



**NNAHRA**  
NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HUMAN RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

# 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

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September 25-27, 2023





# Carefully Cultivating a People-First Culture

Facilitated by Niki Ramirez  
September 2023





# *6 Keys to Cultivating a People-First Culture for HR Professionals*



# What we'll explore today:



**1 – Care & Compassion in the Workplace**



**2 -Establishing a people-centered physical environment**



**3- How to get Grounded in in Growth-Mindset**



**4- Getting connected: How to really get to know your employees**



**5 - The Equity-Based Leadership Equation**



**6 - Increasing psychological safety and mental well-being at work**



# Care & Compassion in the Workplace







“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

~ *Leo Buscaglia*





# 1) What Are Care & Compassion?

- **Care:** The act of displaying kindness.
- **Compassion:** Providing emotional support and engagement.




# 9-Things to Say to Provide Emotional Support

1. **Show interest in assisting:** How can I help you get through this?
2. **Calling out their courage:** Thank you for trusting me with this. It means a lot to me.
3. **Clarifying:** From what I'm hearing, you are feeling X. Is that right?
4. **Convey that you trust them:** You know yourself best, what do you think would be most helpful to you right now?
5. **Acknowledging their pain:** That must be hard.
6. **Reflective listing:** So, you feel that your manager was not fair in their decision?
7. **Offering Support:** I'll work with you to solve this.
8. **Be encouraging:** You're strong... I believe in you!
9. **Checking In:** How are you feeling today?



# Establishing a People-Centered Physical Environment





“The  
environment is  
everything that  
isn’t in me.”

*~ Albert Einstein*

## 2) The Importance of Physical Environment

- ☐ Entryways
  - ☐ Office equipment
  - ☐ Break rooms
  - ☐ Conference rooms and shared spaces
  - ☐ Restrooms
  - ☐ Lactation rooms
  - ☐ Gyms & Meditation Rooms
  - ☐ Workrooms
  - ☐ Lighting
  - ☐ Textures
  - ☐ Smells
  - ☐ Temperature
  - ☐ Natural elements
  - ☐ Your Turn. What else?
- 
- 






The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a tree trunk, showing intricate concentric growth rings in shades of brown, tan, and dark blue. A white circle is positioned on the left side, containing the title text.

# Getting Grounded in Growth Mindset



HR Answers





We must know  
ourselves to  
know and help  
others.

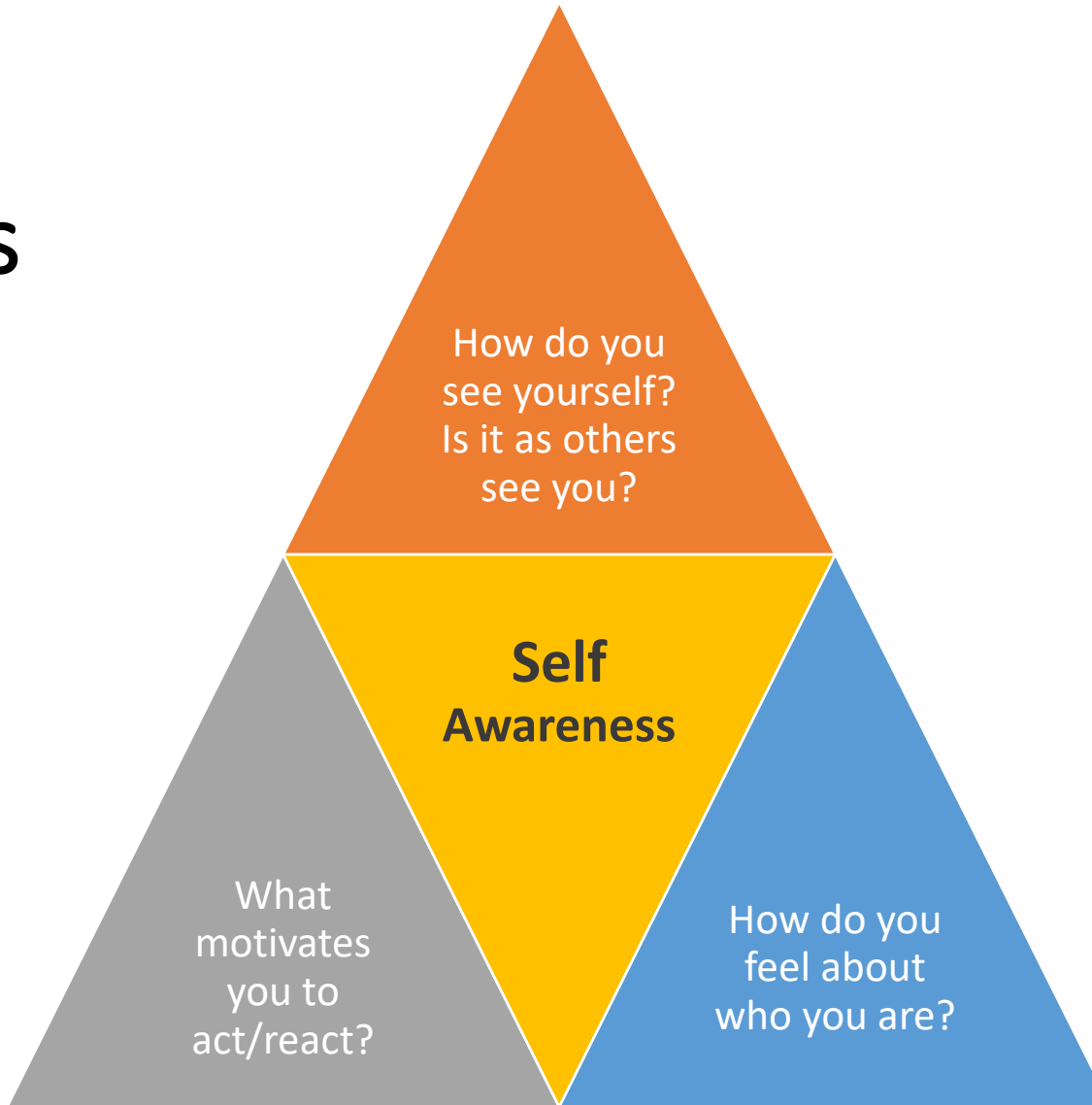
*~ Niki Ramirez*

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# The Self-Awareness Triangle



“Intrinsic motivation allows us to  
perform at our very best.”

~ Stefan Falk

*(Harvard Business Review, March 8, 2023)*







### 3) Getting Grounded in Growth-Mindset

- Encourage people to use their strengths and instincts
- Offer a wide variety of training workshops
- “Certify” your employees internally
- Send employees out to explore the world
- Host innovation sessions
- Encourage downtime to recharge
- Spark curiosity
- Lead by example







# Getting Connected: *How to really get to know your employees*



## 4) How to demonstrate connection.

- Be an excellent listener.
- Express your love, care, and concern.
- Be congruent (share how you really feel, tactfully)
- Remain curious (always ask to learn more)

A photograph of two young women taking a selfie on a rooftop at sunset. The woman on the left is holding a smartphone high in the air, and both women are smiling and looking at the camera. The woman on the right has curly hair and is wearing a denim jacket. The background shows a city skyline with buildings and hanging string lights. The text "Focus on Connecting" is overlaid in the center.

Focus on Connecting





1:00

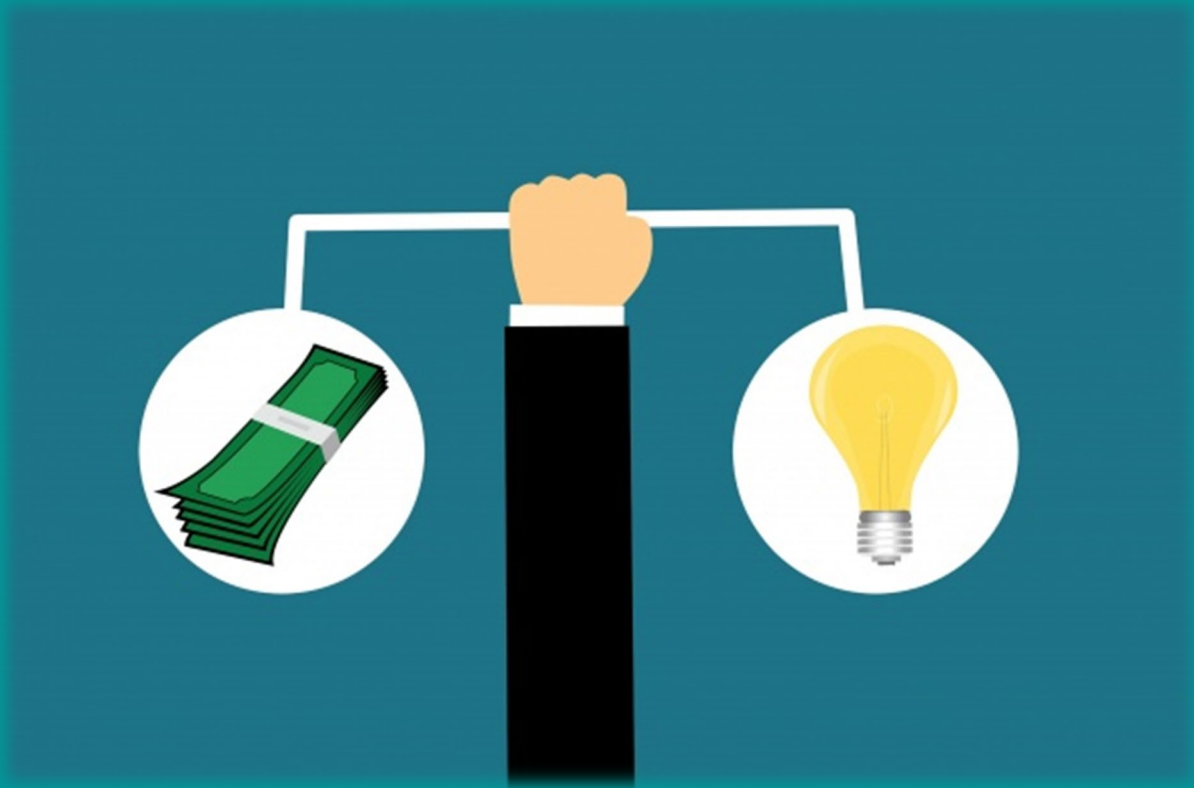
# Really Connecting with Your Team Requires 2 Things:

1. **Budgeted time and resources** to connect and learn about one another
2. A willingness to go deep – **3 Parts of Every Employee's Mind!**





# Budgeting Time & Other Resources



- Plan a year in advance: Annual Plan + Quarterly Goals + Daily Tasks
- Align your requests with your mission, values, and goals
- When budgeting money, consider the cost of turnover (33% of annual salary)
- Consider the benefits of innovation and inspiration

# Three Parts of the Mind

**1 - Personality /  
Feeling**

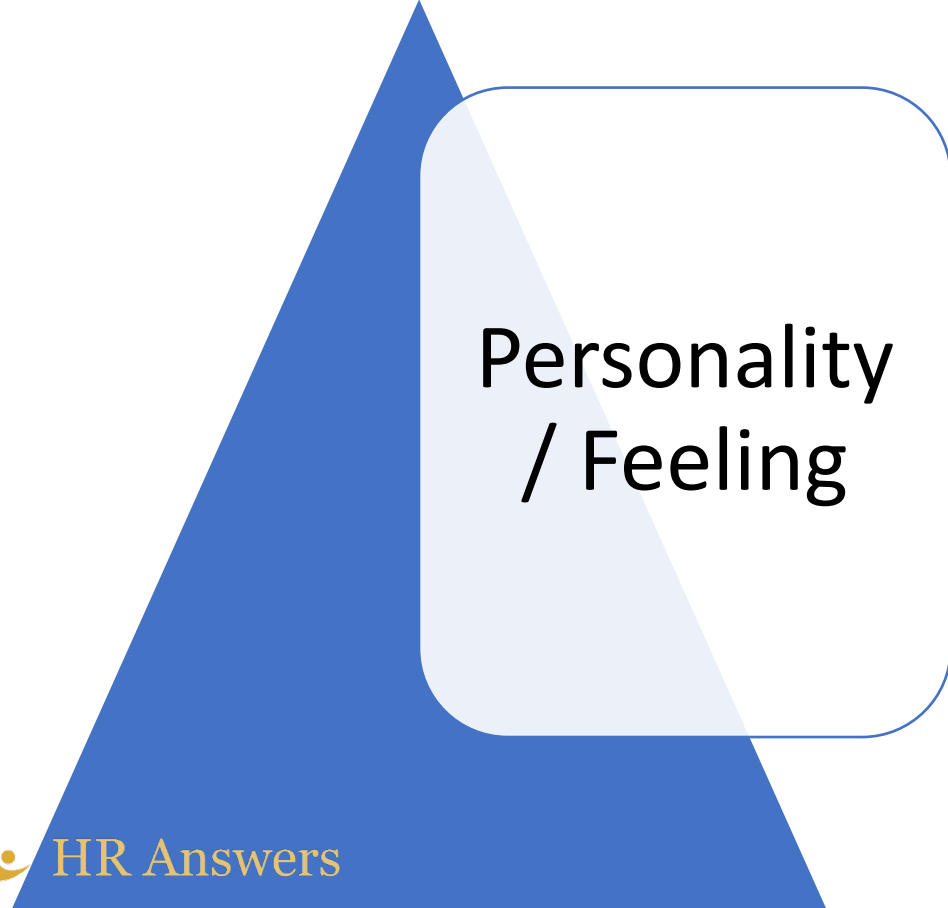
**2 - Thinking /  
Cognitive**

**3 - Doing /  
Instinctual**



# Three Parts of the Mind:

## Part 1 - Personality



Personality  
/ Feeling

- Desires
- Likes / Dislikes
- Attitudes
- Preferences
- Emotions
- Values

# Three Parts of the Mind:

## 1 –Assessing Personality



Personality  
/ Feeling

### Trusted Personality Assessments Include:

- Myers-Briggs
- DISC
- Colors



# Three Parts of the Mind:

## Part 2 – Knowing & Thinking



Thinking/  
Cognitive

- Skills
- Reason
- Knowledge
- Experience
- Education
- IQ

# Three Parts of the Mind:

## 2 – Measuring Knowing & Thinking



Thinking/  
Cognitive

### Assessed by:

- Courses with grades
- Certifications (PHR, SHRM-, THRP)
- IQ tests
- Workplace knowledge and skill tests



# Three Parts of the Mind:

## Part 3 - Doing



Doing/  
Instincts

- Necessity
- Innate force
- Talents
- Drive
- Mental energy

# Three Parts of the Mind:

## 3 Indexing Doing



Doing/  
Instincts

### **Assessed by:**

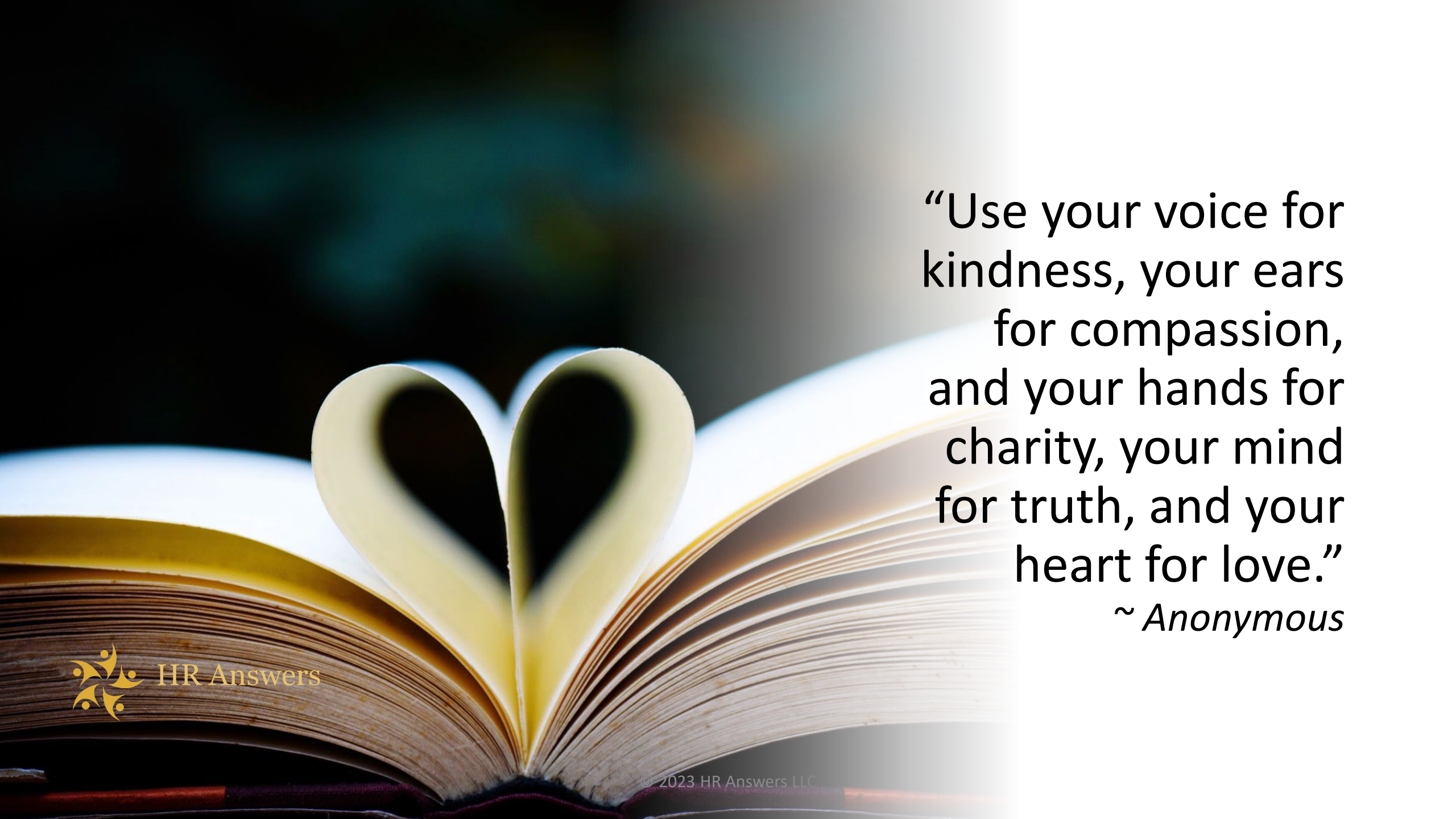
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# Increasing Psychological Safety & Mental Well-Being at Work



HR Answers

An open book is shown from a low angle, with the pages fanned out. The central part of the book is folded to create a heart shape. The background is dark and out of focus.

“Use your voice for  
kindness, your ears  
for compassion,  
and your hands for  
charity, your mind  
for truth, and your  
heart for love.”

~ *Anonymous*



HR Answers



# 5) Increasing Psychological Safety & Mental Well-Being at Work



Encourage people to do things their own way and follow their instincts



Normalize not remembering and need to re-learn



Expect and support employee mistakes



Embrace failure as an opportunity for growth

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# Increasing Psychological Safety & Mental Well-Being at Work

## Questions to ask employees:

- What is something that you're stuck on? How can I help?
- What resources are hard to find or missing that might help?
- What might be a better way for you to solve this problem/accomplish this task?
- How can I better support you?
- What am I doing that is getting in your way?





*Increasing  
Psychological  
Safety &  
Mental Well-  
Being at Work:*  
**Language  
Matters**



Refine



Adjust



Enhance



Suggested edits



Considerations



HR Answers



# The Equity-Based Leadership Equation

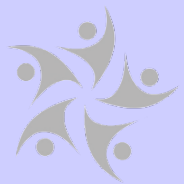


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*Every single person  
deserves to feel that they  
belong at work because of  
who they are.*

*~ Anonymous*



HR Answers

## 6) Equity-Based Leadership is SIMPLE

S Create each employee's **SUCCESS PLAN**

I Provide **INDIVIDUAL** support

M Create and **MEASURE** progress

P **PARTICIPATE** and support

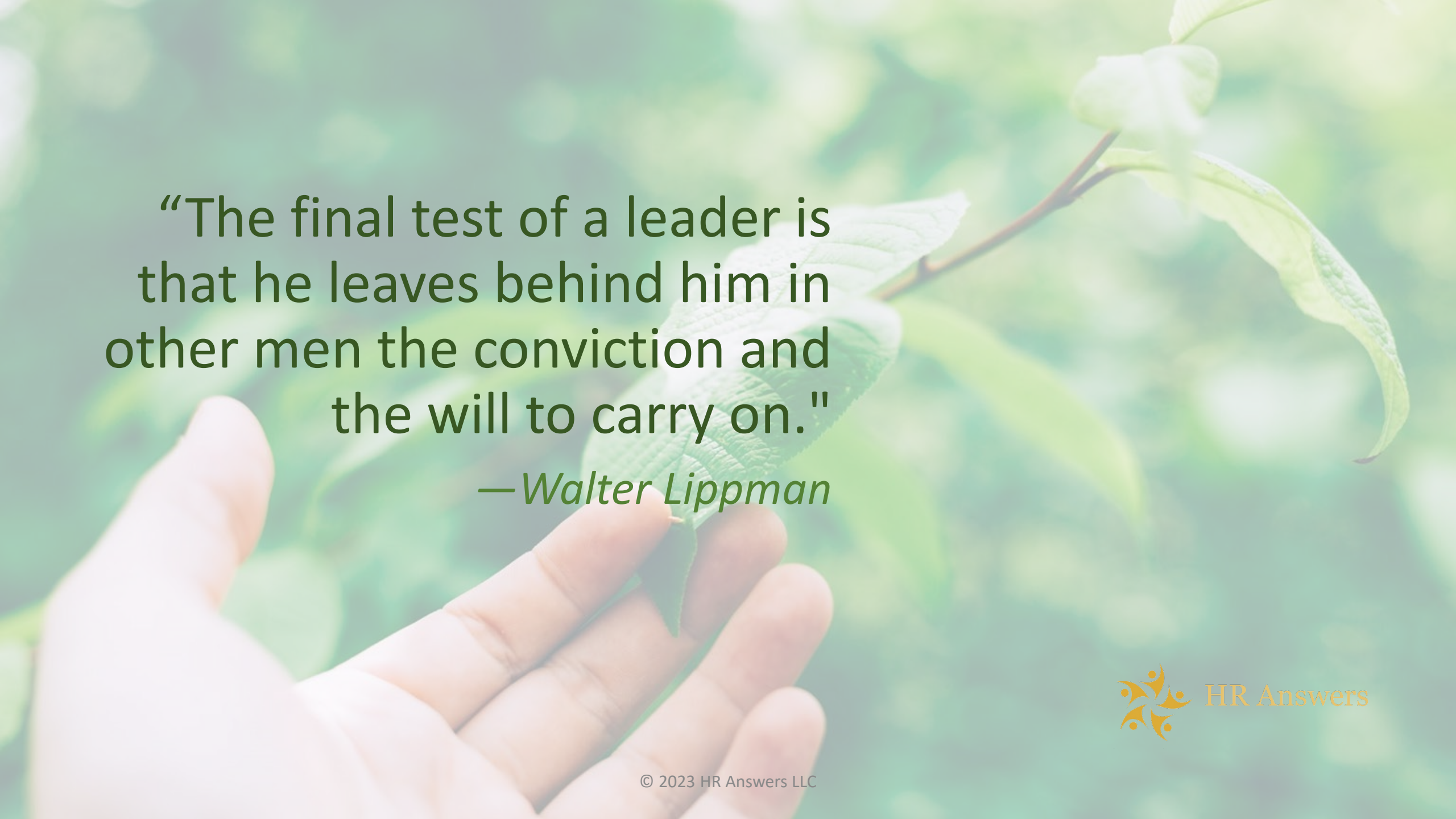
L Pave the way for continued to **LEARNING**

E **EXPERIMENT** to find what works



# Goal Setting



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a single green leaf. The hand is positioned in the lower-left foreground, with fingers gently cupping the leaf. The leaf is bright green and has a prominent vein pattern. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a dense forest or garden setting. The overall lighting is natural and soft, creating a serene and hopeful atmosphere.

“The final test of a leader is  
that he leaves behind him in  
other men the conviction and  
the will to carry on.”

—*Walter Lippman*





# What we covered ...

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- ✓ 6 Keys to Cultivating a People-First Culture at Work
- ✓ Ideas for showing compassion, kindness, empathy
- ✓ Ways to really get to know your team members
- ✓ SIMPLE Equity-Based Leadership
- ✓ Practical steps and considerations, like policies, great job descriptions, team charters, etc.



# Let's Keep the Conversation Going.

*Connect with me:*

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HRAnswers.org

Our Mission: Your people.



## Your Facilitator:

**Niki Ramirez, MBA/PHR/SHRM-CP/THRP**

- I'm a certified human resources consultant and Certified Kolbe Consultant. I'm also the founder of HRAnswers.org. At HRAnswers.org, we focus on providing practical, impactful HR consultation to business leaders and HR professionals so that they can relax, focus on, and crush their goals.
- That said, we believe that professional human resources support isn't only for big companies with huge budgets. HR support is something that every size business deserves!
- Our #1 goal is to help our clients reduce business risk and dramatically improve the employee experience.
- Clients trust my expert team and I to work on a variety of complex HR projects and facilitate engaging, dynamic workshops that build connection, foster trust, inspire action, and improve workplace relationships... Which all lead to better business results.



# Toolbox

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## Workplace Preferences Survey



# Practical Considerations for HR Professionals



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# Back it all up.



## Policies to Consider, Take-Away Ideas

- Have policies in place that align with your mission, vision, and values.
- Review and refresh job descriptions to support a people-first culture
- Survey your employees and USE the results
- Regularly review compensation and benefits based on trends and feedback
- Engage in open conversations about culture and welcome conflict
- Create clarity through goal setting and team charters
- What else?



# Policies to Consider:

- Good Judgment
  - Open Door
  - Problem-solving
  - Anti-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment
  - Anti-Bullying
  - DEI
  - What else?
-

# Policies to Consider:

- Performance Reviews
  - Pay Raises and Bonuses
  - Time Off (paid sick leave, medical leave, recovery leave, family leave, holidays, PTO, vacation, etc.)
  - What else?
-

# Job Design & Workflows Take-Away Idea

Consider  
each  
individual  
position  
carefully:

- How is the position unique?
- What are the essential functions?
- Where does it overlap with other roles and why?
- What specialized knowledge is required?
- What special skills are required?
- What cross-training is required?
- What unique systems are required?
- What level(s) of authority are assigned?





# Team Charters Take-Away Idea:

Set the stage for free and open communication



Best Time and Way to Contact Me – when I work + my preferred method



Team Member Skill Inventory – where does each person shine? What is their specialty? What can they teach other people (even if it isn't HR-related!)? What is each team member working on?



Departmental Goals Outline – Projects, regular tasks, contingency plans, quality standards



Ground Rules – how do we promise to work together to achieve our common goals and encourage fulfillment?



Conflict Management – how will we deal with issues when they arise?



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# Building Strong Connections:

## Take-Away Activity Idea

Invest time developing and sharing your personal missions:

- *"To be a teacher. And to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be." — Oprah Winfrey*
- *"To bring joy to others around the world."*
- *"To support and elevate those around me."*