

# Human-Centric Leadership for High Performance



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3 min read

“A rose is not  
a tulip with a  
disorder”



## The Leadership Gap: Engagement vs. Disengagement

Imagine this... You walk into a meeting, and the room is tense. The team is disengaged, hesitant to speak up. Deadlines are met—just barely. You feel like you're pulling people rather than leading them.

Now, picture this instead: You step into that same room, but now—people are energized. They share ideas openly, challenge each

other, and care about results—not because they have to, but because they want to.

◆ The difference between these two teams is not intelligence, resources, or talent. It's leadership. And specifically, human-centric leadership—the ability to lead with heart.

### A Leadership Case Study: Ana's Turning Point

A few years ago, I worked with a leader named Ana. She was brilliant, strategic, and results-driven. Yet, her team was disengaged, turnover was high, and performance was flatlining. Her instinct was to push harder, measure more KPIs—but it didn't work.

What did work? More connection. By listening more, asking better questions, and recognizing contributions, Ana transformed her team.

#### The result?

- Turnover dropped by 40%.
- Engagement skyrocketed.
- The team went from barely meeting targets to exceeding them by 20% in six months.

## The Power of Asking Better Questions

One of the most overlooked leadership skills is asking better questions—not just more questions. Leaders often fall into common traps:

### 1. Overwhelming & Reactive Questions

✗ “What do you think about this? Okay, and what about that? Do you see any risks? What’s the next step?”

✓ Instead, ask: “If we were to fast-forward six months, what would success look like for you?”

### 2. Leading Questions (Bias & Confirmation-Seeking)

✗ “Don’t you think this approach is the best one?”

✓ Instead, ask: “What approach do you believe will have the highest impact, and why?”

### 3. Checking-the-Box Questions

✗ “Are we moving forward?”

✓ Instead, ask: “What part of this feels most challenging, and what would make it easier?”

## Practical Tools to Lead with Heart (and Drive High Performance)

### 1. The '2-Minute Curiosity' Rule

Before jumping into problem-solving, take two extra minutes to get curious. Instead of telling, start asking:

- "What's your perspective?"
- "What's challenging you the most right now?"
- "What's one thing I can do to support you better?"

Why It Works: Google found that psychological safety is the #1 factor in high-performing teams. When people feel heard, engagement skyrockets—and so does performance.

### 2. The 'Vulnerability Loop' Exercise

Great leaders don't have all the answers—and admitting that increases trust. Try this:

- Share a challenge in a team meeting.
- Ask, "How would you approach this?"
- Implement an idea from the team and acknowledge their contribution.

Why It Works: Harvard research shows that leaders who show vulnerability first create stronger team trust.

### 3. The '3-to-1 Recognition Formula'

Balancing motivation and accountability is key. Use this simple feedback structure:

- 3 Positive Reinforcements: "I appreciate how you..."
- 1 Constructive Feedback Point: "One area we can grow is..."

For example: ❌ "You need to speak up more in meetings."

✅ "I really appreciate your insights when we talk 1-on-1. Your perspective is valuable. I'd love to hear more from you in meetings —your ideas could impact the whole team."

Why It Works: According to Gallup, employees are 12x more engaged when they receive strengths-based feedback.

#### 🌟 A Challenge for You

Pick ONE of these tools and use it this week:

- 1: The 2-Minute Curiosity Rule
- 2: The Vulnerability Loop
- 3: The 3-to-1 Recognition Formula

Let me know in an email which one you'll start with!

## The Science Behind Human-Centric Leadership

- Time Magazine reports that impactful leaders develop curiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-reflection.
- Korn Ferry found that leaders who practice empathy are 3x more effective at inspiring performance.
- Gallup data shows that teams with high psychological safety outperform others by up to 40%.

## Final Thought

The best leaders don't just drive performance. They create a space where people feel safe, inspired, and motivated—and that's where true high performance happens.

Looking forward to hearing your thoughts!