

STABILIMENTA

Empathetic Leadership in the Ever-Changing Workplace
NCACPA Professional Women's Conference

October 22, 2026



Think about the best boss you've ever had.

How did they treat you?

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about what empathetic leadership is and what it looks like in practice
2. Thoughtfully reflect on and discuss your past experiences to build competencies for the future
3. Leave with practical tools and actionable tips (and hopefully a smile!)



LEARNING AGREEMENTS

1. Be fully present
2. Make space, take space (and use the chat!)
3. Ask if you are unsure
4. Have a positive attitude



AGENDA

1:00–1:05 PM

Introduction & Workshop Overview

1:05–1:55 PM

Current Landscape &
Research

Characteristics of
Empathetic Leadership

Building Psychological
Safety & Trust

Communicating with
Empathy

Leading Across
Generations &
Backgrounds

Leveraging AI as a
Leadership Tool

1:55–2:05 PM

Wrap Up, Reflection & Questions



CURRENT LANDSCAPE & RESEARCH

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Political shifts
& geopolitical
uncertainty

Rapid
technology
developments,
especially AI

Layoffs &
economic
uncertainty

Evolution of
workplace
demographics
& expectations

WHY EMPATHY MATTERS

- A BBC article says that empathy “involves the ability to understand others’ thoughts and feelings, allowing us to respond appropriately.”
- Research from *Harvard Business Review* says that empathy is a core leadership skill.
- According to *Forbes*, leaders who prioritize empathy “tend to make stronger decisions and build more resilient organizations because they are grounded in real human needs rather than assumptions.”

Sources: “The myth that women are more naturally empathetic than men” BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20260213-are-women-naturally-more-empathetic-than-men>

“Empathy is a core leadership skill.” *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/tip/2025/05/empathy-is-a-core-leadership-skill>

“Empathy in action: How women founders are redefining leadership” *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferpalumbo/2026/03/24/empathy-in-action-how-women-founders-are-redefining-leadership/>

WOMEN & EMPATHETIC LEADERSHIP

- In a *Harvard Business Review* study, women scored higher than men in most leadership skills.
- BUT this is not necessarily because of genetics but because of socialization.

Men:

- Command
- Control
- Compete

Women:

- Care
- Connect
- Collaborate



“People don’t perform for managers who see them as functions. Employees do great work for leaders who see them as people, contradictions, complexities, and all.”

–Bob Batchelor, author & cultural historian



CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPATHETIC LEADERSHIP

EMPATHETIC LEADERS...

1 Care about their people

2 Truly listen

3 Follow through

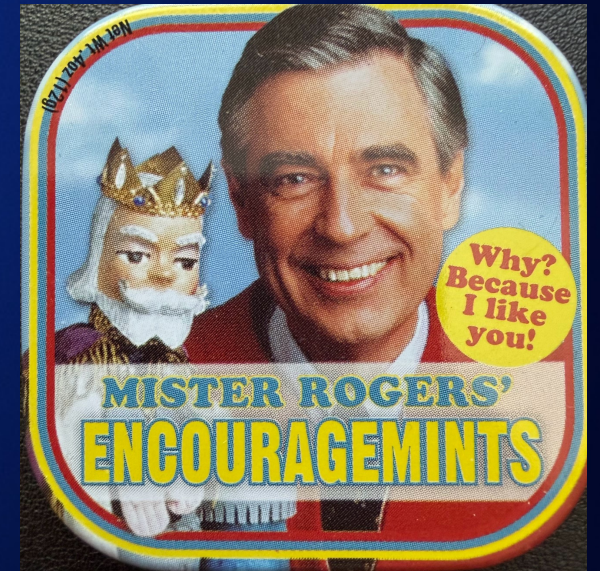
4 Give positive *and* constructive feedback

5 Provide encouragement...but don't lower standards

6 Admit mistakes *and* take accountability

7 Allow freedom to make mistakes

8 Share vulnerably and honestly





SELF-REFLECTION & DISCUSSION



BUILDING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY & TRUST

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY DEFINED

“Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.”

–Amy Edmondson, Harvard University

Psychological safety includes being able to show up as your **authentic self** and be **seen**, **safe**, and **heard** in a **group setting**.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DANGER VS. SAFETY

Psychological Danger

- Fear of Mistakes
- Fear of Consequences
- Blaming Others
- Lack of Trust
- Competitiveness
- Unable to Share Ideas

Psychological Safety

- Comfort Owning Mistakes
- Learn from Failure
- Increased Innovation
- Trust
- Unique Skills Valued
- Openly Share Ideas

TOOLS TO CREATE SAFETY & TRUST

Create a “User Guide” for yourself and your team:

- About My Role
- The Best Ways to Communicate with Me
- How I Prefer to Receive Feedback
- How I Prefer to Give Feedback
- How I Prefer to Receive Recognition
- What Frustrates Me
- Things You Might Misunderstand About Me

AND...

Have conversations with your team about communication, feedback, and recognition, and honor those individual choices.



COMMUNICATING WITH EMPATHY

BEST PRACTICES

1 Be aware of bias

2 Focus on the facts...but do not jump to conclusions

3 Check your listening battery!

4 Share your own vulnerability

5 Use the “Fast Food Rule”

6 Lead with curiosity and open-ended questions

7 Use “I” statements

8 Say “thank you” and provide opportunities for ongoing dialogue

HELPFUL SCRIPTS

"Are you open to a different point of view?"

"Can you help me understand?"

"From my perspective..."

"I'm curious..."

APOLOGY SCRIPT

"I am sorry for...
In the future, I will..."

Note: Make the apology about you, not the person you are apologizing to, and use "I" statements.



LEADING ACROSS GENERATIONS & BACKGROUNDS

GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY

	% OF WORKFORCE	MOTIVATED BY	COMMUNICATION	WORK VIEWS
Baby Boomer <i>Born 1946–1964</i>	15%	Company loyalty, teamwork, duty	Phone calls and face-to- face	Achievement comes after paying dues
Generation X <i>Born 1965–1980</i>	31%	Personal-professional interests rather than company's interests	Phone calls and face-to- face, emails	Resistant to change at work if it affects their personal lives
Millennial <i>Born 1981–2000</i>	36%	Responsibility, quality of manager, unique work experiences	Instant messaging, texts, emails	Seeking growth and development; focus on work/life balance
Generation Z <i>Born 2001–2020</i>	18%	Personalization, individuality, innovation	Social media, texts, instant messaging	Connected to digital devices; mission-driven; expect diversity

KNOW YOUR PEOPLE





LEVERAGING AI AS A LEADERSHIP TOOL

WAYS TO LEVERAGE AI

Use AI tools so you can spend **more time in human-to-human interactions**

1 Take notes during one-on-ones and help with follow-ups/action items

2 Practice difficult conversations/use it to create scripts

3 Use frameworks for goal-setting

4 Be a more polished leader



WRAP UP

FINAL REFLECTION

Following today's session, what will you stop, start, and continue doing to further develop your empathetic leadership skills?



STOP



START



CONTINUE





QUESTIONS



CLOSING CHALLENGE

Think about the best boss you've ever had.

Reach out to thank them!

THANK YOU

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