



# Elevate with AI:

## Techniques for Change-Ready Human-Centered Leadership

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[Available July 26, Pre-order today](#)



# My Human Story

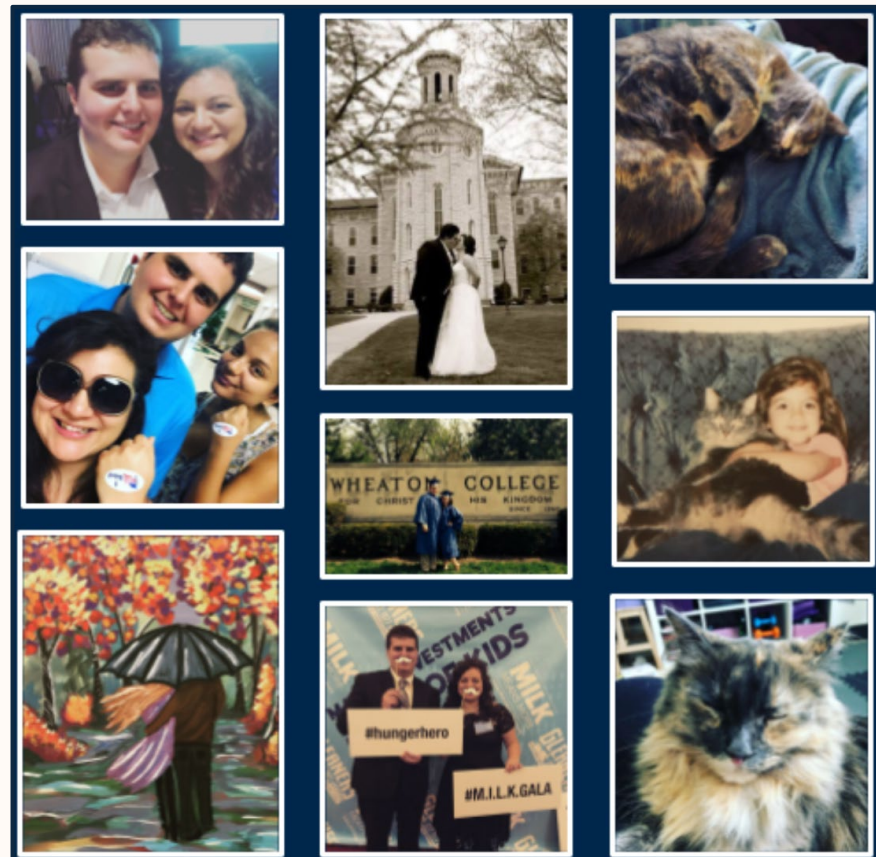
The starting point for every AI moment

**Story:** **First-generation student**, from Southern California, child of three divorces, **moved 55+** times due to housing instability, grew up in poverty, Bill and Melinda **Gates Millennium Scholar**, Master's Degree @ U-M, **PhD in progress** @ MSU, Best friends with my sister (high school Spanish and US History teacher), Married to my College Sweetheart (Celebrating our **12th Anniversary**)

**Personality:** Enneagram 8, INFJ, StrengthsFinder (Activator, Strategic, **Connectedness**, Relator, Input), Libra Sun with Capricorn Moon and Aries Rising

**Hobbies:** Fantasy Reader (65+ books/year), Watercolor & Acrylic Painter, Friendship Bracelet Maker, Kayaking, Hiking, Music Enthusiast\*, **Aspires to be an anonymous romance novelist** because I would love my purpose to be making people believe in love

**Favorite Quote:** It's the Glory of God to hide a matter and the Honor of Kings to seek it out - Proverbs 25:2





# Let's Get on the Same Page

Defining “Change-Ready Human-Centered Leadership”

## “Change-Ready”

A leader who is prepared for constant change, not just reacting to it.

- Adaptive mindset (keeps balanced)
- Proactive, not reactive (anticipates without doomsday thinking)
- Continuous learning (prioritizes upskilling)
- Agility in decision-making (pivots brilliantly)

**Reflect:** Think of a time in the last year something disrupted your team. What systems were in place already to support your team to navigate the obstacles?

# “Human-Centered”

Taken from design thinking and organizational psychology. Leading by prioritizing people’s needs, experiences, and well-being.

- Empathy-driven: Do you understand your team & stakeholders?
- Psychological safety: Is your work environment offering a creative environment?
- Inclusive practices: How are you inviting different perspectives than your own into decision making? Do you know your blind spots?
- Well-being with performance expectations: Is the work offering suitable challenges without burning out your team?

**Reflect:** Try to describe your team’s strengths, blindspots, identities, professional training needs, families, professional hopes, personal five-year plans, and favorite dessert.

## “Change-Ready, Human-Centered” .... **with AI?**

Yes, what large companies who are pouring millions of dollars into AI<sup>1</sup> are forgetting is that people are important. Navigating change effectively means not forgetting about people. Balance speed and empathy. Build systems that are adaptive and humane. Build to sustain hope and trust and growth.

The key to all of this is to do it collectively with your team. You don't need the answers. You need to be the leader, and lead with humility and care. **But how?**

<sup>1</sup> MIT Report: 95% of Gen AI Pilots at Companies Fail.

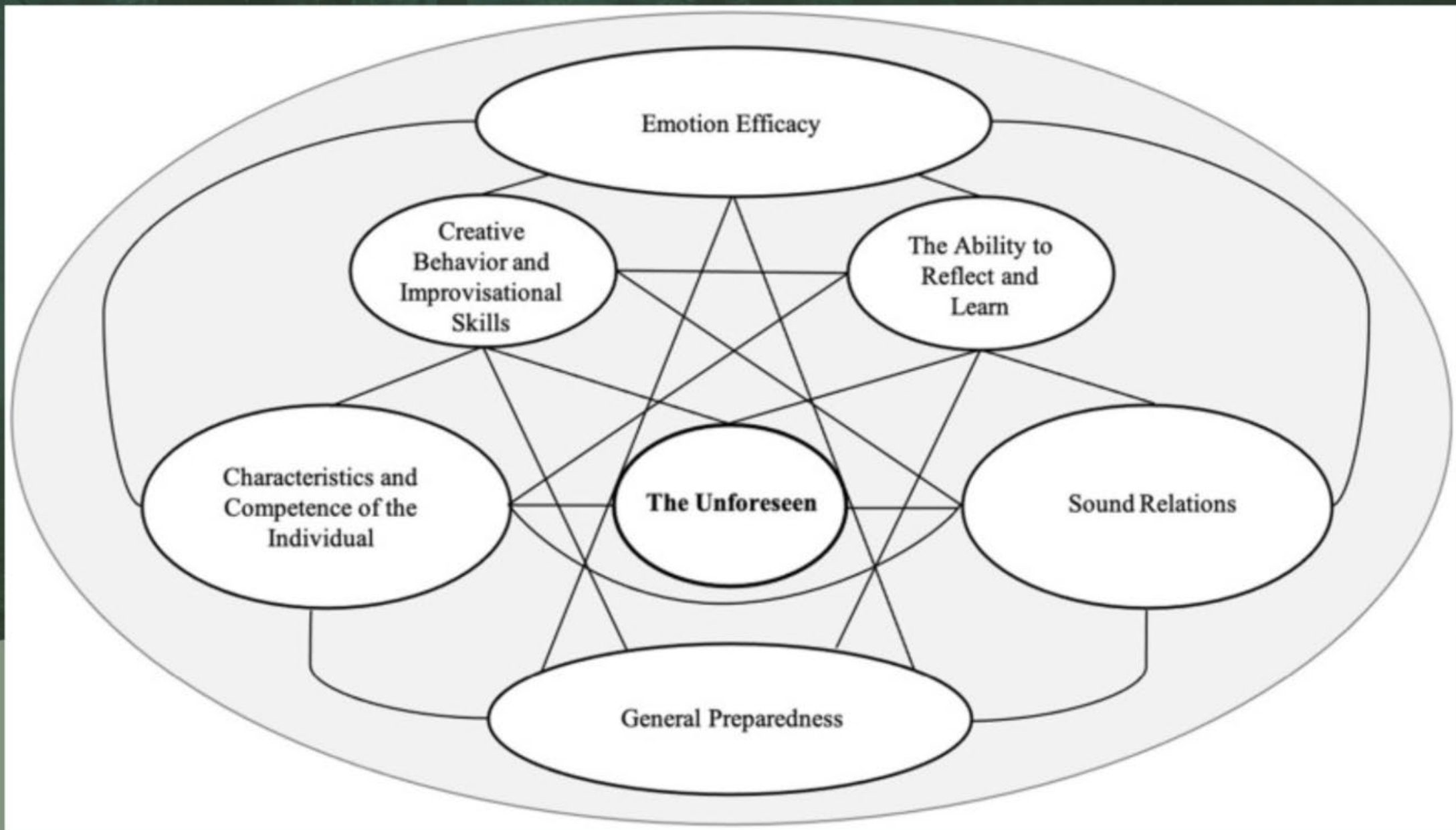
# **POLL #1 What concerns you the most about AI in the workspace?**



# Four ways to lead your team through AI change

- Resilience in the Unforeseen
- Motivation Constructs
- Design Thinking
- Trust (BRAVING)

# Resilience in the Unforeseen



# Resilience in the Unforeseen Activity

How to use this: Great resource to use in a team retreat or a Padlet activity. Give space for people to reflect and answer each question on a physical or digital post-it note, and synthesize the information collectively to create a teamwide understanding of resilience navigation of AI that your team is committed to in the next year.

- **Unforeseen Definition:** Something we can imagine a little but cannot fully predict, and that suddenly asks more of us than we are ready for.
  - **Guiding Question:** How does AI show up as the "unforeseen" in your role? Positively and negatively?
- **Characteristics and Competence of the Individual Definition:** A person's mindset and skills, such as confidence, ability to handle stress, judgment, and openness to learning, when normal routines stop working.
  - **Guiding Question:** In what ways do you have confidence in yourself to navigate AI's influence on education? What's a personal skill you are most grateful for?
- **Emotion Efficacy Definition:** The ability to notice feelings like fear, confusion, or confidence and manage them in a healthy way while change is happening.
  - **Guiding Question:** What usually causes negative emotions in you in response to an AI-influenced situation in your role, and how do you navigate them?
- **Creative Behavior and Improvisational Skills Definition:** This is the ability to use what we already know in new ways when old rules or procedures no longer fit the situation.
  - **Guiding Question:** Provide an example of when you were proud of yourself for navigating an AI situation.
- **Sound Relations Definition:** Strong, trusting relationships where people feel safe asking questions, sharing concerns, and working together when things are unclear.
  - **Guiding Question:** What is a characteristic you appreciate in someone in conversations surrounding AI & education?
- **The Ability to Reflect and Learn Definition:** This means taking time to stop, think, and learn from experience while things are happening, not only after problems occur.
  - **Guiding Question:** When talking about AI & Education with a colleague, loved one, or friend, what are some recurring topics or themes that arise?
- **General Preparedness Definition:** Having basic plans, training, and systems that help people respond when things change, instead of relying on fixed rules that break under pressure.
  - **Guiding Question:** What training, resources, and guidelines would you be interested in for your role in regarding AI?

**POLL #2 Which area  
of resilience do you  
feel most called to  
strengthen as a  
leader this year?**



# Motivation Constructs Activity

How to use this: Not everyone is motivated by the same constructs. Learn what are the top 1-2 ways each team member orients their motivation. Provide them this list of definitions and reflections questions, and ask them to reflect on the answers and share it with you. Find out the top 3 motivation constructs across your team.

- **Intrinsic–Extrinsic + Interest (Deci & Ryan, Hidi & Renninger)** - Why you're doing something—because you enjoy it or because of outside rewards or pressures. When something genuinely interests you, learning feels easier and more engaging.
  - “When you use AI tools, what parts feel genuinely interesting or satisfying to you? Are you mainly using AI because it's required/expected, or because you find it helpful or engaging?”
  - “What kinds of AI use cases spark your curiosity or interest the most? Are there ways of using AI that you'd like to explore but haven't yet?”
- **Capability Beliefs (Self-Efficacy (Bandura), Expectancy of Success (Eccles & Wigfield), Competence (Deci & Ryan; White))** - Your belief that you can succeed at a task. If you think you can do it, you're more likely to try and persist. How likely you think it is that you'll succeed in a situation. It's a personal prediction about success. Feeling capable and effective. People stay motivated when they feel they're improving.
  - “How confident do you feel using AI to complete your work effectively? What would make you feel more capable or skilled when working with AI?”
  - “When you use AI for a task, how likely do you think it will improve your outcomes? Do you expect AI to help you, or does it feel unreliable?”
  - “Do you feel like you're getting better at using AI over time? What would help you feel more effective or skilled when working with AI?”
- **Task Value (Eccles & Wigfield)** - How important, useful, or interesting something feels. People are motivated when they see something as worth doing.
  - “How valuable do you think AI is for improving your work or saving time? In what situations does using AI feel worth the effort and when is it not?”
- **Cost (Eccles, Wigfield, Barron & Hulleman)** - What you think you'll have to give up (time, effort, stress, missed alternatives).
  - “What feels 'costly' about using AI (e.g., time to learn, trust issues, extra checking)? When does using AI feel like more trouble than it's worth?”
- **Goal Orientation (Ames; Dweck; Nicholls)** - What kind of goal you're pursuing (learning vs proving yourself).
  - “Do you see AI as a tool to help you learn and improve, or mainly to perform faster or look more productive?”
- **Attributions (Weiner)** - How you explain success or failure (effort, ability, luck, etc.). These explanations shape future motivation.
  - “When AI helps you succeed, what do you think made the difference—you, the tool, or both?”
- **Autonomy (Deci & Ryan)** - Feeling like you have choice and control over your actions. Motivation increases when you feel you're choosing freely.
  - “Do you feel you have a choice in whether and how you use AI tools? Where do you feel restricted or pressured in using (or not using) AI?”
- **Belonging / Relatedness (Baumeister & Leary; Deci & Ryan)** - Feeling accepted and connected to others.
  - “Do you feel comfortable discussing or sharing how you use AI with your team? Do you feel supported or judged when experimenting with AI?”
- **Persistence / Grit + Effort Beliefs (Duckworth; Bandura, Dweck; Blackwell)** - What you believe about effort—whether it helps you improve. How long you keep going, especially when things get hard. Motivation isn't just starting—it's sticking with it.
  - “Do you think investing time in learning AI will actually pay off for you?”
  - “When AI tools don't work well at first, how likely are you to keep trying different approaches?”

**POLL #3 What most  
drives your  
motivation to use AI  
in your work right  
now?**



# Design Thinking

How to use this: Have 2-3 people on the team work collectively for 2 months to try to see if AI could be a solution to their work challenge. Have them work through this process together and share out their findings with the team in a staff meeting after big milestones or after the end of the project.

- **Human Need (Empathize + Define)**
  - What is a consistent pain point in our work? What problem are we actually trying to solve, and for whom? Where are people frustrated, stuck, or losing time? What does a “better” experience look like for them? Have the group collectively define the problem they would like to solve together.
  - Then, individually, use the speech-to-text function and talk through the problem from your perspective for five minutes. Copy and paste that into your AI tool using this prompt: “I’m running a Design Thinking Challenge, and we are in the Define Phase. Take this stream of consciousness about a problem and help me create a workflow map to identify where the key pain points are.”
  - After each person completes this, take all AI outputs and input them into a single AI tool to synthesize and reflect on the problem collectively: “The three of us each did a verbal stream-of-consciousness description of the problem, and these are our results identifying the problem and pain points. Can you elevate the commonalities and differences for us? Where are we aligned, and where do we differ? What is surprising in these results? Give us four reflection questions to consider as we move to the next step of Design Thinking (Ideate) in how AI could provide us meaningful solutions.”
- **AI Fit (Ideate)**
  - Where could AI meaningfully support or improve this? Could AI save time, improve quality, or reduce effort? What part of the task is repetitive vs. human-centered?
  - Thoughtfully consider what tasks people really enjoy and love doing; never offboard tasks to AI that humans love doing. If there is love, there is creativity, energy and innovation.
  - This is a great activity to do with a whiteboard, and place all your ideas on a whiteboard. From there, take photos, and upload it to the same AI bot that did the synthesis of the three with this prompt: “here are images of our Design Thinking Stage of Ideate regarding our problem of “insert problem”. First, list all of our ideas in thematic order. Second, critique our solutions, ranking them by ease of use and onboarding. Third, give use three reflections questions to consider as we enter the Prototype step.”
- **Test & Trust (Prototype + Test)**
  - What’s a small, low-risk way we can try this with AI? What would we test first? How will we know if it actually helped (or didn’t)?
  - This is a great time to share your progress with the rest of the team in a staff meeting to get their input and reaction before trying something new in AI; but this is an optional step, and can happen at the end.
  - Have fun with this - the key with design thinking is that you are piloting and testing; things will and should go wrong, that’s the fun part. Learning to dust yourself off and try again will make you an expert in the problem, and the solution that much more sustainable.

**POLL #4 What type  
of problem would  
you be most  
interested in solving  
with this approach?**



# BRAVING by Brené Brown

How to use this: Such a good framework for trust building within a team. Follow the link above to learn more about the original use of the team building framework. These discussion questions can be used in staff meetings to establish trust among your team regarding AI use in the workplace.

- **B — Boundaries: What's okay and not okay with AI use**
  - Where do we need clearer boundaries around when and how AI should or should not be used in our work? What types of information, decisions, or tasks feel inappropriate to delegate to AI, and why?
- **R — Reliability: Doing what we say we'll do, within our limits**
  - Where might we be overestimating our ability to use AI effectively, and what support or training do we actually need? How can we ensure that work supported by AI still meets our standards for quality and follow-through?
- **A — Accountability: Owning mistakes and learning from them**
  - How will we handle situations where AI use leads to errors, misinformation, or unintended consequences? What would it look like to openly acknowledge when we've relied on AI in ways that didn't serve the work or the team?
- **V — Vault: Confidentiality and trust**
  - What types of data or information should never be entered into AI tools, even if it feels convenient? How do we ensure we are protecting student, staff, and institutional confidentiality when using AI?
- **I — Integrity: Choosing what's right over what's easy**
  - Where might AI create shortcuts that challenge our values or professional standards? How do we ensure we are using AI in ways that align with our mission, not just efficiency?
- **N — Nonjudgment: Creating space to ask, learn, and admit uncertainty**
  - Do people on our team feel safe asking basic or "behind" questions about AI without judgment? How can we normalize different levels of comfort and experience with AI across the team?
- **G — Generosity: Assuming positive intent**
  - How can we assume positive intent when colleagues use AI differently than we would? Where can we give each other more grace as we experiment, learn, and make mistakes with AI? How can we create a culture of learning from each other regarding AI?

**POLL #5 What would  
most strengthen trust  
within your team  
around each other's  
use of AI?**



2026 EDITION

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MARISSA RIVAS TAYLOR

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# Thank you!