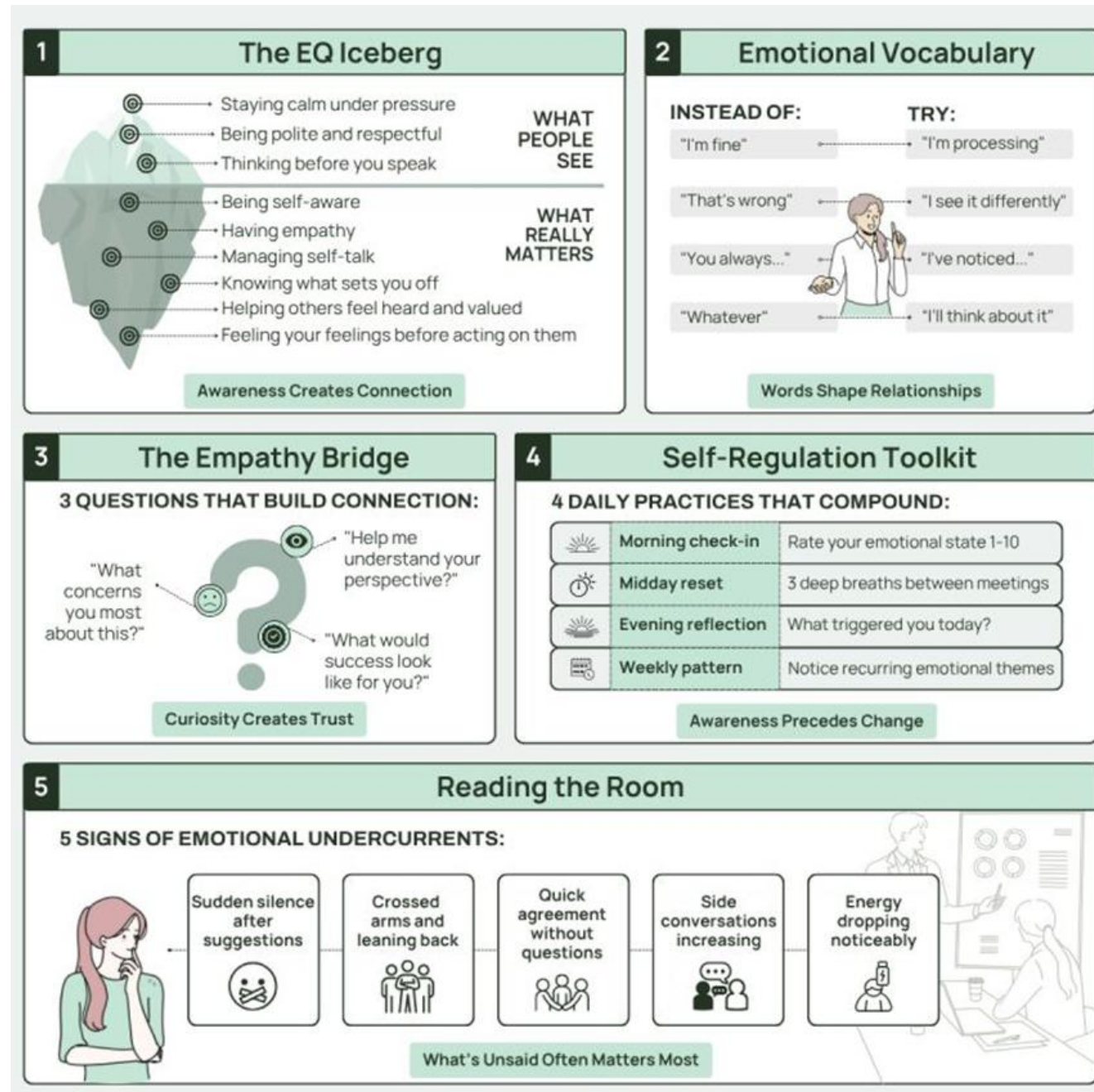
The result?

- Teams that trust you with the truth
- Conversations that solve problems
- Relationships built on authenticity, not authority

Emotional intelligence isn't something you "finish." It's a practice you keep deepening.

One conversation at a time. One reaction at a time. One human connection at a time. And that 90% below the surface? That's where impactful leadership lives.

Source: Amy Gibson (LinkedIn)



Emotional Intelligence Language

How to speak with high EQ

1 When You're Under Pressure

"I need to pause and collect my thoughts for a moment."

4 When Apologizing

"I apologize. I understand how my actions affected you. How can I make this right?"

7 When Managing Conflict

"Your perspective is important to me. How can we find a solution that works for everyone?"

2 When You're Giving Constructive Feedback

"I appreciate your work on this. Would you be open to a suggestion that might help?"

5 When Building Trust

"I want to understand your point of view before we make any decisions."

8 When Showing Empathy

"I hear how difficult this is. What kind of support would be most helpful right now?"

3 When Someone Makes a Mistake

"These things happen. What can we learn from this to make things better going forward?"

6 When Feeling Burned Out

"I need to step back and recharge. Could we revisit this when I'm feeling more focused?"

9 When Feeling Overwhelmed

"I'm at capacity right now. Can we discuss priorities or additional resources?"

10 When Feeling Anxious

"I'm feeling uncertain about this deadline. Could we break it down into smaller steps?"

12 When Giving Encouragement

"You've handled hard things before. I know you've got this. How can I support you?"

14 When Receiving Feedback

"I appreciate this feedback. It gives me something concrete to work on."

16 When Holding Someone Accountable

"This commitment is important. I want to understand what's getting in the way so we can get back on track."

11 When Feeling Angry

"I need some time to process my emotions before we discuss this."

13 When Asking for Feedback

"I'd love your perspective on how I handled this. Any suggestions for improvement?"

15 When Setting Boundaries

"To deliver quality work, I need to be realistic about what I can handle."

When You're Wrong

✗ Defend yourself

✓ I was wrong about that.

When You Need Support

✗ Struggle alone

✓ I need some help

When You Don't Know

✗ Pretend to know

✓ I don't know enough to make that call.

When Someone Disagrees

✗ Argue your point

✓ You might be right.

After a Mistake

✗ Blame others

✓ That's on me.

When Making Decisions

✗ Assume you know best

✓ Let's hear your perspective first.

When It's Tough

✗ Hide the issue

✓ This isn't working.

Too Many Tasks

✗ Take on everything

✓ I'll need a hand with this

Unrealistic Deadlines

✗ Agree blindly

✓ Let's set a more realistic date.

Need More Time

✗ Respond quickly

✓ Let me think and get back to you.

Against Your Values

✗ Say yes out of fear

✓ Not for me, Thank you.

When You Disagree

✗ Stay silent

✓ I disagree, and here's why



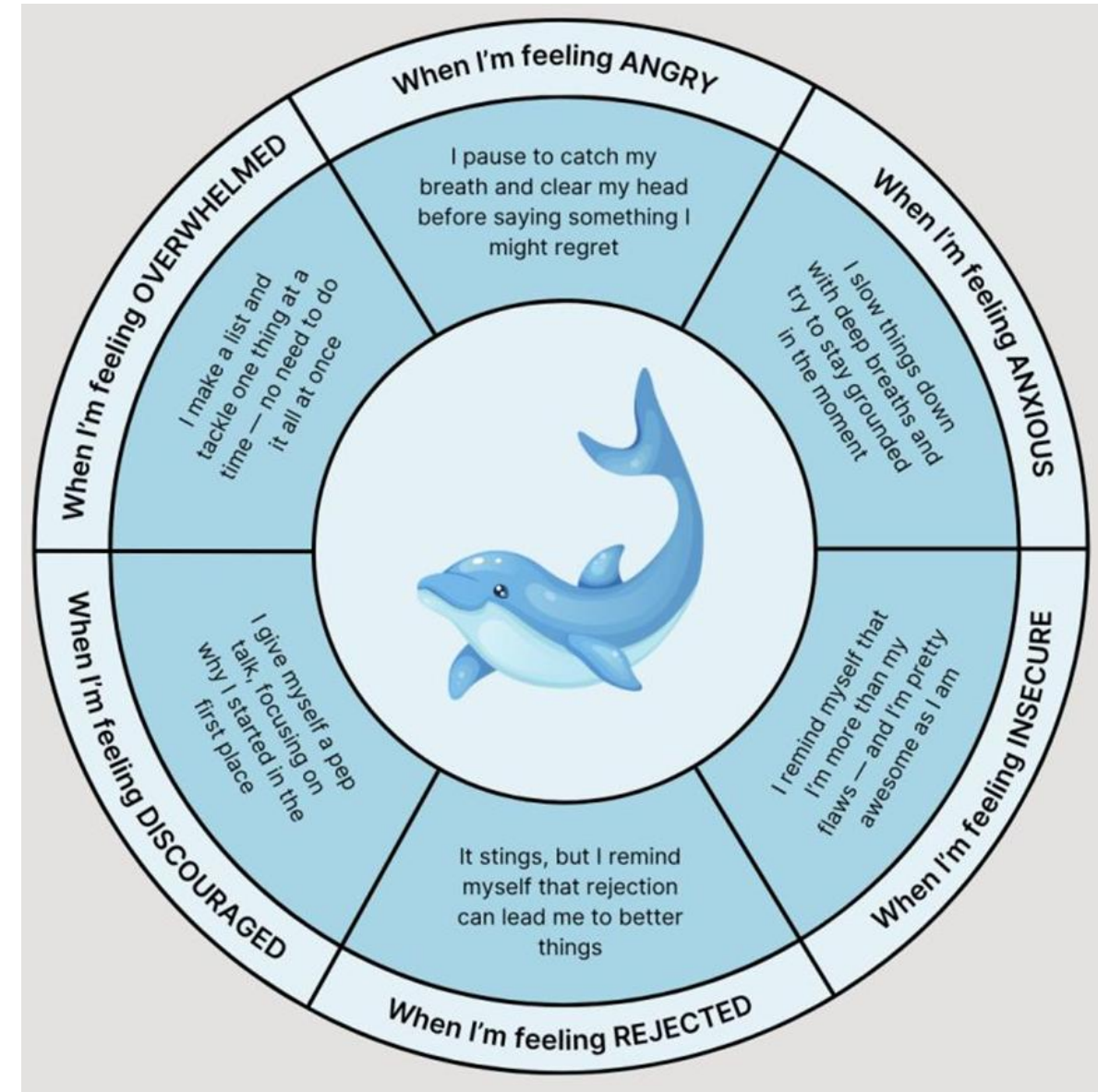
The Wheel of Emotional Regulation

Empathy + Adaptability = Leadership that lasts

You need to:

- Be aware of the emotions you want to handle better
- Prepare your responses in advance, so when they show up, you know how to deal with them.

That's it. "Let's build a world where everyone belongs through the power of wellbeing!"



Building Confidence and Overcoming Self-Doubt

Women often experience a confidence gap rooted in social conditioning rather than capability.

Strategies to build confidence include:

- ✓ Documenting Achievements: Keep a success journal to reinforce self-belief.
- ✓ Reframing Doubt: Challenge internalised biases by asking, “Would I question a male colleague’s readiness?”
- ✓ Strategic Risk-Taking: Begin with low-stakes risks to build confidence.
- ✓ Expertise Anchors: Develop deep knowledge in key areas to establish credibility.
- ✓ Assertive Communication: Use confident language and body posture to reinforce presence.

Opportunity Readiness:

- Apply the 70% Rule: If you meet most criteria, pursue the opportunity.
- Build a Personal Board of Advisors for mentorship and sponsorship.
- Negotiate confidently to enhance career progression.



Leading with Feminine Strength

Effective leadership blends assertiveness with empathy.

Key principles include:

- Assertiveness ≠ Aggression: Be clear and respectful.
- Empathy as Intelligence: Understand team dynamics to improve performance.
- Clear Boundaries: Compassion does not mean tolerating poor behaviour.
- Visible Work: Communicate achievements regularly.
- Strategic Alliances: Build relationships with influential colleagues.
- Challenge Double Standards: Address inequities professionally.

Maintaining Influence:

- Deliver consistent results.
- Name and frame your leadership style.
- Balance warmth with competence.



Leading with Feminine Strength

Effective leadership blends assertiveness with empathy.

1. Redefining Leadership Strength

- Traditional notions of leadership have often emphasised decisiveness, authority, and control; qualities historically coded as “masculine”. Yet modern leadership demands a more balanced and human approach. **Feminine strength** encompasses emotional intelligence, collaboration, compassion, and intuition; qualities that are not signs of softness but sources of profound influence. For female leaders, embracing this balance means rejecting outdated stereotypes and recognising that strength can be both **assertive and empathetic**, strategic and sensitive, firm and fair.

2. The Power of Empathy in Leadership

- Empathy enables leaders to connect authentically, understand different perspectives, and build trust. It enables female leaders to lead with humanity, fostering psychological safety and a sense of belonging within their teams.
- An empathetic leader listens deeply, recognises the emotional undercurrents within a group, and responds with care and clarity. This doesn't mean avoiding difficult conversations; rather, it ensures that those conversations are grounded in respect and understanding, enabling people to feel seen and valued even when challenged.



Leading with Feminine Strength

Effective leadership blends assertiveness with empathy.

3. Assertiveness as a Complement, Not a Contrast

Assertiveness allows leaders to communicate with confidence, make decisions with conviction, and uphold boundaries without aggression. When combined with empathy, assertiveness becomes **a tool for clarity and fairness** rather than dominance. For female leaders, this balance is particularly powerful. It enables them to stand firm in their values, articulate expectations clearly, and make tough decisions; all while maintaining emotional awareness and respect for others. This is not about conforming to masculine norms, but about leading authentically and effectively.

4. Authentic Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

Blending empathy with assertiveness requires **emotional intelligence**: the ability to recognise, regulate, and respond to emotions (both one's own and others'). Female leaders who lead authentically draw strength from self-awareness: they understand when to be directive, when to listen, and how to inspire through both compassion and conviction. Authenticity creates trust, and trust creates influence. When women lead with authenticity, they model a form of leadership that is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

Leading with Feminine Strength

Effective leadership blends assertiveness with empathy.

5. The Broader Impact

Leading with feminine strength not only benefits individual leaders but transforms organisational culture. It encourages more humane workplaces where wellbeing, collaboration, and performance coexist. Female leaders who embody this balance set new standards for what effective leadership looks like, **not by mirroring old models, but by redefining them.**

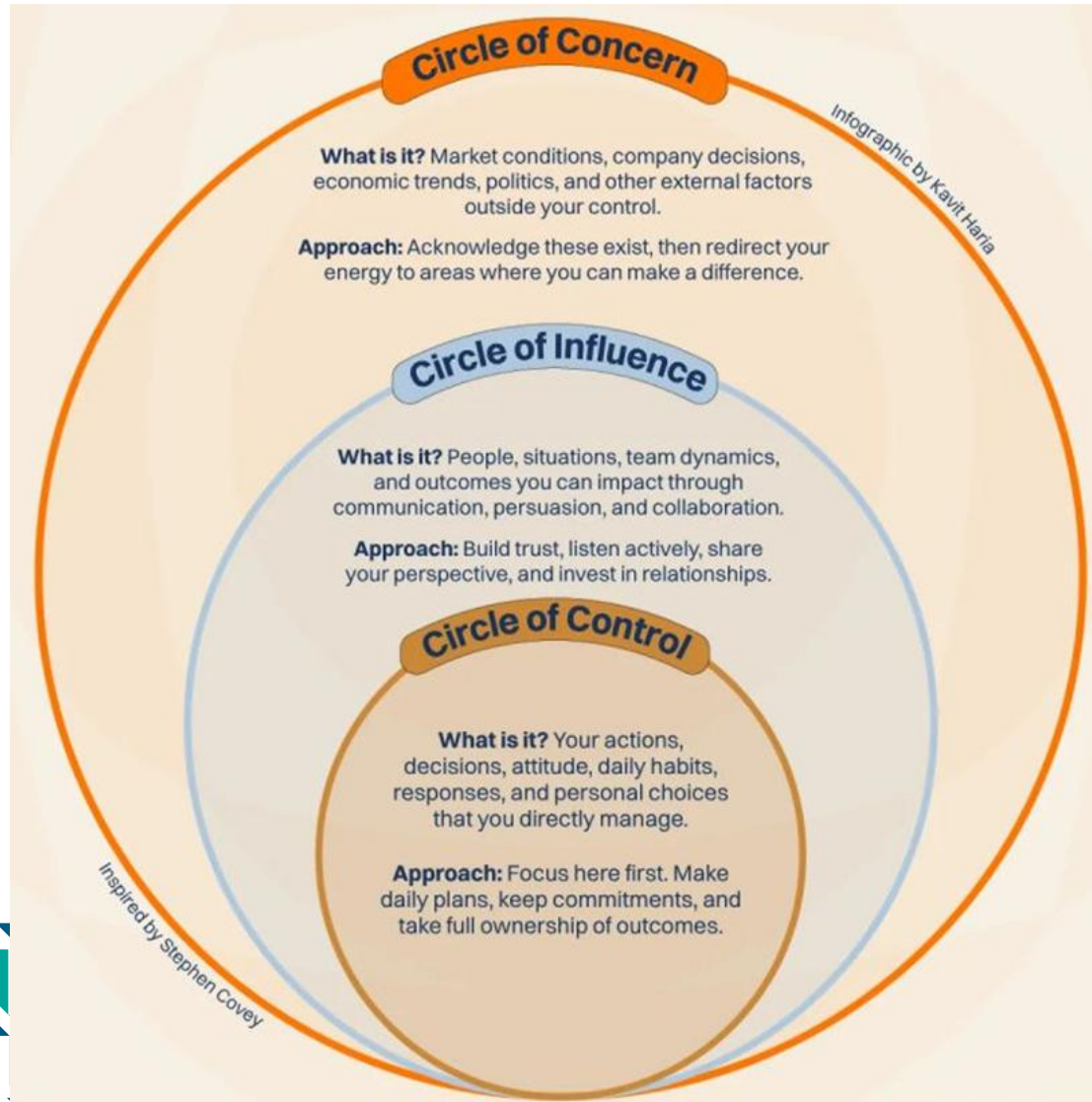
In Summary

- **Empathy** builds connection and trust.
- **Assertiveness** creates clarity and confidence.
- **Feminine strength** lies in balancing both with authenticity and self-awareness.

By leading with both heart and courage, female leaders can inspire teams, influence culture, and demonstrate that true strength lies not in dominance, but in balance.

Focus on what you can control

Most people waste energy in the wrong place and then wonder why they feel exhausted. The problem: You're focused on what you can't control. While ignoring where you have real power. Stephen Covey mapped this with 3 circles:



Source: Kavita Haria (LinkedIn)

Circle of Control: Your actions, decisions, daily habits

- ↳ Start here every morning
- ↳ Ask: "What can I directly change today?"

Circle of Influence: People and situations you can impact

- ↳ Build trust, communicate clearly
- ↳ Ask: "How can I positively influence this?"

Circle of Concern: Market conditions, others' decisions

- ↳ Acknowledge, then move on
- ↳ Ask: "Is worrying helping anyone?"

Key Learning Points:

- Power lives in your Circle of Control.
- Anxiety lives in your Circle of Concern.
- Growth happens in your Circle of Influence.

High performers spend 80% of energy in the first two circles. Most people waste 70% in the third. The fix is simple:

- ✓ Catch yourself worrying.
- ✓ Ask: "Can I control or influence this?"

If yes → Make a plan

If no → Let go and refocus

Empathy

There is a difference in what people think it is vs what it actually is.

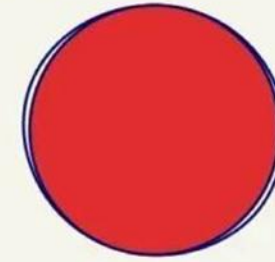
- ✓ Empathy requires us to listen with presence and intent, and to assume positive intent
- ✓ Empathy means bringing people together to share ideas and thoughts, and to be there to support without judgment, but instead with collaboration
- ✓ Empathy means to show you care and follow through with your employees and engage them to check in on their wellbeing, to recognize them and to show appreciation for them

Leadership is like a contact sport! Connecting with your people is a must. Empathy leads to servant leadership and a desire to help others.

- To be truly empathetic, you must first be self-aware and confident in who you are.
- You should understand why you feel this way, why you want to succeed and why you want to help others and your organization to be better. Only then can you truly, positively influence the people around you.

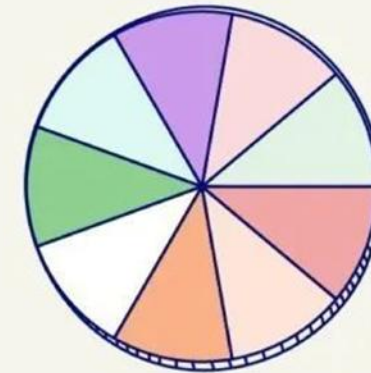
The outer work begins with the inner-work.

What People Think Empathy Is



Feeling sorry for someone

What Empathy Actually Is



- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Sensing other people's emotions | ■ Really listening to what others have to say |
| ■ Mirroring someone's feelings | ■ Understanding another person's feelings |
| ■ Imagine what someone is thinking | ■ Imagining how someone is feeling |
| ■ Identify how a person is feeling | ■ Seeing things from another point of view |
| ■ Feeling overwhelmed by others' tragedy | |

Why Empathy is Important

The most powerful leaders don't just analyse behavior, they understand emotion.

Here are 5 neuroscience-backed ways to lead with empathy:

1. Look beneath the surface

- ↳ A forced smile or rushed response might hide real pain.
- ↳ Don't judge too quickly, ask, "How are you really?"

2. Train emotional perception

- ↳ Empathy isn't just a trait, it's a learnable skill.
- ↳ Read body language. Tune into tone. Watch for the quiet ones.

3. Create psychological safety

- ↳ People can't innovate in survival mode.
- ↳ Safety unlocks openness, trust, and creativity.

4. Balance logic with compassion

- ↳ Neuroscience shows decisions are rarely just rational.
- ↳ Emotions shape memory, focus, and behavior more than we think.

5. Be a mirror, not a judge

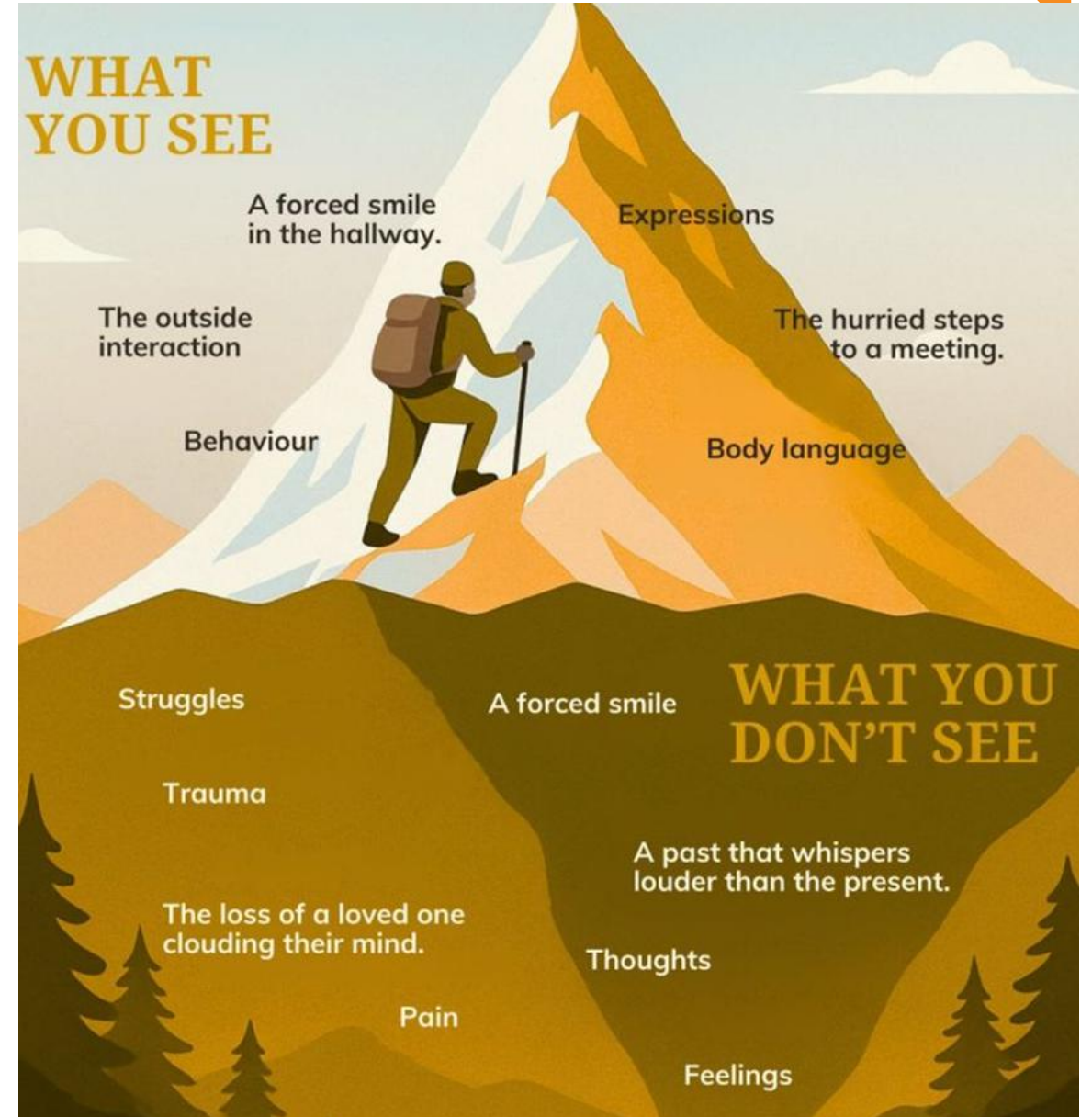
- ↳ Reflect understanding, even when you don't agree.
- ↳ That alone can shift someone's entire day or life.

We talk about AI. But let's not forget HI (human intelligence).
Because the future of leadership isn't just about algorithms.
It's about understanding the invisible stories that drive people every day.

Empathy is not a cost. It's a competitive edge



Source: Veronique Barrot (LinkedIn)



Mentorship, Sponsorship, and Peer Support

Women should seek multiple mentors and strategic sponsors, participate in formal programmes, and give back by mentoring others.

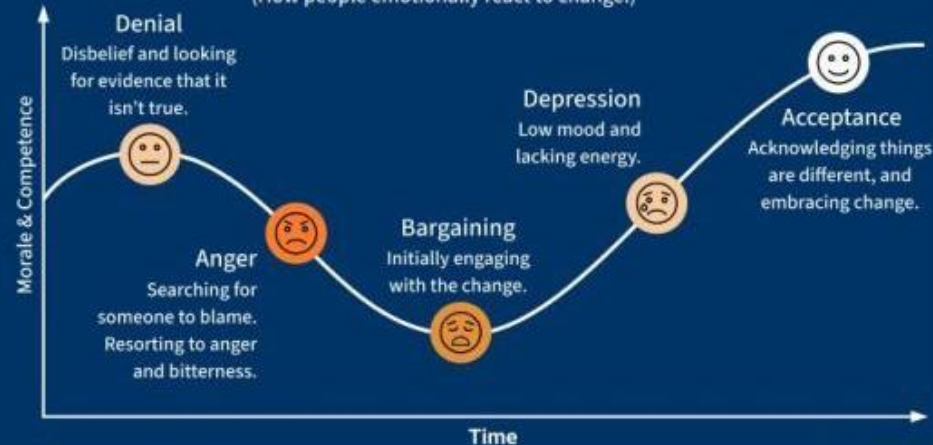
- 1. Mentorship:** Mentorship remains a cornerstone of leadership development for women. A strong mentor–mentee relationship offers guidance, feedback, and perspective from someone who has navigated similar challenges. For female leaders, mentors can help build confidence, refine strategic thinking, and offer insight into organisational culture. However, access to high-quality mentorship can sometimes be uneven. Organisations should therefore create structured, transparent mentoring schemes that pair emerging female leaders with senior figures who are both capable and committed to fostering growth. Cross-functional or cross-gender mentoring can also provide broader networks and perspectives.
- 2. Sponsorship:** While mentorship focuses on advice and guidance, sponsorship involves active advocacy. A sponsor uses their influence to create opportunities; recommending a protégé for promotions, high-visibility projects, or leadership programmes. For women, sponsorship is particularly vital in overcoming systemic barriers such as underrepresentation in senior roles or exclusion from informal networks. Companies should therefore encourage senior leaders, both male and female, to take on sponsorship roles deliberately, recognising that equitable advancement depends on visible support and advocacy, not simply encouragement.
- 3. Peer Support:** Peer networks provide an essential layer of support that complements mentorship and sponsorship. Female leaders benefit from spaces where they can share experiences, exchange practical advice, and build mutual resilience. Such networks can foster collaboration rather than competition, reduce isolation, and encourage collective problem-solving. Peer support can take many forms, from informal discussion circles to structured leadership cohorts, but its success depends on a culture of trust and authenticity. When nurtured effectively, peer communities become ongoing sources of learning and empowerment.

Leading Change



Kübler-Ross Change Curve Model

(How people emotionally react to change.)



8 Tips For Leaders

1. **Lead by Example**: Demonstrate your commitment to the change.
2. **Listen Actively**: Welcome team concerns and encourage feedback.
3. **Communicate Clearly**: Share information openly and frequently.
4. **Empathize**: Understand and acknowledge team emotions.
5. **Set Clear Goals**: Define what success looks like.
6. **Provide Training**: Offer learning resources for new skills.
7. **Stay Flexible**: Adapt plans based on feedback and results.
8. **Celebrate Milestones**: Recognize progress and achievements.

Diversity and Inclusion

Championing Diversity as a Strategic Priority. For female leaders, diversity and inclusion are not simply matters of fairness; they are strategic imperatives.

1. Diverse teams bring richer perspectives, enhance creativity, and improve decision-making.

Female leaders are uniquely positioned to model inclusive leadership behaviours, demonstrating that diversity of thought, background, and experience leads to stronger, more adaptive organisations.

Embedding diversity into business strategy means ensuring that representation is meaningful at every level, from recruitment and promotion to policy-making and product design. It also requires accountability: measurable goals, transparent reporting, and visible leadership commitment.

2. Building Inclusive Cultures: Inclusion ensures that diversity translates into genuine participation and belonging. Female leaders can play a pivotal role in shaping cultures where every voice is heard and respected. Encouraging open dialogue and psychological safety. Challenging bias, both conscious and unconscious, in decision-making processes. Advocating flexible and equitable work practices that support all employees, including carers and those with diverse needs. By modelling inclusive behaviour, female leaders help normalise equity, empathy, and collaboration as leadership strengths rather than exceptions.

Diversity and Inclusion

(continued)

3. Using Influence to Drive Structural Change: Leadership influence can and should extend beyond individual teams. Female leaders can use their platforms to advocate for systemic change, whether by contributing to policy reviews, shaping talent pipelines, or sponsoring diverse emerging leaders. They can also amplify underrepresented voices by ensuring that decision-making spaces are genuinely diverse. Mentorship and sponsorship, when approached through a D&I lens, become tools not only for personal development but also for creating pathways that widen access and representation across the organisation.

4. Intersectionality and Representation: An effective D&I approach recognises that gender does not exist in isolation. Women's experiences differ based on ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, and other identity factors. Female leaders should embrace an intersectional perspective, acknowledge these nuances and promote initiatives that address the needs of all women, not just those in majority groups. **Representation matters:** seeing diverse women in leadership helps break stereotypes and inspires others to envision themselves in positions of influence.

Diversity and Inclusion

Conclusion

In Summary: Diversity drives innovation, performance, and fairness.

Inclusion ensures that difference is valued and voices are empowered.

Female leaders play a vital role in shaping cultures and systems that sustain both.

By leading inclusively and advocating courageously, female leaders can help create workplaces that reflect the richness of society; and deliver better outcomes for people, purpose, and performance alike.



Personal Resilience and Authentic Leadership

Authenticity and resilience are key to sustainable leadership

It includes:

- Knowing Your Values.
- Finding Your Voice.
- Selective Conformity.
- Building Support Systems.

Resilience Practices:

- Reframe setbacks.
- Maintain perspective.
- Prioritise self-care.
- Process emotions healthily.
- Celebrate small wins.
- Maintain strong connections.

Common Gaps to Address:

- Strategic risk-taking.
- Self-promotion.
- Asking for advancement.
- Building broad networks.
- Taking up space—physically and metaphorically.



12 micro-boundaries that actually protect your time (and your energy)

Your burnout isn't from overwork. It's from zero boundaries. You already work hard. That's not the issue. The real problem is your time has no protection. That's why you feel drained no matter how much you accomplish

1. Buffer Build: "I need the brief by Monday to deliver Wednesday"
2. Energy Block: "Tuesday mornings are focus time - connect Wednesday?"
3. Response Window: "I check emails 10am, 2pm, 5pm - urgent items call"
4. Processing Pause: "I do my best thinking offline - let me circle back"
5. Collaboration Redirect: "This sounds big - who else should be involved?"
6. Scope Clarifier: "I can research or decide, not both by Friday"
7. Priority Check: "I'm heads-down on Johnson - does this take priority?"
8. Completion Boundary: "Let me finish this thought first"
9. Availability Window: "I'm offline after 7pm - anything urgent before then?"
10. Meeting Purpose: "What's our main goal for these 30 minutes?"
11. Decision Timeline: "Big decisions get 24 hours - confirm tomorrow?"
12. Time Box: "15 minutes now or an hour Thursday"

The most productive people don't just manage time; they protect it ✨



Future Outlook

Trends shaping women's leadership:

- Increased representation.
- Generational shifts in expectations.
- Technology's mixed impact.
- Recognition of intersectionality.
- Men as allies.

Critical Reforms:

- Gender-balanced policies.
- Paid family leave.
- Pay transparency.
- Accountability for diversity outcomes.
- Educational pipeline development.
- Professional standards on inclusion.

Culture & Values + Teamwork

(Wilna Degenaar)



Importance of Culture

Driving Force & Foundation

- A strong culture is the quiet force that turns strategic intent into everyday action. When purpose and people align, strategy stops being a plan on paper and becomes the rhythm of a productive, thriving organisation.
- Culture shapes how strategy comes to life. By nurturing shared values and purpose, we create an environment where people can do their best work and strategic goals are achieved with meaning and momentum
- Culture is the engine of strategy, when values and vision move together, productivity follows naturally

What is the biggest reason strategy fails?

*When the culture can't carry the strategy, it isn't resistant; it is misaligned. The biggest reason strategy fails is **CULTURE**.*

If strategy is the destination, culture is the vehicle. And if your vehicle isn't built for the terrain ahead, no amount of planning will get you there.

🎯 So what's the lesson?

Don't treat culture as an afterthought. Start there. Measure it. Understand it.

Then either build your strategy to fit it, or intentionally shift it to support where you're going.

📊 The infographic contains a few culture models. They're not silver bullets, but they're sharp tools to help you get started.

Use them to:

- ✅ Diagnose what your culture truly values
- ✅ Identify the friction points between "what's said" and "what's done"
- ✅ Define the shifts required for the strategy to succeed

Because strategy sets the course. But culture determines whether you



THE POWER OF CULTURE

Schein's Three-Level Model

Organizational culture operates at three levels, according to Edgar Schein:



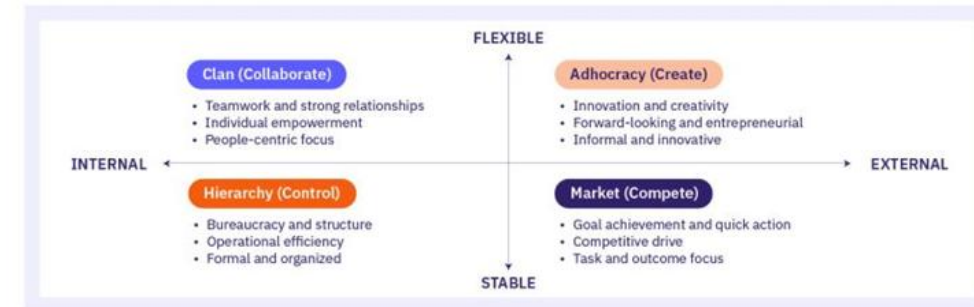
Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Geert Hofstede's framework helps understand how national and organizational cultures differ through five dimensions:



Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework

This framework categorizes organizational culture into four types based on two axes: flexibility versus stability and internal versus external focus. The four culture types are:



The Cultural Web Model

This model outlines six elements that shape an organization's core beliefs and reveals how culture drives behavior and decisions.



The Barrett Model

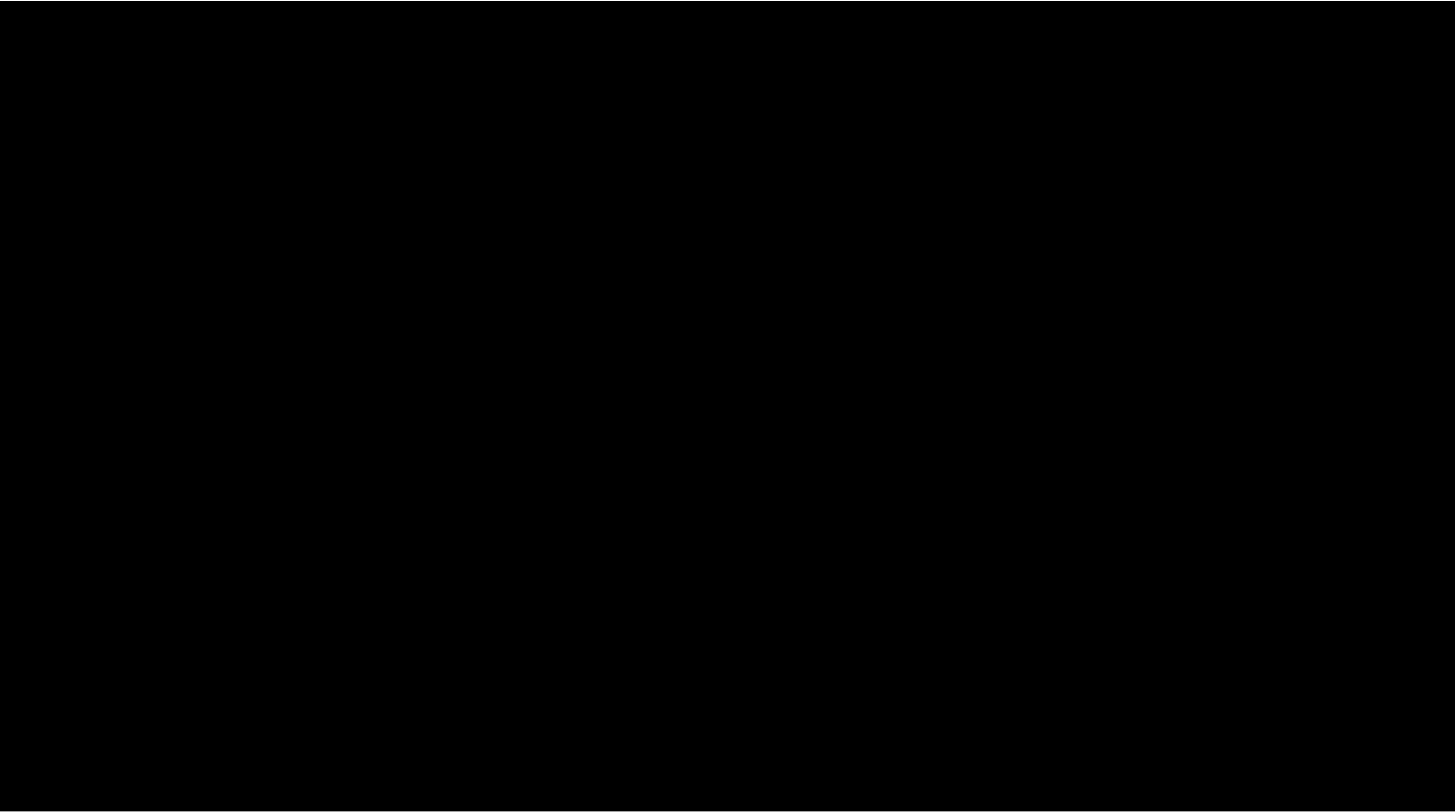
The Barrett Model outlines seven levels of culture shaped by values and used to guide transformation and alignment.



A TEAM means

Together Each Achieves More





Empowering Teams & Resolving Conflict

Empowerment involves trust, clarity, and development

Empowerment includes:

- Clarify Decision Rights.
- Provide Stretch Assignments.
- Create Psychological Safety.
- Recognise Contributions.
- Invest in Development.

Conflict Resolution:

- Address issues early.
- Focus on behaviours, not personalities.
- Listen actively.
- Find shared interests.
- Facilitate win-win solutions.
- Follow up to rebuild trust.



Empowering Teams & Resolving Conflict

Conflict resolution Strategies



01

Avoiding

Avoiding conflict may seem like the path of least resistance, and in certain scenarios, it serves a purpose.

02

Competing

Competing is an uncooperative, overly assertive method used by individuals who seek to win the dispute at all costs, typically known as a win-lose strategy.

03

Accommodating

Accommodating, often referred to as smoothing, is a conflict resolution strategy where one party willingly concedes to the needs or demands of another, effectively prioritizing the relationship over their own interests.

04

Collaborating

When you understand these neural paths, you have the power to create a successful slogan that captures attention and sticks in the memory.

05

Compromising

Compromising is a pragmatic conflict resolution strategy that involves finding a middle ground where both parties give up elements of their demands to achieve an acceptable settlement.

Dysfunctions of a team

Key Insights from the model

- The dysfunctions are interconnected and hierarchical.
- Teams cannot successfully address higher-level dysfunctions without first establishing the foundational elements. For instance, you cannot create genuine accountability without first establishing commitment, which requires healthy conflict, which demands trust.
- Lencioni's model emphasises that overcoming these dysfunctions requires deliberate effort and strong leadership, but the rewards include improved decision-making, higher productivity, and reduced staff turnover.

5 DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

Adapted from the book by Patrick Lencioni | Infographic by Eric Partaker



The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team Unpacked

- **Absence of Trust** This forms the foundation of all other dysfunctions. Without trust, team members are reluctant to be vulnerable with one another, unwilling to admit mistakes, weaknesses, or ask for help. They tend to conceal their shortcomings and hesitate to offer assistance to colleagues. Trust here isn't about reliability in delivering tasks, but rather the confidence that teammates won't use vulnerabilities against each other.
- **Fear of Conflict:** When trust is absent, teams avoid productive debate and healthy conflict around ideas. Members seek artificial harmony rather than engaging in passionate, unfiltered discussions about important issues. This leads to boring meetings where real issues aren't addressed, and decisions are made without proper scrutiny of alternatives.
- **Lack of Commitment:** Without healthy conflict to air different viewpoints, team members rarely buy into decisions completely. They may feign agreement during meetings but lack genuine commitment to the chosen path. This dysfunction manifests as ambiguity around direction and priorities, with team members second-guessing decisions and failing to hold themselves accountable.

The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team Unpacked

- **Avoidance of Accountability:** When people haven't committed to a clear plan of action, they're reluctant to hold peers accountable for behaviours and actions that seem counterproductive. Team members avoid difficult conversations and allow mediocre performance to continue unchallenged, creating resentment amongst high performers.
- **Inattention to Results:** The ultimate dysfunction occurs when team members put their individual needs (ego, career development, recognition) or departmental goals above collective team results. Without accountability, people naturally focus on their own interests rather than the team's success.



High-performing teams don't always stand out at first glance.

No obvious superstars. No cutting-edge frameworks. Yet they deliver, consistently.

If you look closely, a pattern emerges:

- They manage conflict differently
- They share information differently
- They make decisions differently

What sets them apart?

They understand that trust isn't just a feeling - It's a capability that can be developed.

The **T.R.U.S.T.** model highlights the practices strong teams embed into their culture:

T – Train → Develop each other, not just yourselves

R – Reflect → Treat mistakes as data, not failures

U – Uplift → Recognize and use everyone's strengths

S – Support → Make space for dissenting voices

T – Transform → Serve the work, not personal egos

These practices make teams resilient under pressure:

- ✓ Hard conversations become productive
- ✓ Tight deadlines turn into momentum
- ✓ Top performers stay engaged

Talent matters. But without trust, a team is just a collection of individuals. With it, performance compounds faster than any other investment you can make.

Source: C-Serve & Russ Hill (LinkedIn)

The T.R.U.S.T Model: How Leaders Build High-Performing Teams

Harvard's 5 Principles of Purposeful Leadership



Be Intentional:

- Connect your purpose to the company's mission.



Be Energetic:

- Inspire hope and generate momentum.



Be Supportive:

- Prioritize team needs.



Be Ethical:

- Lead with honesty, respect, and compassion.



Be Real:

- Share your true self and beliefs.

The Art of T.R.U.S.T.

Train:
Promote team over self

- **Example:** Develop service-minded skills

T

R

U

S

T

Transform:
Align with servant principles.

- **Example:** Reward servant leader behaviors.

Reflect:
Foster continuous improvement

- **Example:** Weekly self-assessments

Uplift:
Nurture unique talents

- **Example:** Personalized development plans

Support:
Amplify every voice

- **Example:** Inclusive decision-making processes.

10 Habits of Exceptional Servant Leaders



1 Encourage others constantly



2 Practice what you preach



3 Set specific servant leader goals



4 Make ethical decisions



5 Invest in others' personal development



6 Empower team to take initiative



7 Reflect on yourself and surroundings



8 Understand and validate others' feelings



9 Support personal and professional healing



10 Form daily habits supporting servant leadership



Being a Top Performer

The Do's and Don'ts

Set Clear Goals Do: Define what success looks like for you. Don't: Work aimlessly without clear direction. 	Stay Focused Do: Prioritise tasks that deliver the most impact. Don't: Get distracted by low-value activities. 	Take Initiative Do: Step up and act without waiting for instructions. Don't: Wait for others to push you forward. 
Be Consistent Do: Deliver high-quality results time and time again. Don't: Let performance drop after initial success. 	Learn Continuously Do: Improve your skills to stay ahead. Don't: Think you know everything already. 	Own Your Results Do: Take responsibility for wins and failures. Don't: Blame others when things go wrong. 
Manage Your Time Do: Use your time wisely to maximise output. Don't: Waste hours on unimportant tasks. 	Adapt Quickly Do: Be flexible and open to changing priorities. Don't: Resist change or stay stuck in old ways. 	Seek Feedback Do: Use feedback to improve and grow. Don't: Ignore constructive criticism or take it personally. 
Stay Resilient Do: Bounce back from setbacks with determination. Don't: Give up when challenges get tough. 	Deliver Results Do: Focus on outcomes that add real value. Don't: Confuse busyness with actual progress. 	Collaborate Effectively Do: Work well with others to achieve goals. Don't: Isolate yourself or avoid teamwork. 
Stay Proactive Do: Anticipate challenges and plan ahead. Don't: React to problems at the last minute. 	Maintain High Standards Do: Aim for excellence in everything you do. Don't: Settle for "good enough." 	Celebrate Progress Do: Recognise small wins on the way to success. Don't: Focus only on the end result. 

Work-Life Integration and Career Interruptions

Balance is rarely perfect; integration is more realistic.

Strategies include:

- Non-Negotiables: Identify and protect key commitments.
- Time Management: Prioritise strategic tasks and delegate effectively.
- Technology Boundaries: Use tech for flexibility, not constant availability.
- Reject Guilt: Model healthy boundaries.
- Equitable Domestic Roles: Share responsibilities fairly.

Career Interruptions:

- Maintain professional currency through learning.
- Reframe gaps as skill-building periods.
- Seek high-visibility re-entry opportunities.
- Find sponsors to regain momentum.
- Advocate for menopause-inclusive policies.

Leadership

Humbling Wake-Up Call

1. If your team's failing,
look into the mirror.
You're the problem.



2. If you can't handle criticism,
you're not fit to lead.

3. Your title makes you a manager;
your people make
you a leader.
Don't confuse the two.



4. Don't preach teamwork and
then play favourites.
Hypocrisy kills culture.

5. Stop micromanaging. If you
don't trust your team,
why should they trust you?

6. If you're not developing your
team, you're diminishing them.
Step up or step aside.

7. If your team's afraid to
speak up,
you've already
failed as a leader.



8. If you're not accountable,
you're not credible.
Own your mistakes.

9. Don't just set the pace;
set the standard.
Excellence is contagious.

10. Your team doesn't work
for you.
You work for them.
Serve to lead.



11. If your actions don't inspire,
your words won't.
Lead by example.

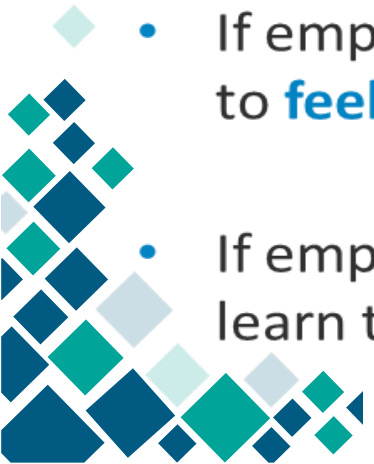
12. A leader takes the blame
and shares the fame.
No exceptions.

The Shadow I Cast

What example do I set?

Employees live what they learn/see

- If employees live with **criticism**, they learn to **condemn**.
- If employees live with **hostility**, they learn to **fight**.
- If employees live with **ridicule**, they learn to **withdraw**.
- If employees live with **shame**, they learn to **feel guilty**.
- If employees live with **tolerance**, they learn to be **patient**.
- If employees live with **praise**, they learn to **appreciate**.
- If employees live with **fairness**, they learn **justice**.
- If employees live with **approval**, they learn to **have courage**.
- If employees live with **acceptance**, they learn to **be helpful**.
- If employees live with **encouragement**, they learn **confidence**.



Reflection

Female Leadership

Take a moment to pause and reflect on the unique strength and resilience that you, as a female leader, bring to your role. Your journey is shaped not only by your achievements but by the challenges you have overcome with courage and grace. Leadership is not merely about authority; it is about the power to influence, nurture, and transform those around you.

Remember that your voice matters and your vision can create lasting change. Embrace your authenticity, for it is your greatest asset in a world that needs diverse perspectives and compassionate leadership. Let your confidence be rooted in your values, your empathy guide your decisions, and your determination inspire others to rise alongside you.

As you continue to lead, reflect on the legacy you wish to leave—not only in the milestones you reach but in the doors you open for others. True leadership is a shared journey of empowerment and growth. Today, commit to leading with both strength and kindness, and to being a beacon of possibility for women everywhere.



In Closing

Leadership is a journey of growth and impact.

Women in SAls play a vital role in shaping governance, accountability, and equity. Lead boldly, authentically, and with compassion. Your leadership matters—now more than ever.





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Group Exercise: Influencing without Authority

You are leading a cross-departmental audit project. Some senior colleagues (mostly male) are reluctant to take direction from you, even though you are the project lead. They often question your decisions and bypass you in communications.

Discussion Questions:

1. What leadership challenges are present in this scenario?
2. How could the leader respond effectively while maintaining professionalism?
3. What strategies could help her strengthen her influence and credibility?

Groups Feedback



Group Exercise: Balancing Work and Wellbeing

As a Leader, you're managing a large team and multiple audit deadlines. You also have family responsibilities. You often feel pressure to overperform and struggle to maintain boundaries between work and personal time.

Discussion Questions:

1. What leadership and personal challenges does this leader face?
2. How might resilience and self-awareness help manage this situation?
3. What organisational supports could make a difference?

Groups Feedback



Group Exercise: Driving Change in a Traditional Environment

You have been asked to lead an initiative introducing new audit technology. Some team members resist change, arguing that traditional methods have “always worked fine”.

Discussion Questions:

1. What leadership qualities are needed to manage this change?
2. How can the leader build trust and motivate the team?
3. What communication approaches would be most effective?



Groups Feedback