

## CONNECTION PIVOT | LEADING WITH HEART

**ACTIVITY TITLE:** Transforming from Role to Real

**OBJECTIVE:** To help leaders reflect on how they currently show care—and discover new ways to create connection and belonging—at the personal, relational, and systemic levels of leadership.

### Instructions:

This activity invites layered reflection. Take 30–40 minutes in a quiet setting. Use a journal or digital device.

### Introduction:

Caring leadership isn't soft, it's strategic. It builds trust, fuels resilience, and deepens engagement. And yet, in the urgency of hustle culture, care is often the first thing sacrificed. This activity explores three levels where care matters most:

### Level 1: Care for Self (Inward)

*You can't give what you don't nurture within.*

#### Reflect:

- What does self-care look like for me beyond rest and recovery?
- What beliefs might I hold that devalue or deprioritize my own care?
- How do I speak to myself when I make a mistake?
- What's one practice I can commit to this week to replenish my well-being?

#### Examples of Leader Self-Care:

- Block “thinking time” in calendar
- Take a personal boundary audit
- Seek feedback from trusted peers or a coach
- Create a “pause ritual” before high-stress interactions

**Write your commitment:**

"I will show care for myself by..."

## Level 2: Care in Relationships (Interpersonal)

*Care is the connective tissue of trust.*

**Reflection Prompts:**

- Who on my team or in my circle needs to feel seen right now?
- When was the last time I asked someone how they're really doing and listened?
- How often do I show appreciation or encouragement?
- Do I practice care as a leader and neglect it with my personal relationships?

**Examples of Relational Care:**

- Start meetings with brief personal check-ins
- Send a handwritten thank-you note
- Ask "What support would be most helpful right now?"
- Acknowledge and show appreciation for support received
- Celebrate small wins and personal milestones

**Write your commitment:**

"I will show care in my relationships by..."

Consider writing down your commitment statements in your calendar and assess your progress. Ask your team for feedback on ways you can improve your care and connection with them. Take time to consider if your emotional state improves as your connection with others deepens.

## Level 3: Care in Systems (Organizational)

*If people don't feel cared for by the culture, no amount of mission will matter.*

**Reflection Prompts:**

- How do our policies and practices reinforce care—or compromise it?
- Where in our culture is belonging lacking or uneven?
- What story does our pace, pressure, and reward system tell about what we value?

**Examples of Organizational Care:**

- Establish a norm of “people first” check-ins
- Audit meeting culture to protect deep work and reduce burnout
- Build “restorative spaces” into the team rhythm (e.g., rest days, debriefs, retreats)
- Normalize asking for help, slowing down, and naming needs

**Write your commitment:**

“I will show care in my leadership culture by...”