THE
DEEPLY HUMAN
WORKPLACE

Tap into What People Need,
Build Commitment on Your Teams, and
Create a Workplace that Employees Love

SAL SILVESTER

The Deeply Human Workplace

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Build Commitment on Your Teams, and
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Here's What's Inside…

Introduction

My vision for the workplace of the future is deeply human. What is a deeply human workplace? To me, it's a place where people can bring their whole selves to work. It's a place where people feel connected and feel safe to take an interpersonal risk by expressing a new idea or challenging the status quo. It's a place where people find their true purpose and can make a positive difference. It's a place where people feel valued both emotionally and financially.

This vision has turned into my mission:

Help organizations create a healthy, aligned, and more deeply human workplace.

I believe that we can put humanity back into our workplace by recognizing that people have deeply rooted human needs. When organizational leaders create an environment that meets most of those needs, people will

demonstrate unparalleled levels of engagement, commitment, and contribution.

When people feel they can "just be real," when they can bring their full human selves to work every day, they are more likely to connect with their colleagues. The result? A workplace full of people who trust, collaborate, and work together toward a common set of goals.
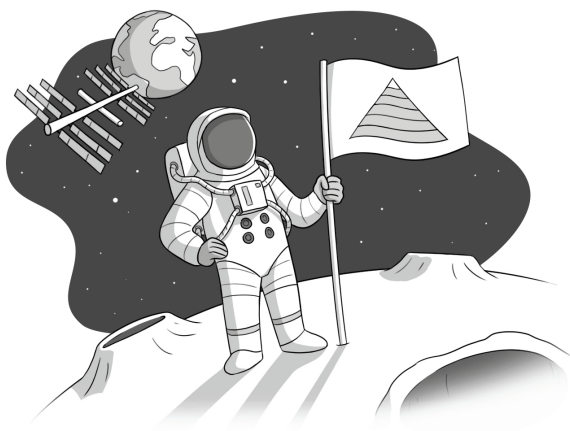
Purpose and Goals of this Book

In our work coaching and training tens of thousands of leaders globally, I've noticed there's an underlying pattern among most people at work. Regardless of gender, demographics, or geography, I have observed that people have a common set of needs. If we

can understand and tap into those needs, we can create a healthier, aligned, trusting, committed, productive, and human workplace.

The purpose of this short book is to share a proven model — the 6 Cs of Human *Workplace* Needs — that we have tested with global clients to give you a pathway for creating a healthier, aligned, and deeply human workplace.

I hope that after reading this book, you will be able to:

> → Gain a deeper understanding of what is important to you personally and professionally.
>
> → Utilize a framework to help teams focus on both results and relationships to create a healthy team environment.
>
> → Assess your organizational culture so that you can implement tangible steps to create a deeply human workplace that people love.

You Can Expect

I am confident that a workplace that embraces humanity will be prepared for the future.

- People will more readily be able to address the unprecedented pace of change and unpredictability.

- People will take the necessary risks to experiment and develop mechanisms that enable organizations to thrive in a complex environment.

- Your organization will be poised to address employees' changing attitudes and expectations in the post-pandemic era.

This book is packed with ideas, strategies, and tips. So, let's jump right in!

To Your Team's Success,

Sal

Preface
The Case for a Deeply Human Workplace

The Pace of Change and Complexity

Today's pace of change is the slowest you and I will experience for the remainder of our careers.

Business is increasingly unpredictable. There is no secret playbook.

In the past, we've looked to previous solutions or leveraged experts who knew how to handle a situation. In today's complex world, the answers to many of our questions do not exist. There are no experts who have been through what we are currently experiencing.

Take, for example, the transition out of the COVID pandemic and into the post-pandemic work environment. No one in recent history has been through this transition, and we can only guess how it might play out.

A more human workplace will help enable people to deal with the unpredictability of our workplace by creating a positive environment where people feel connected and support each other through uncertainty.

The Impact of Unpredictability

If organizations, teams, or individual leaders aren't able to adapt when faced with unpredictability, they will not succeed in work.

The good news is that the single most unique characteristic that has defined the human race and enabled us to survive over time as a species has been our ability to adapt.

A more human workplace will help support our natural adaptability.

A Shift in Thinking is Needed

To succeed, leaders and teams must shift their thinking.

Instead of looking for solutions that don't exist, we must experiment, learn from those

experiments, and then put the right solutions in place that reflect what we've learned.

It's an iterative approach, where the process of experimentation, learning, and adapting is not just one-and-done but circular and continuous.

A more human workplace will enable the risk-taking required to experiment more as people will feel safer challenging the status quo and sharing different opinions and ideas.

From Hierarchal to Inclusive

To enable this shift in thinking and accelerate our ability to adapt, our organizations will have to step away from hierarchal approaches to leadership where a few leaders at the top are relied on to make the significant decisions.

It's a shift away from a controlling style of leadership where those central people exert power over others, instead of sharing power with others, to drive everything that happens in the business.

A more human workplace will help create a more inclusive environment where differences

are appreciated, people will know their contributions matter, and power will be shared with others.

Stop Missing the Opportunities

With the increasing complexity and unpredictability of our world today, we must draw upon other people's insights, creativity, and innovative ideas. That means a lot of dialogue and collaboration. It means constructive debate. It means being open to what other people have to say, especially when their point of view is different.

The absence of robust dialogue and debate inevitably leads to missed opportunities.

A more human workplace will help equip people to engage in the conversations that matter most because behavioral norms that guide those conversations will be clear.

Shifting Attitudes and Expectations

As organizations emerge in the post-pandemic era, leaders need to think differently about

engaging their workforce. Employees' attitudes and expectations about work have changed, and they will be counting on their leaders' attitudes and expectations to have changed as well.

Before the pandemic, most people were used to going into the office every day. It was routine. During the pandemic, workers experienced new levels of flexibility when it came to where and when they worked. Home and work have become much more integrated.

People spent time during the workday helping their kids with online learning or taking care of older adults. They weren't shy about taking time to focus on their health and well-being. We watched each other's dogs, cats, and kids in the background of our daily video calls. It's truly been a very human experience.

People have now realized that they can be at work and home at the same time—while maintaining the same, or even higher, productivity levels.

The change in perspective that occurred with people during COVID resulted in a personal and professional shift in priorities.

A more human workplace will help organizations address employees' changing attitudes and expectations of their future by enabling people to grow and connect their work to a meaningful purpose.

The Human *Workplace* Needs Model

When psychologist Abraham Maslow introduced his concept of "the hierarchy of needs" in 1943, it changed how we viewed and appreciated human growth and motivation. In short, once you square away food, water, warmth, and rest, higher-level needs can follow — all the way up the pyramid to self-actualization.

I propose that every person has a core set of hierarchical needs in the workplace to perform well and achieve maximum success for themselves and their organization.

The 6 Cs of Human *Workplace* Needs model provides a roadmap toward creating a deeply human workplace. Such a workplace is one where everyone can ignite their potential. The model is a game-changer for organizational life and will fundamentally change the world of business when leaders embrace the idea of humanity in their organization's culture.

The first four C's in the model represent the Core human needs – needs that everyone has. They include:

- Connection with people
- Certainty as a result of safety

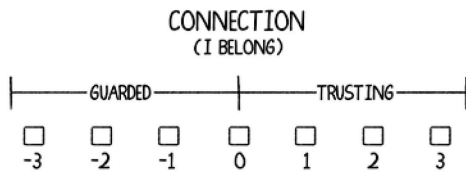- Contributions are valued

- Clarity of the *what* and *how*

The last two needs are the needs of Fulfillment. They are higher-level needs that, when met, result in remarkable levels of engagement and fulfillment. Those needs include:

- Challenge and growth

- Community impact

Let's explore each level of the model.

Chapter One
Connection with People


```
        CONNECTION
         (I BELONG)

|——GUARDED——————|——————TRUSTING——|
  ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐     ☐
 -3    -2    -1     0     1     2     3
```

An 8-person leadership team from a global
resources company had the challenging role of
de-merging two major mining operations from
the parent company. As a result, the ripple
effect would impact 2,000 employees in
addition to the larger community of suppliers,
vendors, local retail store owners, and an
unknown number of families.

On top of it all, neither the parent company nor
the purchasing company could guarantee jobs
for these seasoned executives after the
completion of the sale.

Jim, the General Manager, had the foresight and
vision to build the strongest leadership team
that he could, knowing that the transaction

would be a two-year journey. So, as part of his overall plan, he recruited my consulting firm to help. Over those two years, we spent intentional time each month developing and enhancing relationships among the team members. During that time, the leaders made the consequential decisions that mattered most for people, processes, and the business.

But it wasn't easy.

There were intense debates, which occasionally crossed the line from direct and respectful to slightly ugly and a bit unprofessional. There were shared moments of anxiety and deep uncertainty. And there was a fear that the buyer wouldn't place the safety of their employees as the number one priority in the business.

But through all those challenges, this team persevered. They took care of their people. They established a next-level leadership group that could steer the business into the future. And when conversations grew tense, they were always able to reestablish their relationships.

To this day, this was the strongest leadership team that I have had the privilege to work with.

The shared experience and deep bond have kept us all connected.

Connection is the Foundation

Connection is the first human workplace need. It is absolutely core and central to our humanity.

Connection is about the need to belong and feel loved. While that may sound "soft" in the corporate workplace, it is anything but soft! The mining company leadership team knew this.

They knew that when people feel like they belong, they trust others, take more risks in conversation, engage in productive conflict, and move faster to decisions with less drama and politics.

Like members of that mining leadership team, when team members feel a deep connection, they become more open to operating from a place of positive intent.

And when people are connected, they speak up when speaking up matters most.

Connection is at the base of our 6 Cs of the Human *Workplace* Needs model because, in longitudinal studies, the quality of our social connections is the primary predictor of long-term physical and mental health and happiness[i].

The Foundation for Agility

With the increasing complexity in today's work environment, connection becomes the foundation for agility and speed.

When people feel connected, they're much more likely to take risks, tell you the truth, and engage in the meaningful conversations that matter most for the business.

And they'll do it faster.

Social Media Is Not Connection

Today, our society promotes the idea of connectedness through the highlight reels of social media and technology. However, just because people are "linked" or "friends" or "followed" doesn't mean they *feel* a connection. Perhaps counterintuitively, studies have shown

that tweets, posts, likes, and images of the seemingly perfect lives of others often leave viewers feeling inadequate and unfulfilled. Real connection in the workplace goes much deeper, where human beings find meaningful relationships with their manager and colleagues.

Connection in the Post-Pandemic Environment

Without a doubt, COVID resulted in an enormous amount of suffering for many people. It will be a historical marker in our lives.

Intertwined with that pain and suffering, there were so many glimmers of people connecting on a more human level.

I had the opportunity to interact with senior and executive leaders outside the veil of their corporate boardrooms and fancy offices. We met each other's children, spouses, and partners in ways we may not have before. And now, when Charlie the cat, who I met on a previous Zoom call, needs to go to her veterinary appointment, I may respond with more empathy and understanding.

COVID has given us an opening to simply be more human.

Watch Out for Efficiency

Before COVID-19, Gallup published a study stating that 67% of employees say they are sometimes, very often, or always burned out at work. [ii] I believe that the hyper productivity-focused virtual world—where people go from video meeting to video meeting and working days and nights without boundaries—comes at a cost to genuine connection, resulting in even more people feeling overwhelmed, stressed and burned out.

We must find ways to connect informally without the proverbial water cooler conversations and accidental hallway collisions.

Our Most Common Fear

The need for connection is universal. And like all the other human workplace needs, everyone seeks to get this need met in either healthy or unhealthy ways. So as leaders and team members, it's essential to understand the fear

that may drive behavior behind each need so that together we can create more constructive ways to get these needs met at work.

There are several fears related to the connections that drive human behavior in the workplace. They show up differently for different people, depending on life experiences and personality.

Like all other fears, they play out as voices inside our heads. "Am I being taken advantage of?", "Does she like me?" "Am I good enough?"

These narratives usually boil down to the deepest and most common fear we all share as human beings. It is the fear of not feeling like we belong or are loved.

It's a fear that stems from an evolutionary function. Our millions of years old brains are wired to enable us to survive as a species. As a result, our brains have taught us that the consequences of ignoring positive information are much less severe than the consequences of ignoring negative or threatening information.

When we detect a threat, our fight-flight-or-freeze response kicks in, and we might push people away or remain guarded or protective in relationships.

When team members operate out of fear, ineffectiveness in conflict is the norm, defensiveness and blame are commonplace, and turf wars and turnover are inevitable.

But when we build connections in the workplace, people live less from fear and more from a place of expansiveness.

How to Build Connection on Your Team

Team Exercise #1: Share Your Top 2 Human Workplace Needs

One exercise that we at 5.12 Solutions Consulting Group encourage teams to do is identify their top two human workplace needs and then share those needs publicly with their team members so that team members can learn how to adapt to each other, and people can be more connected.

- What are your top two needs?

- What do those needs mean for you?

- What would your manager have to do for you to get those needs met?

- What would others have to do for you to get those needs met?

Team Exercise #2: Top and Bottom 5%

I first observed this exercise while working with one of the healthiest executive teams I've seen over more than 20 years as an executive coach. This team started their weekly operational meetings by sharing their top 5% of experiences

currently impacting their lives and the bottom 5% of their experiences. This deeply vulnerable exercise gave each person a greater sense of connection and a deeper level of empathy for each other because they knew more about each other's lives than most executive team members in our workplace today.

Team Exercise #3: Create a Shared Experience

The third exercise isn't much of an exercise at all. It's simply spending informal time together with colleagues. Something special happens between human beings when there isn't an agenda or a never-ending lineup of calls and meetings.

How Leaders Create an Environment of Connection

Creating an environment of connection requires leaders to shift their mindset, skillset, and habits.

Mindset

The first shift leaders must make to build a connection in the workplace is to change their thinking and realize that people seek love and belonging — in both personal and professional settings.

Leaders also must see that both results and relationships are essential to optimize their potential fully and the potential of their people.

Skillset

Leaders who create connection in the workplace have the people skills to build trust in their teams. They create an environment of open communication in meetings, 1-1s, and other settings. They know how to build vulnerability-based trust, where people can ask for help, offer help and admit mistakes without fear of being *disconnected* from others.

Connection Habits

A leader's habits demonstrate their mindset and skillset. Some examples of practices that build connection include:

- Creating space for people to spend time together consistently

- Making time for regular 1-1s, goal reviews, and coaching

- Demonstrating genuine interest and care in people

- Rewarding team members when they model interest and respect for others

- Developing team norms that bring out the best in people

- Setting behavioral expectations that align with clearly defined norms and values

- Organizing events outside of work where people can just be human

- Admitting their mistakes

- Giving team members a voice

Build Connection Yourself

You don't have to rely on others to build connection. Instead, you are empowered to take steps to get this need met in your own life.

First of all, tap into your narratives and notice the stories you might be telling yourself. For example, how are your fears related to love and belonging impacting your behavior? Do you spend time ruminating about what others think of you? Are you overly concerned about damaging relationships and, as a result, avoid important conversations?

Recognize that your fear of vulnerability might actually be getting in the way of having deeper and more meaningful relationships with people at work and home.

Secondly, take some small but meaningful steps to build connections with others.

- Find more unexpected opportunities to bump into people in the hallways or the proverbial water cooler. Or, in a virtual environment, reach out with an informal phone call to just check-in.

- Conduct meetings while taking a walk outside, either in person or virtually while the other person is on the phone.

- Go to lunch with team members once a week.

- Ensure the team has regular (and productive) meetings.

- Give yourself and others permission to disagree.

- Build team norms.

- Express gratitude.

Reflections for Your Team

Do your team members feel genuinely connected, especially when working remotely?

Assess your organizational environment here. For example, on a scale of 1 through 5, where 5 represents "almost always" and 1 represents "almost never", how would you rate the culture of connection in your organization?

1. I feel like my team members genuinely care about me.

2. My team members give me the benefit of the doubt.

3. We have a positive climate that supports people in doing their best work.

4. Team members invite input from others about their area of the business.

Chapter Two
Certainty As a Result of Safety

CERTAINTY
(I FEEL SAFE)

|———— DEFENSIVE ————|———— OPEN / SAFE ————|

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
-3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
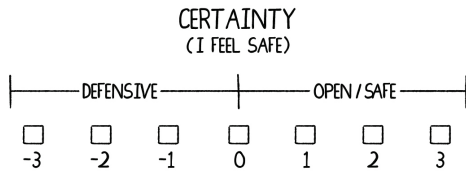
I had the honor and good fortune of spending 17 years volunteering with the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group (RMRG). RMRG is one of the oldest and most respected mountain rescue teams in the nation. When someone in the mountains of Boulder, Colorado, gets lost, breaks a leg, injures themself on a rock climb, or needs any form of assistance in the backcountry, RMRG is there day or night.

On most mountain rescue teams, there is a Safety Officer – someone assigned to an accident site to double-check all the systems and ensure scene safety.

RMRG doesn't do that.

Instead, everyone on the scene assumes the role of Safety Officer. Individual team members double-check their own systems and what others around them are doing as well. So, when a team member builds an anchor that will support lowering a litter from a 500-foot rock face, other team members chip in to ensure the system was built correctly – and will get the patient, two litter bearers, and any additional people attending the litter to the ground safely.

The concept of "everyone is a Safety Officer" is a radical idea in mountain rescue, but it enables the team to perform their missions in a physically safe manner. But, more importantly, in an emotionally safe manner.

Certainty as a Result of Safety

When organizations meet the human workplace need of connection, they can create Certainty, the next level of our human workplace needs model. Certainty, like on the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group, is the outcome of a safe environment — both physically and psychologically.

Prior to COVID-19, physical safety was a priority for organizations in industries such as manufacturing, oil and gas, and biotech; now, it should be a top priority for every organization.

When we feel like we are physically safe in a work environment, we feel certain.

The other component of certainty, which may be even more critical on a team, is psychological safety.

Psychological safety measures interpersonal trust and respect among people at work that allows people to take social risks. Harvard organizational behavioral scientist Amy Edmondson first introduced the construct of "team psychological safety," defining it as "a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking."[iii]

Edmondson clearly describes psychological safety as a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up about ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. At some point in our careers, we've all seen or heard of people being punished or humiliated in the workplace.

It can be devastating to the person as well as to the culture.

When people feel safe, creativity thrives. New ideas emerge. Safety allows people's unique ideas and perspectives to shine through.

Social and Interpersonal Risk Taking

The workplace of the future will rely on people from different teams to work together, experiment, and then adjust their approach based on what they learn. To do that effectively, humans need a sense of safety.

Without physical and psychological safety, there isn't certainty. And without certainty, people become reluctant. They do things like:

- Defer to managers to solve problems for them

- Hesitate to raise tough issues or business challenges

- Use protective language out of fear of humiliation, or shut down as a way of managing what they say and how they say it

- Assess their manager's mood before deciding to share the truth about the business

But with certainty, people are more willing to take social and interpersonal risks by:

→ Expressing their opinions when those opinions are different from those of other people

→ Sharing ideas instead of analyzing information

→ Making decisions in the face of conflicting information

→ Asking for cross-functional help when complexity arises

→ Expanding their social networks in the workplace

→ Admitting a mistake

→ Offering an apology

These are highly vulnerable behaviors. Ones that take psychological safety for people to feel willing to risk doing them.

Everyone is a Safety Officer

Like in the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group, where it's everyone's role to create safety on the team, it's every team member's role to create safety in the workplace.

My firm often gets pulled into client engagements asked to help an executive team improve their dynamics, and sometimes we uncover that the root of the issues lies within the dysfunctional behaviors of one or two team members. The challenge is these team members are usually "good producers." In other words, they are good at what they do technically, but they derail the level of safety and certainty on a team. And when there isn't safety on a team, the ability to connect, trust and take risks completely breaks down.

It's not just the team leader's role to hold these Derailers accountable. Creating physical and psychological safety is the responsibility of every single team member.

The Fear Behind Certainty

I recently facilitated our Team Acceleration program with an executive team and discussed the critical topic of productive conflict. We were exploring how each team member approached conflict when one of the leaders said, "I never got in trouble for keeping my mouth shut."

Ouch.

Not exactly the most effective approach to executive leadership, and a great example of how this need for certainty was met in an unhealthy way.

When people don't find certainty in the workplace, several fears emerge that have the potential to drive unhealthy behavior. Some of the most common fears we see related to certainty are:

"*Does he or she like me?*" (disapproval)

"*How am I doing compared to her?*" (comparison to others)

"Will I lose my job for speaking up?" (fear of loss)

Regardless of how these fears show up, they usually boil down to one core fear: "*Am I safe?*"

When team members operate out of fear, it becomes much more challenging to navigate the complexity and constant change in the workplace. Issues simmer under the surface. Meetings occur after the meeting. Decisions are revisited over and over and over again. And on top of it all, people feel dissatisfied in their roles.

But when we create a psychologically safe environment where team members feel a sense of certainty, anything and everything becomes possible. Leaders can tap into the beautiful gifts that people bring to work. People can have the conversations that matter most—for the organization, the team, and individuals. Teams can create an environment where vulnerability-based trust flourishes and productive conflict is the norm.

Certainty, the second component of our Human *Workplace* Needs model, helps accelerate all of the other core human needs — **connection** with people, valued **contributions,** and **clarity** on the *what* and the *how*.

MAKE DECISIONS

ASK FOR HELP

LEVEL #2
CERTAINTY
AS A RESULT OF SAFETY

PRODUCTIVE DEBATE

OPTIONS

OPTIONS

SPEAK UP

Characteristics that Googlers Value Most

Google has done a ton of research with their Project Aristotle initiative around the characteristics that Googlers value in their managers[iv]. Their team's study found psychological safety to be the most common characteristic of effective teams. The Google researchers found that individuals on teams with higher psychological safety were less likely to leave Google, more likely to harness the power of diverse ideas from their teammates, more likely to bring in increased revenue, and were more likely to be rated as "effective" by executives.

How to Build Certainty on Your Team

Creating certainty is more important than ever, as teams find themselves in fully remote or hybrid work environments. When teams have a strong sense of psychological safety, regardless of whether team members are in person or virtual, they're able to engage in productive debate. Here are a few exercises your team can implement to create more certainty on your team.

Team Exercise #1: Productive Conflict Norms

We first saw a variation of this exercise in the book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*[v]. Productive conflict norms are simple agreements that articulate what is expected and unacceptable when dialogue and debate are necessary to solve complex problems. Creating productive conflict norms will help the team address the diverse backgrounds that people bring to the workplace in how they deal with each other when tensions rise. For example, here are some expected and unacceptable behaviors a leadership team we worked with created:

Expected Behaviors:

- Welcome diversity of thought
- Focus on the issue, not the person
- Be direct, honest, and respectful

Unacceptable Behaviors:

- Caving in to avoid tension
- Moving on before checking in for opposing views

- Using threatening and foul language

Team Exercise #2: Understand Personality Differences

In many of our team and leadership development programs, we use a personality style profile tool called DiSC© to help people understand themselves and others at a much deeper level. DiSC© (notice the lowercase "i" to distinguish it from knockoffs), published by Wiley, provides a practical and effective framework people can use on an interactive basis to improve communication and build better relationships. Additionally, when leaders and team members share their DiSC© styles, it helps to build what author Patrick Lencioni calls "vulnerability-based trust." This level of trust allows team members to "comfortably and quickly acknowledge without provocation their mistakes, weaknesses, failures, and needs for help," as well as recognize "the strengths of others, even when those strengths exceed their own."

From a leadership perspective, understanding the ins and outs of behavioral styles helps

leaders recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach to communication isn't effective. Instead, using DiSC© effectively can help leaders tailor how they direct, develop, motivate, and delegate to their people and communicate up to their managers.

How Leaders Create Certainty

Creating an environment of certainty requires leaders to shift their mindset, skillset, and habits.

1. Mindset

Leaders build certainty in the workplace when they recognize that leading from fear is an outdated approach. Back to Amy Edmonson's work at Harvard— research in neuroscience shows that fear consumes cognitive resources, diverting them from parts of the brain that process new information. As a result, when we experience fear, we are less able to engage in analytic thinking, creative insight, and problem-solving. In short, it's hard for people to do their best work when they are afraid.

The mindset shift for leaders is the following:

- From — people will be motivated when they fear me, the situation, or the environment.

- To — people will be motivated when they feel safe around me, the situation, or the environment.

2. Skillset

Leaders who build certainty in the workplace have the people skills to build trust in their teams. They create an environment of open communication in meetings, one-on-ones, and other settings. They know how to build vulnerability-based trust, where people can take interpersonal risks knowing that those risks will not result in punishment or humiliation.

3. Certainty Habits

Some examples of habits that create certainty include:

- Giving permission to engage in productive and healthy conflict.

- Rewarding team members when they take interpersonal risks.

- Creating team agreements that define how people will work together, engage

in conflict, make decisions and hold each other accountable.

- Providing meeting agendas and pre-reads in advance so that people have time to process and prepare and can engage in lively dialogue during meetings.

Reflections for Your Team

Do your people feel the certainty they need to bring out the best in their performance?

Assess your organizational environment here. On a scale of 1 through 5, where 5 represents "almost always" and 1 represents "almost never", how would you rate the culture of Certainty in your organization?

1. I feel safe voicing my opinion even on controversial issues.

2. The team encourages a healthy exchange of ideas.

3. The team is comfortable making decisions in the face of conflicting information.

4. Team members ask for help when complexity increases.

Chapter Three
Contributions are Valued

CONTRIBUTIONS VALUED
(I MATTER)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

IGNORED —————— | —————— VALUED
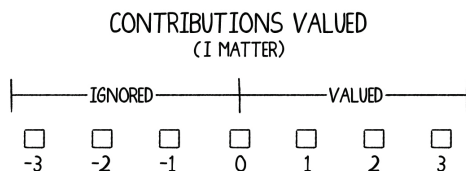
The closing ceremonies for the 2021 Tokyo Olympics just concluded at the writing of this chapter. The lack of fans in the stadium due to the COVID-19 pandemic struck me. The spectator seats were mostly empty throughout all the events, from swimming to basketball to track and field, gymnastics, beach volleyball, and more.

Empty seats, no fans, no cheering. Weird.

The atmosphere was different. It was uninspiring.

The announcers consistently talked about how difficult this was for the athletes. To be

competing at the top of their game with no one watching.

A New York Times article described the simulated crowd noise as "more like the din of a restaurant at lunchtime service."[vi]

Yet, in the workplace, this happens all the time.

Employees perform at the top of their workplace game and receive very little recognition for their effort, or leaders wait until a project "crosses the finish line" before they cheer.

Team members are stranded on the playing field, left guessing as to whether they are winning the game or not.

Are My Contributions Valued?

People need to know that they matter. They want to believe their voice is heard and their opinions count.

Unfortunately, it's all too common to hear leaders say, 'Why should I recognize my people?' And, almost always, the next line out

of their mouth is, 'That's what they get paid for.'

But at the end of a long workday, everyone wants to know one thing: Are my contributions valued?

Valued contributions are the third level of our Human *Workplace* Needs model. When this human need is met, it enhances the connection and certainty that people feel at work.

Of all the six human workplace needs, this is the one that cuts most deeply to our sense of self-worth, and most stories of management-gone-wrong usually connect back to this core human workplace need.

The Fear Behind Contributions Matter

The internal narrative reel begins when we fail to let our team members know that their contributions matter.

"Am I good enough?"

"Do I have what it takes?"

"Do I deserve to be here?"

"Do I matter?"

These are just some of the stories that play within our heads. It's an evolutionary function where we tend to overlook the positive and focus on the negative because our survival instincts assume that the consequence of overlooking the negative outweighs the consequences of overlooking the positive.

When people don't know that their contributions are valued, the deep human fear of not feeling worthy comes to bear.

And it's costly.

When people don't feel valued, they often disengage and withdraw. They take fewer interpersonal risks, and the team and organization miss out on their unique perspective and ideas.

When Contributions are Valued, Teams Align

When people feel valued, team members are more likely to listen to each other to understand; they're more likely to draw each other into the

conversation instead of pushing others away; they're more likely to appreciate differences of opinions and ideas.

As a result, teams are more likely to focus on alignment versus agreement. Agreement is the bi-product of overly protective fear-based behavior that teams focus on when they don't want others to feel upset, disappointed, or anxious about an outcome. It results in an aura of consensus that slows teams down in dealing with the complexity of our workplace in a meaningful way.

Instead of focusing on agreement, we encourage teams to focus on alignment, where there's productive dialogue and respectful debate. As a result, people remain engaged in conversation. At the end of the decision-making process, people can live with the decision because they feel like their contributions were valued. Their ideas were heard, even if they disagreed with the outcome or the ultimate decision.

When people feel valued, we're likely to see more aligned teams versus teams focused on agreement or consensus.

LEVEL #3
CONTRIBUTIONS
ARE VALUED

DRAW OTHERS IN

APPRECIATE DIFFERENCES

UNDERSTAND

ALIGNMENT

LISTEN

How to Ensure Contributions are Valued on Your Team

Team Exercise #1: Start with Wins

Teams that do this well don't leave recognition up to chance. Instead, they look for key milestones in advance to intentionally recognize people. Or, instead of jumping right into their meetings, they start with celebrating small wins.

Team Exercise #2: Link Recognition to Values

Make your recognition efforts even more valuable by linking a team member's behavior to a specific organizational value. This has three impacts. First, it reinforces the values that the organization stands for. Second, it helps the team member see the cause and effect of their behavior on the broader organizational culture. Third, it tells the team member that you are actually paying attention and have heard and seen a team member's contributions.

Team Exercise #3: Share How You Prefer to Be Recognized

Some people prefer the spotlight. Others despise it. Some do value sincere appreciation, while others don't require much of it. A simple exercise to help move everyone beyond a one-size-fits-all recognition campaign is to have each individual on your team get clear on how they prefer to be recognized and then share those preferences with other team members.

Leaders Are the Topic of Conversation at the Dinner Table

My father is an incredible man. He is sincere, genuine, vulnerable. He dedicated his life to ensuring my mother, three brothers, and I had everything we needed in life to thrive.

Meals were always a central part of our lives. At breakfast, we'd talk about what we would eat for lunch. During lunch, we'd do the same about dinner.

We sat at the dinner table almost every night together, and some of my clearest childhood memories were the conversations that ensued.

Almost inevitably, I would hear my Mother and Father catching up about the day and hear mention of the "Old Man," the nickname attributed to my father's boss and owner of the construction company where he worked. It was a nightly routine hearing about the trials and tribulations derived from the Old Man. And when my father was unexpectedly let go after 18 years of dedication to the Old Man and the company, the impact reverberated throughout the family for months and years to come.

Leaders should never forget the impact they have on people within and beyond the workplace. They are not only the topic of dinner-time conversation but can profoundly impact whether people feel like their contributions are valued.

How Leaders Ensure Human Contributions are Valued.

Creating an environment where people know that their contributions are valued requires leaders to shift their mindset, skillset, and habits.

Mindset

As with any leadership behavior, the mindset must evolve, or behavior change will not follow. To truly create an environment where employees feel valued, leaders must shift their magnifying glass. *We are very accustomed to and skilled at keeping the magnifying glass on what is not working. It takes a conscious effort to break this pattern and move the magnifying glass onto what is working.* Leaders also must see that:

- Even though they may not value recognition, others do.

- People want to know that they are enough and that they matter.

- Recognizing others is part of their role.

Skillset

Leaders who value the contributions that employees make in the workplace develop two key skillsets. First of all, they learn to personalize their recognition efforts and move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach based on

personality, preferences, motivations, and cultural differences.

Secondly, such leaders are specific with their recognition. They say more than "thanks" and "good job." Instead, these leaders link the positive behaviors they observed to how they impacted business goals and aligned with organizational values. Any acknowledgment or feedback is more powerful when it is made up of the observation and the impact. The observation sets the behavioral expectation, and the impact is the motivation to change.
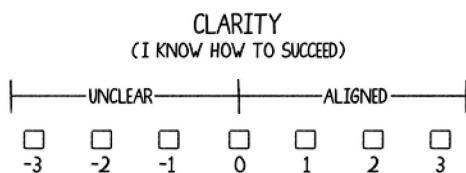
Valued Contribution Habits

To help your team members feel valued, consider:

- Implementing a recognition strategy
- Making daily recognition rounds
- Adapting how people are recognized based on their specific preferences
- Showing genuine interest in people's lives
- Making time for regular 1-1s, goal reviews, and coaching

- Rewarding team members when they model behavior that demonstrates they value other employees

- Setting behavioral expectations that align with clearly defined norms and values

- Organizing events outside of work where people can just be human

- Giving team members a voice by asking for and valuing their opinions

- Shift your focus from what is not working to what is working.

Chapter Four
Clarity of the What and How

CLARITY
(I KNOW HOW TO SUCCEED)

```
|——————UNCLEAR——————|——————ALIGNED——————|
   ☐       ☐       ☐       ☐       ☐       ☐       ☐
  -3      -2      -1       0       1       2       3
```

I was recently coaching an executive, discussing a situation she had with her CEO where she hadn't delivered to his expectations. When she asked the CEO for feedback, all he said was, "I'll know it when I see it."

Not helpful!

Unfortunately, this experience aligns with current workplace engagement data. For example, according to Gallup's work with companies worldwide, only about half of employees strongly agree that they know what is expected of them at work[vii]. Similarly, according to ThriveMap, 48% of workers left a

job because it wasn't what they thought it would be[viii].

People want — and need — to know *how* to succeed, both in terms of business results and cultural expectations. When team members do not have clarity on what's expected, it becomes a never-ending guessing game with one of two ultimate outcomes:

1. The employee fails in their role.
2. The employee becomes frustrated and seeks a different role inside or outside the organization.

When people understand the *what* and the *how,* they clearly see the connection of their work and the right behaviors to the bigger picture. Only then are they able to move forward with confidence.

Both the *What* and the *How* are Important

Most organizations are pretty effective at getting clear on the *what*. Clarity of the *what* refers to results-oriented expectations, ranging from sales or profit goals to meeting outcomes.

With clarity of the *what*, specific expectations are communicated and understood. People align around the unifying goals, target objectives, and key results for the organization, their functional area of the business, and their team. We can easily answer the following questions:

- What are the organization's unifying goals?

- What objectives and key results are expected at the functional and team levels?

- What are my performance objectives and key results for the quarter and/or year?

- What is it that we're trying to produce?

- What actions and decisions did we just decide upon at the conclusion of any given meeting?

Clarity of the *how* refers to behavioral norms and expectations and is more elusive for most organizations. The *how* is often unspoken, leaving employees to guess at cultural expectations.

With clarity of the *how*, people can understand the cultural guideposts that drive critical

decisions around hiring, developing, and transitioning employees. Norms on how people conduct meetings and engage in productive conflict are clear.

When the how is clear, people understand what is rewarded and criticized within the culture and how to succeed. They can answer these questions:

- What cultural values drive our hiring decisions?

- What behaviors does this organization reward and criticize?

- What norms guide how we run our meetings?

- What agreements enable us to engage in productive conflict?

Clarity of the *What* and *How* Enables Better People Development

Clarity on both the *what* and the *how* enables organizations to make better hiring decisions. Candidates are evaluated on both what they know and how they show up. For example, a candidate may be technically competent in her

role but not a good cultural fit. Or a candidate may be an excellent cultural fit but not have the technical chops to do their role well.

Clarity on both the *what* and the *how* enables organizations to make better coaching decisions. They move beyond the typical task list in development conversations to coach people on how to have better relationships and avoid potential career derailers.

Clarity on both the *what* and the *how* enables organizations to make better promotion decisions. People know the competencies expected in their current and next-level roles and have a pathway to get there.

Clarity of the *What* and the *How* Elevates Leadership Teams

Most teams don't have a stated purpose. Ask individual team members if they know *what* the reason is for their existence, and they'll give you an answer. However, it probably won't be the same *what* their other team members think.

When a leadership team lacks clarity on *what* they do and *how* they go about doing it, there

are unintended consequences. Two examples include:

- The team's make-up defaults to the direct reports to the senior leader instead of intentional team member selection.

- Meetings are often informational report-outs with little value added to problem-solving and decision-making.

But when a leadership team has clarity on their singular purpose, *what* they do and *how* they go about doing it, everything changes, from who is on the team to what gets on the team's agenda to behavioral expectations around accountability.

Clarity reduces guessing.

The Fear Behind Clarity

"The executive team is constantly changing priorities."

"I don't know where we are going. What's our vision?"

"Who has the decision rights?"

"What is expected of me?"

Regardless of how fear shows up when it comes to a lack of clarity of the *what* and *how*, the fear boils down to one core question –

How will I succeed?

And when people feel worried and stressed about their future, they tend to play things safe and are less likely to innovate.

The Future is *Un*clear

Our entire lives, we've learned that we need to be certain before moving forward.

In college, we were pushed to select a major so that we could get the right job.

We've been conditioned to be available for traditional work hours from, at least, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

We have annual goals, measure performance every 90 days, and evaluate our success based on a calendar year.

We prepare for retirement by the age of 65.

We have 2.5 kids, a white picket fence, and two automobiles in our driveway.

But what if life isn't that clear?

In a world where there may not be a playbook, the idea of clarity may just be an illusion. The challenge is that the human need to seek clarity still exists in a workplace where there may not be much clarity to provide.
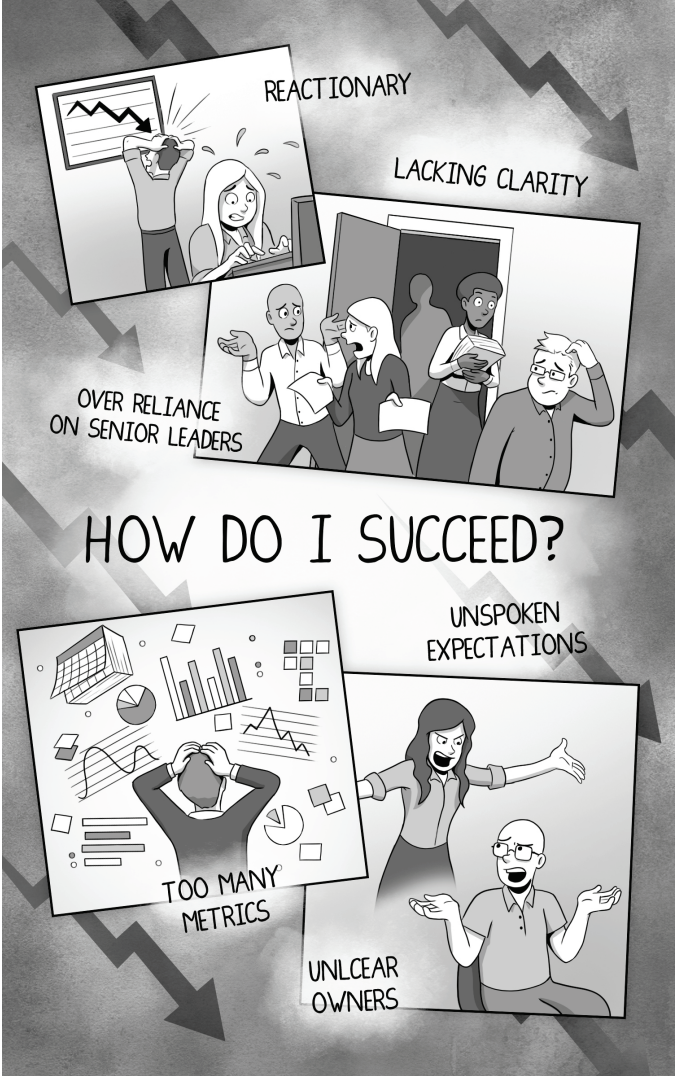
Maybe in the future, clarity will be about letting people know that the future may not actually be clear. It will constantly be changing, and that we will need to learn and adjust as we move forward.

Maybe clarity will be more about knowing the best next step and then adjusting from there to changing market conditions.

Maybe clarity will be more about sharing what we know and don't know and letting people know we are unclear about the future.

Maybe clarity is about acknowledging that we don't have all the answers and are learning along the way.

In a less human environment, people wouldn't feel comfortable doing that. And employees would feel less clear as a result.

CLEAR
OBJECTIVES

STEP 1
STEP 2
STEP 3

ORGANIZATIONAL
VALUES

LEVEL #4
CLARITY
OF THE WHAT AND HOW

UNDERSTAND
PURPOSE

ALIGN ON
KEY DECISIONS

GUIDE

RELENTLESSLY PROVIDE
CONTEXT

How to Create Clarity on Your Team

In a world of information overload and where everything seems to be a priority, it is challenging to focus on the aspects of work that matter most. So, here are some exercises to help your team gain clarity.

Team Exercise #1: Clarify Your Team's Purpose

Most teams don't truly know their purpose. Or, if they do, it's not documented and used to drive critical decisions. When a team has clarity of its purpose, it focuses on the right issues and operates at the right level.

To define your team's purpose, start by making a list of the areas that should be in the team's focus and areas that should not be in the team's focus. From there, create a team purpose statement that defines why the team exists and who it serves. Here's an example of a team purpose statement from a fast-growing technology company:

The Purpose of the Senior Leadership Team is to clearly define and communicate the

company's goals, promote and foster operational and innovative excellence across the business, and empower all employees to execute these stated goals in a safe and inclusive environment.

Team Exercise #2: Clarify Your Team's Sprint Goals

The most effective teams have clarity on their top three goals for any given 90-day period. I call these Sprint Goals.

To clarify your team's three Sprint Goals, ask each of your team members to write what they believe to be the team's top three goals for the next 90-day period on a separate sticky note. As each team member shares their goals, place them on a flip chart or online canvas that is easily visible. Consolidate similar goals, engage in dialogue about what is most important for the team to accomplish over the next 90-days, and then track the goals in your regular team meetings.

Team Exercise #3: Clarify Your Meeting Operating System

Much of the work a team accomplishes happens in meetings. But most meetings are incredibly inefficient and ineffective, resulting in team members yearning to get back to their "real work" outside of the meeting.

It doesn't have to be that way.

By defining the following five Ps for each of your team's meetings, your team will operate with more intention and remain focused on the most consequential areas of the business.

- Purpose – define the purpose for each meeting.

- Process – based on the purpose of the meeting, clarify how the meeting flows.

- Priority – each agenda item should have a clear priority (high, medium, low), a discussion owner, and a defined outcome ahead of time (Inform, Seek Input, Decide). Focus on top priorities first.

- Participants – clarify who should attend.

- Preparation – agree on the preparation that is expected of each team member before joining the meeting.

How Leaders Can Create Clarity of the *What* and *How*

There are several ways leaders can help team members meet the need to find clarity of the *what* and *how*.

Mindset

The mindset shift for most leaders is one from a problem orientation to an outcome orientation. Through surveys and my work with clients, I've found that people typically approach their work with a problem orientation. In other words, they see a problem, and they fix it. Then, they see another issue, and they fix that one too. It's a never-ending process of tension and relief as problems arise and the leader fixes them.

The leader, usually without knowing it, has a dysfunctional belief that leadership is about rescuing others instead of teaching, delegating,

and coaching. As a result, they can conceal their leadership weaknesses with their technical skills and often do so successfully!

The shift from a problem orientation to an outcome orientation requires leaders to broaden their perspective and take a more systematic approach to operate at the right level. It's an approach that requires leaders to

1. Think beyond their functional area.

2. Consider a long-term view.

3. Build people's capacity.

Skillset

To successfully create clarity of the *what* and *how* in your organization, leaders need three core skillsets.

One, they need a strategic thinking skillset to create unifying goals that span the entire organization.

Second, they need emotional intelligence to stay in conversation with peers who have competing priorities.

Third, they need skills to provide feedback and feedforward to keep people on track with organizational direction.

Clarity Habits

A leader demonstrates their mindset and skillset through what they do consistently. Some examples of habits that create clarity include:

Establishing the *What*

- Ensure roles are clear.

- Define unifying goals linked to team objectives and key results.

- Confirm that everyone has input into and clarity of their individual objectives and key results.

- Create transparency by sharing goals publicly.

- Establish team norms so people know what leadership expects in meetings.

- Conduct regular 1-1s to provide feedback and feedforward with all team members.

Establishing the *How*

- Meet with all new employees to help them understand the culture, values, and norms.

- Onboard new team members by sharing team norms, productive conflict expectations, and other team agreements.

- Share personality styles so that team members understand each other's tendencies and preferences.

Reflections for Your Team

No one should have to guess *what* is expected from them in the workplace, and they certainly shouldn't be guessing about *how* they are performing.

Do Your People Have Clarity?

Assess your organizational environment here. On a scale of 1 through 5, where 5 represents "almost always" and 1 represents "almost never", how would you rate the culture of Clarity in your organization?

1. We understand our singular purpose as a team.

2. Team goals and priorities are clear.

3. We align on key decisions and actions at the end of meetings.

4. We have a clear set of norms that guide our interactions.

Chapter Five
Challenge and Growth

CHALLENGE
(I AM GROWING)

|———STAGNATION———|———EVOLUTION———|
-3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
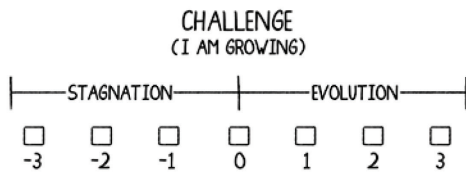
In a recent coaching conversation, I could hear the tension in my client's voice. The job was easy, and she enjoyed the work-life balance, but she wasn't done yet. She wasn't ready to retire and be satisfied with the easy road ahead.

Throughout her career, she'd felt challenged in her role in public policy. But, even though her current job came with the essential responsibilities of managing day-to-day operations at a small start-up, it didn't provide her with the challenge and growth she needed to find true fulfillment in her work.

According to the book *Flow, The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, enjoyable events occur when a person has not only met some prior

expectation or satisfied a need or a desire but also gone beyond what he or she has been programmed to do and achieved something unexpected, perhaps something even unimagined before.[ix]

For my client, even though the work conditions all met her core human workplace needs of connection, certainty, valued contributions, and clarity, something was missing. She wasn't evolving as a human being.

She was bored.

She eventually left the organization and found a new role that leveraged her experience and provided new challenges that enabled her to grow.

Grow or Stagnate

When organizations meet the first four Core needs – Connection, Certainty, Contributions, and Clarity – they can focus on the last two needs – the needs of Fulfillment.

These fulfillment needs are the kind that result in meaningful and purpose-driven work and

ultimately higher levels of engagement and productivity with team members.

In business and life, we either grow or stagnate. There is no in-between.

Unfortunately, many corporate environments suck the soul out of us. They drain our energy. They fail to provide the growth and challenge that we seek. They don't nurture an environment where people can reach their highest potential and significantly impact this world. So, it's not surprising when we see Gallup citing that about 70 percent of employees are disengaged consistently year over year[x].

It doesn't have to be that way.

The Need for Continuing Development

When our world was much less complex, the concept of preparing for a career and then excelling in your career was reasonably straightforward. We went to college for four years, studied a subject, and then engaged in a 30-plus year career. Today, much of what students learn at the university level is often

outdated or no longer relevant by the time they graduate from college.

According to Lynda Gratton in an MIT Sloan article, "People will need to engage in work that has development opportunities built into it, be prepared to spend some of their leisure time upskilling, and probably take significant chunks of time out of work to learn a new skill.[xi]"

Continually investing in personal and professional development comes naturally for most entrepreneurs who know they only have themselves to rely on for ongoing learning and development. For example, I regularly spend $15,000 - $30,000 per year on my personal development. But in the corporate workplace, most people rely on their employers to provide those learning opportunities.

Challenge and Growth on a Team

The great news is that most people want to learn. They want to grow and develop, and the very complexity of our workplace today offers plenty of options to fulfill this human workplace need.

For example, Dan, a Director of Engineering with global responsibility, has been experimenting with a philosophy of 'empowerment as recognition.' In other words, he gives people more responsibility and more challenging engineering assignments to recognize their achievements. As they build new capabilities, their confidence soars, and he can offer stretch assignments that further exceed what his team members ever thought was possible. As a result, he's not only building skills and knowledge but also developing his people's creativity.

When teams create an environment where the human workplace meets and nurtures the need for challenge, people feel like they are making progress and start to feel a more profound sense of fulfillment at work.

The Fear Behind Challenge

In Chapter 4, Contributions are Valued, we explored the fear of not being good enough. It was a fear of not being worthy, one of our deepest fears as human beings.
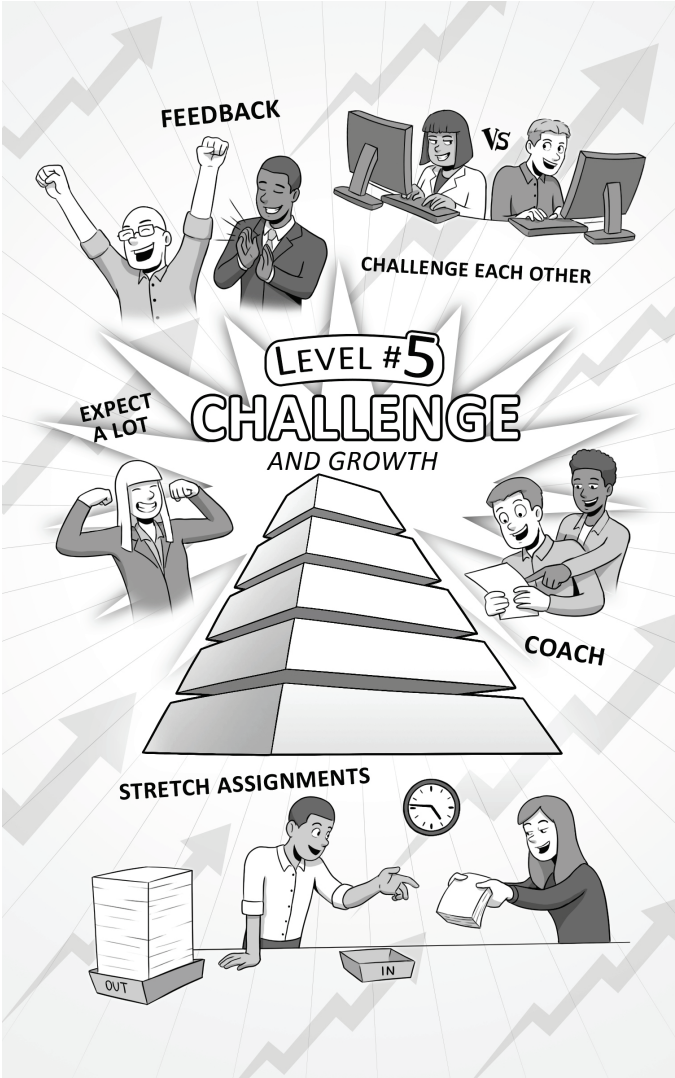
The fear behind the human workplace's need for challenge and growth is about the future and not being good enough or worthy at some future date. The challenge with this fear is that it invokes a sense of loss that hasn't yet happened and can become overly exaggerated.

When people feel that their future self won't be good enough, it can result in very controlling and protective behavior, especially when the information has to do with it. People start to treat others on a need-to-know basis. They keep each other in the dark, and in many cases, become over-reliant on the team's senior leader, causing a complete breakdown of the flow of information and ideas.

However, when the team and organizational environment makes people feel like they're being challenged, growing, and have a future path, team members create opportunities to learn from one another rather than being protective of their functional business area. They challenge each other and provide each other with regular feedback and feedforward. As a result, people become more open to stretch roles and assignments, and team members

embrace and expect coaching from each other and their manager.

Team Tools and Exercises

The great news is that creating an environment that meets the human workplace's need for challenge and growth doesn't have to be expensive or complex. Here are three tools you can implement immediately on your team that won't cost you a dime.

Tool #1: The Mid-Point Check

This simple tool is a great way to improve your team meeting dynamics. Halfway through your meeting, stop the conversation and ask the following two questions to explore where team dynamics are strong and where they can improve.

1. What is currently working in our team dynamics that we want to continue in the second half of the meeting?

2. What should we do more of, less of, or differently to have a more productive meeting?

Tool #2: Share Resources

Team members can challenge each other by sharing interesting articles, frameworks, and other resources about their industry, the future of work, leadership skills, or anything that will help people grow. For example, we recently worked with an IT team that sponsored monthly lunch and learn meetings where different team members shared information about new and emerging technologies. Almost everyone attended these optional learning events.

Tool #3: Embrace A Feedforward Mentality

Feedforward is a concept popularized by Marshall Goldsmith[xii]. In comparison to feedback, which focuses on the past, feedforward is about sharing ideas and suggestions for the future. People can't change their past, but they can change their future. We find that when team members coach each other with a feedforward mentality, they are more likely to challenge others in more supportive and readily accepted ways.

How Leaders Can Challenge Others

Mindset

The mindset shift for most leaders is to see people's development as a critical part of their role. They also need to understand the balance between providing too much challenge where a team member becomes overwhelmed and anxious and not enough challenge where the team member becomes bored and stagnant. Leaders need to develop a mindset that accepts the differences between people – not just based on personality type – but also on competence and individual career goals.

Skillset

Leaders need three critical skills to help team members on the optimal path toward challenge and growth.

First, they need to have career-enhancing conversations with people to understand what's important to them, how they want to progress, and the opportunities that exist both within and outside of the organization.

Second, they need situational leadership skills to match their leadership approach to their people's competence and confidence level – finding the flow between anxiety and boredom.

Third, they need to set clear expectations and provide feedback and feedforward so that team members experience the right level of support without feeling micromanaged.

Habits

There's a framework in the organizational development world called 70/20/10 that says[xiii]:

- 70% of what people learn at work comes from job-related experiences

- 20% from interactions with others

- 10% from formal training programs, books, and events.

Great leaders create daily habits that intentionally support the 70/20/10 principle by providing stretch assignments, increased responsibility, and lateral job movements to support job-related learning experiences. In

addition, they conduct one-on-one's, provide regular feedback and job shadowing to support learning through interactions with others. And they help facilitate development through workshops, online resources, articles, podcasts, and more.

Reflections for Your Team

In this complex world that we live in, there's always an opportunity for people to learn and grow. So, I encourage you to find new ways every day or every week to challenge people and expose them to something new.

Are your people being challenged and growing?

Assess your organizational environment here. On a scale of 1 through 5, where 5 represents "almost always" and 1 represents "almost never", how would you rate the culture of Challenge and growth in your organization?

1. We create opportunities to learn from each other instead of being protective of our functional area.

2. Team members expect a lot, and they tolerate very little.

3. Team members challenge each other and provide each other with regular feedback and feedforward.

4. The team views failure as an opportunity to learn.

Chapter Six
Community Impact

COMMUNITY IMPACT
(I KNOW MY PURPOSE)

|——TRANSACTIONAL——|——MEANINGFUL——|

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
-3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
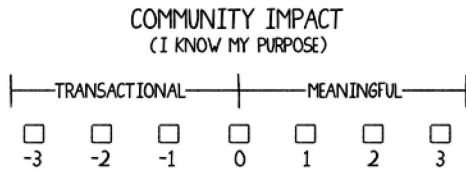
My mom recently passed away. As I sat at her bedside in the hospital, there was a deep sense of sadness and looming loss.

However, there wasn't regret.

She lived her life surrounded by family and friends and made a positive difference in many people's lives. Some small, some large. And at her funeral, people from all walks of life arrived, telling stories of how my mom took them into her home, gave them a warm meal or bed, and was a second mother to them when their own didn't show up.

That's purpose. That's impact.

My mother may not have done everything in life that she wanted to do, but I can guarantee that she lived with meaning.

Steve Jobs once said, "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."

The opportunity is now, right in front of us, to make a more significant difference in the world. We only get one chance, so we might as well try to make this world a better place.

Community Impact

The sixth and highest-level human workplace need is community impact. It's the second of the two fulfillment needs. It is the need to make a positive difference in our community, society, and world.

Business as a Platform for Good

When people know their work has an impact beyond themselves, it gives them more profound meaning and purpose. It enables them to tap into their most authentic selves, inspiring

a drive that can never come from a heavy-handed or top-down approach.

According to a Cone Communications employee engagement study, 74% of people say their job is more fulfilling when they receive opportunities to make a positive impact at work[xiv].

Business can become a platform for doing well for our shareholders and doing good for our world, and there are so many great organizations that are making a positive difference in our world:

- Salesforce donates one percent of their profits, products, and people's time to support the community.

- Patagonia takes a stand by making "without compromise commitments" to the preservation of the environment.

- New Belgium Brewing, initially founded in Colorado, created The Mighty Arrow Foundation, which evaluates and administers grants in four broad focus areas: Climate Change, Food Systems,

> Land & Water Stewardship, and Social Justice.

Every business and organization has the opportunity to tap into this human need and make a positive difference.

Use Your Unique Platform and Skills

But, there's always a tension between playing it safe and living with purpose. So many organizations don't take a stand for something bigger.

Even if your organization doesn't embrace a philosophy of positively impacting our community, you can meet this human need yourself by impacting the people around you like your manager, direct reports, peers, and/or others.

I was working with an influential technology executive who was passionate about making a bigger impact in the world, but her company only focused on the bottom line and shareholder economic value. She told me in a coaching conversation that when she retired, she wanted to be a professor. I asked her what she loved

about the idea of being a professor, and her energy levels rose as she told me about being able to teach young people and help shape their thinking.

In response, I asked her, "Why don't you just take all of the aspects you love about being a professor and do those things in the workplace now?"

Her impact became incalculable as she found a new purpose in her role.

The opportunity is now, right in front of each of us, to make a more significant difference in our world.

RALLY AROUND A COMMON CAUSE

CONCERN OVER CUSTOMER

LEVEL #6
COMMUNITY
IMPACT

SEEK DIFFERENCE MAKING

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

IMPACT LOCAL & GLOBAL

Team Tool: Storytelling

When someone's passion aligns with what an organization values, their commitment grows exponentially.

One simple tool that teams can use is storytelling – how the organization's people, processes, or products made a difference in others' lives or impacted our community. To tell a good story, share the specifics, describe the impact, and link it to organizational values and goals. Then, ask others to do the same.

How Leaders Can Encourage Community Impact

Leaders at all levels can create the right conditions for people to create shareholder value and do good for the community and society in which we live.

To do so, leaders must think about their mindset, skillset, and daily habits.

Mindset

The mindset shift for most leaders is to realize that doing well and doing good are not mutually exclusive. We can create shareholder wealth and also make a positive impact in our world.

For example, brands with a high sense of purpose have experienced a brand valuation increase of 175% over the past 12 years, compared to the median growth rate of 86% and the 70% growth rate for brands with a low sense of purpose (Kantar Consulting's new Purpose 2020 report)[xv].

And as younger generations become a more considerable influence in our work environment, this mindset shift will be even more critical. Studies have shown that millennials and generation Z are very concerned about the environment and their communities[xvi].

Skillset

Leaders need three skillsets to effectively leverage work to make a bigger impact on their community.

First, they need to have a vision for what can become possible between business and life. They must see how they can impact people and the community and do it in a way that also positively impacts the company and shareholders.

Second, they must be able to engage with a variety of stakeholders through storytelling effectively. For example, taking on corporate social responsibility initiatives may involve influencing board members and other executive leaders and showing people how doing well and doing good can impact both the business and community.

Third, leaders need to build a strong network with a broad set of constituents so that they can tap into resources that may otherwise not be available to bring the vision to life.

Daily Habits

Leaders who fulfill the higher-level need for community impact tend to have a daily ritual that sets up their day for success and keeps them focused on a higher-level purpose.

Great leaders start their day with intention instead of waking late, checking email, and immediately reacting to outside influences. It could be through meditation or yoga. Maybe it is through journaling, gratitude, and visualization. Whatever the method, making the space to tap into what's happening internally with you will enable you to lead externally with more clarity and meaning.

Reflections for Your Team

How is your team doing? Is there a deeper sense of purpose and commitment to the larger community? Are you tapping into this human workplace need to make a community impact?

Assess your organizational environment here.

On a scale of 1 through 5, where 5 represents "almost always" and 1 represents "almost never", how would you rate the culture of Community impact in your organization?

1. I find a deep sense of purpose in the work we do as a team.

2. Team members put the team and organizational results above their individual and functional needs.

3. Our work is making a positive difference in this world.

4. We, as an organization, take a stand for something meaningful.

Summary
The Deeply Human Workplace

Humanness is Your Competitive Advantage

As our world becomes more complex, our humanness will not only become more important — it is our competitive advantage. When you implement the 6 Cs of the Human *Workplace* Needs model in your organization, your people will feel more connected, enabling them to move faster and more agile. There will be a more profound sense of certainty and safety, allowing people to talk about the conversations that matter most. People will feel valued and, in return, be more committed. They will have more clarity in what they work on and how they work, enabling greater velocity and focus. And with a sense of challenge, growth, and community impact, they will feel a deeper sense of purpose and find more meaning in their work, contributing to higher levels of engagement and productivity.
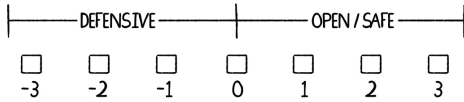
But Some Won't Make it

Unfortunately, most organizations will see our humanness as soft. As a result, they won't connect the economic value that better human-to-human communication and relationships can accelerate. And they won't see the multiplier impact when people work through complexity together.

As a result, they'll experience more siloed working environments. People will still rely on old methods for finding solutions to unsolved problems. They'll continue to use thinking and teaming strategies that only work in the past's predictable and uncomplicated world. As a result, tension will rise, overwhelm will increase, and good talent will seek organizations that think more progressively.

CONNECTION
(I BELONG)

	GUARDED			TRUSTING		
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

CERTAINTY
(I FEEL SAFE)

	DEFENSIVE			OPEN / SAFE		
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

CONTRIBUTIONS VALUED
(I MATTER)

	IGNORED			VALUED		
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

CLARITY
(I KNOW HOW TO SUCCEED)

	UNCLEAR			ALIGNED		
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

My Hope for You

There is still time.

My hope for you is that the 6 Cs of the Human *Workplace* Needs Model can guide a change in culture as you change the business. After all, it will be the humans that will have to execute the business strategy.

My vision for the workplace of the future – and the world I would like to live in – values a deeply human environment.

It's a world where people can bring their whole self to work, make a positive difference, and succeed in their own way, where people can find a place of belonging and connection and can benefit economically at the same time.

6 C's Summary

Connection with People

What is it? Connection is the need to belong and feel loved.

Why is it important? Connection becomes the foundation for agility and speed. When people feel connected, they're much more likely to take risks, tell you the truth, and engage in the conversations that matter most.

Common fear: Feeling like you don't belong or are not loved.

How to build connection on your team:

- Share your top 2 human workplace needs

- Share your top and bottom 5%

- Create a shared experience

Actions leaders can take:

- Create space for people to consistently spend time together

- Make time for regular 1-1s, goal reviews, and coaching

- Demonstrate genuine interest and care in people

- Reward team members when they model interest and care for others

- Develop team norms that bring out the best in people

- Set behavioral expectations that align with clearly defined norms and values

- Organize events outside of work where people can just be human

- Admit mistakes

- Give team members a voice

Certainty as a Result of Safety

What is it? Certainty is the need to feel physically and psychologically safe.

Why is it important? When people feel safe, creativity thrives. New ideas emerge. Safety allows people's unique ideas and perspectives to shine through.

Common fear? Not feeling safe. When team members operate out of fear, it becomes much more challenging to navigate the complexity and constant change in the workplace. Issues simmer under the surface, the meeting after the meeting occurs, and people revisit decisions over and over and over again. And on top of it all, people feel dissatisfied in their roles.

How to build certainty on your team:

- Create productive conflict norms
- Understand personality differences

Actions leaders can take:

- Give permission to engage in productive and healthy conflict.

- Reward team members when they take interpersonal risks.

- Create team agreements that define how people will work together, engage in conflict, make decisions and hold each other accountable.

- Provide meeting agendas and pre-reads in advance so that people have time to

process and prepare and can engage in lively dialogue during meetings.

Contributions are Valued

What is it? The need to feel valued, have your voice heard, and know your opinions count.

Why is it important? When people feel valued, team members are more likely to listen to each other to understand; they're more likely to draw each other into the conversation instead of pushing others away; they're more likely to appreciate differences of opinions and ideas.

Common fear? Not feeling worthy. When people don't feel valued, they often disengage and withdraw. They take fewer interpersonal risks, and the team and organization miss out on their unique perspective and ideas.

How to ensure people feel valued on your team:

- Start with wins
- Link recognition to values
- Share how you prefer to be recognized

Actions leaders can take:

- Implementing a recognition strategy

- Making daily recognition rounds

- Adapting how people are recognized based on their specific preferences

- Showing genuine interest in people's lives

- Making time for regular 1-1s, goal reviews, and coaching

- Rewarding team members when they model behavior that demonstrates they value other employees

- Setting behavioral expectations that align with clearly defined norms and values

- Organizing events outside of work where people can just be human

- Giving team members a voice by asking for and valuing their opinions

Clarity of the *What* and *How*

What is it? Clarity of the *what* is the need to understand the expected outcomes. Clarity of

the *how* is the need to understand behavioral norms and expectations.

Why is it important? When people understand the *what* and the *how,* they clearly see the connection of their work and the right behaviors to the bigger picture.

Common fear: Not knowing how to succeed

How to build Clarity on your team:

- Clarify your team's purpose.
- Clarify your team's sprint goals.
- Clarify your meeting operating system.

Actions leaders can take:

- Ensure roles are clear.
- Define unifying goals linked to team objectives and key results.
- Confirm that each individual has input into and clarity of their individual objectives and key results.
- Create transparency by sharing goals publicly.

- Establish team norms so people know what leadership expects in meetings.

- Conduct regular 1-1s to provide feedback and feedforward with all team members.

Challenge and Growth

What is it? The need to grow and evolve.

Why is it important? When people feel like they are progressing, they experience a deeper sense of fulfillment at work.

Common fear: That I will not be good enough in the future.

How to build Challenge and Growth on your team:

- The Mid-point Check

- Share resources

- Embrace a feedforward mentality

Actions Leaders Can Take:

- Leverage the 70/20/10 framework to provide stretch assignments, increased responsibility, and lateral job movements

to support job-related learning experiences.

- Conduct one-on-one's, provide regular feedback and job shadowing to support learning through interactions with others.

- Help facilitate development through workshops, online resources, articles, podcasts, and more.

Community Impact

What is it? The need to make a positive difference in our community, our society, and our world.

Why is it important? When people know their work has an impact beyond themselves, it gives them more profound meaning and purpose. It enables them to tap into their most authentic selves, inspiring a drive that can never come from a heavy-handed or top-down approach.

Common fear: Regret not living a life of meaning.

How to inspire community impact on your team: Storytelling

Actions leaders can take: Start your day with intention

Additional Resources

Here's what you can do next to discover more about the ideas we explored in this book.

Step 1: Watch this 9-minute video and download this free toolkit to identify your top human workplace needs.
www.512solutions.com/humanworkplacebook

Step 2: On the same page, download our **Human *Workplace* Needs Team Survey** to understand your team's current state and identify specific actions to move your team forward.
512solutions.com/humanworkplacebook

Step 3: Schedule an Insight Session where we'll explore the outcomes you want to see in your organization and whether our services are a fit to help accelerate your results.

Email **info@512solutions.com.**

In 2016 Sal and his team launched the first of its kind, cloud-based coaching application, Coachmetrix. It is designed to optimize and measure behavioral change in leadership development programs.

Prior to launching 5.12 Solutions, Sal was an executive at Accenture. He is a graduate of the US Army Ranger and Airborne schools and served as an Army Officer.

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Sal Silvester is the founder and president of 5.12 Solutions Consulting Group, a coaching, consulting, and training organization based in Boulder, Colorado. For more than 20 years, Sal and his colleagues have supported leaders and teams through grounded, real-world practices and techniques. Their best-in-class team development, executive coaching, and leadership development programs are centered around creating a more healthy, aligned, and human workplace.

Sal is a blogger, podcast host, keynote speaker, and author of three other books:

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- *Ignite! The 4 Essential Rules for Emerging Leaders*

- *Unite! The 4 Mindset Shifts for Senior Leaders*