



Empathy Is Your Leadership Superpower

Building and Leading Together

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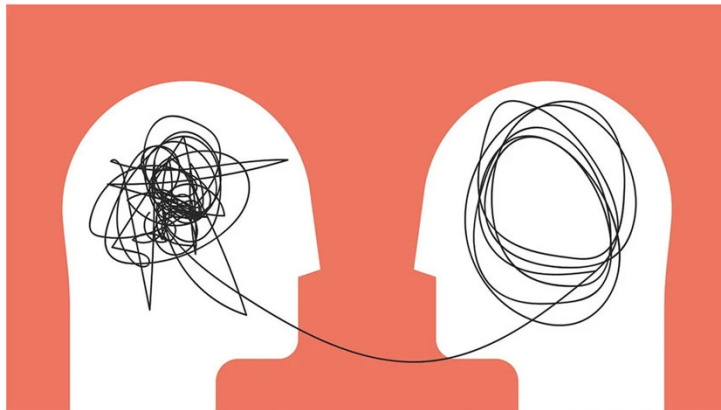
Build Together. Lead Together.



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- We don't build organizations alone.
 - We build them through people.
 - Empathy makes that possible.

BUILD TOGETHER. LEAD TOGETHER.

EMPATHY = STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP



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Empathy is not soft.
It is not lowering standards.
It drives results.

Build Together. Lead Together.

BRENE BROWN ON EMPATHY



UNDERSTANDING EMPATHY

TYPES OF EMPATHY



Emotional

- ✓ "I feel what you feel."
- ✓ Feeling with someone.
- ✓ Example:
"I can tell this deadline stress is really wearing on you – I've felt that too."

Cognitive

- ✓ "I understand how you feel."
- ✓ Understanding someone's perspective.
- ✓ Example:
"I get why you're frustrated – the shifting priorities are confusing."

Compassionate

- ✓ "I want to help you."
- ✓ Taking action based on that understanding.
- ✓ Example:
"I know you're overwhelmed. Let's review your workload and see what we can adjust."

CONTRASTING EMPATHY AND SYMPATHY

EMPATHY



-
- Sounds like “I’m feeling with you.”
 - Fuels connection.

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SYMPATHY



-
- Sounds like “I feel sorry for you.”
 - Fuels disconnection.
 - Uneven power dynamic.

WHEN EMPATHY IS MISSING....

YOU CAN FEEL AND SEE IT

The Truth

You can't build together
if people don't feel understood.



The Reality

- Misalignment.
- Communication breakdowns.
- Disengagement.

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THE BUSINESS CASE FOR EMPATHY

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- Empathetic leaders = greater team engagement, trust, innovation, and better communication.
- Empathy improves organizational culture by strengthening trust, psychological safety, and team cohesion.
- Empathy is a foundational communicational skill. Active listening is essential to empathy.
- Empathy is a learnable skill - not just an innate trait - it's a practice.



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PAIR EXERCISE

SHARE YOUR CURRENT CHALLENGE.

Listener - no fixing.

Switch roles.





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PAIR EXERCISE DEBRIEF

HOW DID IT FEEL TO BE HEARD?

What changed?



Build Together. Lead Together.



Understand

What might they be thinking or navigating?

Ask: What else could be true



Connect

Acknowledge emotion and perspective

Say: That makes sense.



Respond

Adjust your approach intentionally

Acknowledge → Normalize → Redirect



Lead

Align on next steps and maintain accountability

Focus on shared goals

EMPATHY FRAMEWORK TOOL

CHANGING CONVERSATIONS



Main Takeaway

A simple, powerful tool for leading conversations that drive results

ONE TOOL YOU CAN USE IMMEDIATELY

EMPATHY IN ACTION



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ASK

- ✓ What else could be true?

ACKNOWLEDGE

- ✓ That makes sense
- ✓ Truly listen

ADJUST

- ✓ Let's move forward

SCENARIO - HIGH PERFORMER SUDDENLY UNDERPERFORMING

A previously reliable employee has missed deadlines, seems disengaged,
and is less responsive.



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Typical Response

"Your performance has slipped lately. I need you to get back on track immediately."

Empathetic Response

"I've noticed some changes recently, and I wanted to check in. You've always been dependable, so I'm curious what might be going on and how I can support you while also getting things back on track."

SCENARIO – RESISTANCE TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Your team is rolling out a new process/system.

A team member openly pushes back and complains.



Typical Response

"This decision has already been made. We need everyone to get on board."

Empathetic Response

"I can hear that this change is frustrating. Transitions can be challenging, especially when people have established ways of working. Help me understand your biggest concern so we can address what's getting in the way."

BUILD TOGETHER. LEAD TOGETHER.

STRENGTHEN YOUR TEAM WITH EMPATHY



-
- Build Together requires trust.
 - Understand + Connect
 - Create trust and shared understanding



-
- Lead Together requires listening.
 - Respond + Align
 - Move forward with clarity.



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EMPATHY IS YOUR SUPERPOWER
EMPATHY = LEADERSHIP LEVERAGE

You can improve your leadership effectiveness by communicating with empathy.



FINAL REFLECTION

**WHAT CONVERSATION COULD EMPATHY
TRANSFORM THIS WEEK?**



Build Together. Lead Together.



THANK YOU!

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The Empathy Framework

A simple, powerful tool for leading conversations that drive results

UNDERSTAND

What might they be thinking or navigating? Ask: What else could be true?

CONNECT

Acknowledge emotion and perspective Say: That makes sense.

RESPOND

Adjust your approach intentionally Acknowledge → Normalize → Redirect

LEAD

Align on next steps and maintain accountability Focus on shared goals

Use It in Real Conversations

1. Pause	Get curious before reacting
2. Acknowledge	Validate what's real for them
3. Adjust	Shift your response intentionally
4. Align	Move toward a shared solution

Empathy isn't about being nice—it's about creating the conditions where people can communicate, align, and perform at their best.



Empathy Toolkit

Practical tools you can use immediately

Empathy Questions

- What's competing for your attention?
- What feels most challenging right now?
- What would make this easier?

Validating Language

- That makes sense.
- I can see why that's frustrating.
- Thanks for sharing that.

Check-Ins

- How's your energy (1–5)?
- One word to describe how this feels?
- What's still unclear?

Design for Constraints

- Prioritize must-know vs nice-to-know
- Chunk content
- Build in reflection time