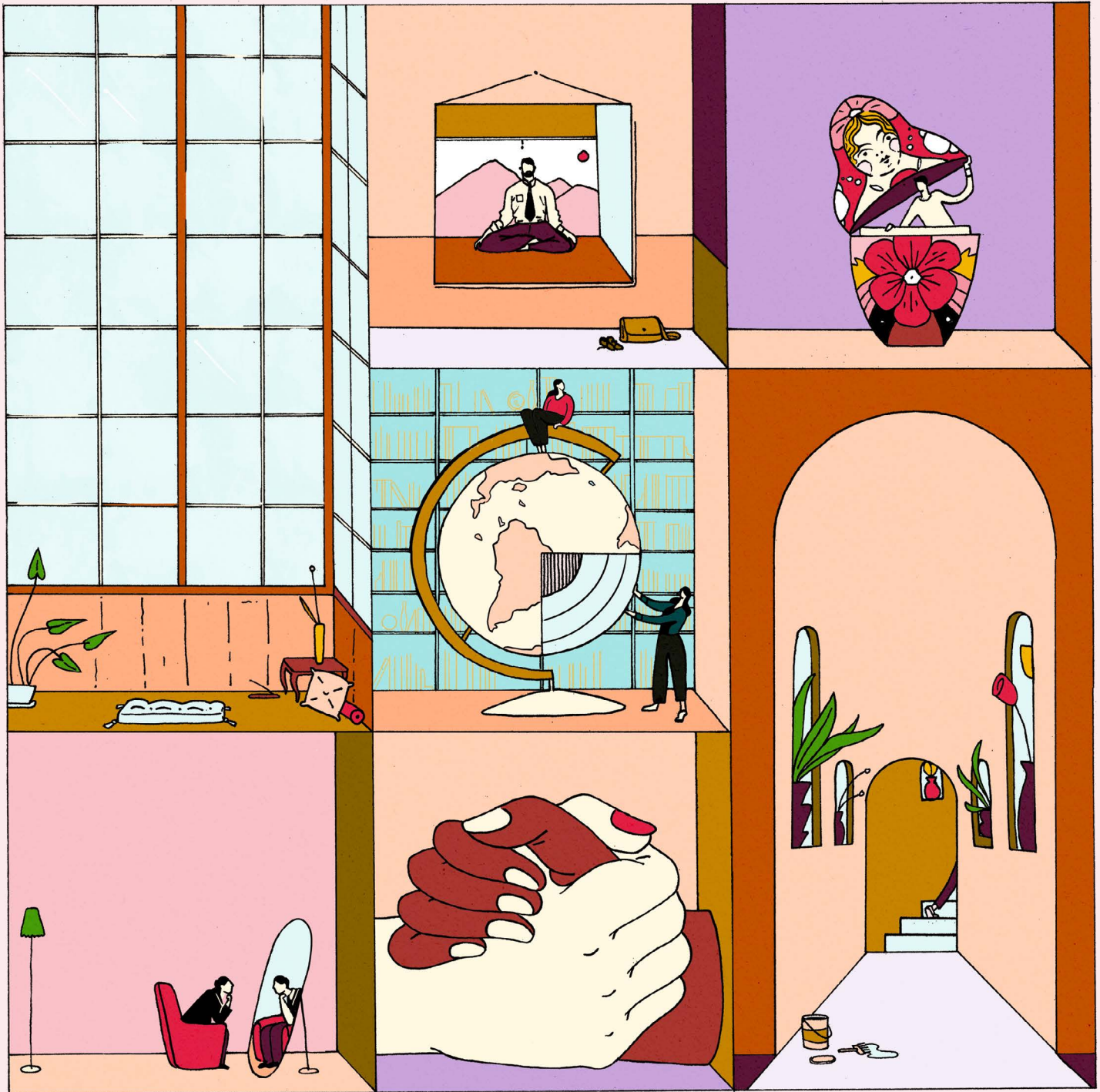


Looking forward:

7 tools for workplace resilience



There's no roadmap for the *future* of work

Throughout the global pandemic, the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, and widespread economic crisis, we've seen the importance of resilience, agility, and humanity in the workplace. While there's no clear roadmap for what comes next, we created this toolkit to help you prepare your workforce for the near future and beyond.

As we turn our focus to the future, we've collected various tools and resources from HR professionals and culture-first leaders to help build a framework for ongoing organizational success.

In our conversations with experts and thought leaders, the answer we found wasn't all that complicated. Bringing a more human approach to the workplace is the recipe for a more resilient and agile workforce, which is ultimately the harbinger of success.

Adapted from these learnings, this toolkit is designed to help individuals at any level feel prepared for unexpected challenges, shifts in the business landscape, and questions about the future.

Toolkit

PART 1

Wellbeing is the foundation for long-term success

PART 2

A human workplace starts with leadership vulnerability

PART 3

Empathy is a must-have soft skill for high-performing teams

PART 4

Emotional intelligence is the guiding light in an uncertain world

PART 5

Communication and connection will set your organization apart

PART 6

It's time to make performance management more inclusive and human

PART 7

Looking forward means embracing humanity at work

How to use this *toolkit*

In the face of major global shifts, employers have had to double down on resources and programs to support their employees holistically. Gartner's 2020 ReimagineHR Employee Survey shows that employers who support employees with their life experience see a 23% increase in the number of employees reporting better mental health and a 17% increase in physical health. Employers also see a 21% increase in the number of high performers than organizations that don't provide the same degree of support.

As a result, we found that some of the most important “tools” that we've relied on aren't just tactical guides and templates (though we have those, too). They're mindfulness practices that gave us *pause* from work. They're ways we learned how to rest our bodies and brains. And they're mantras that we chanted in the back of our minds when we thought things couldn't get any worse – then they did – and we still had to show up.

Each section in this toolkit references a unique challenge faced by people leaders during a time when the workplace was forced to shift dramatically and provides actionable tools for addressing them. You can start at the beginning or jump to any part that feels relevant to you and your team.

This guide isn't meant to act as a definitive roadmap into the future. Instead, we built it to offer a set of actionable tools used by some of the most resilient and exemplary organizations of our time. We hope these perspectives will help your organization better care for your people.

Wellbeing is the *foundation* for long-term success

During tumultuous times, we often turn to self-care. However, building up these practices during periods of stability can help us better face periods of uncertainty with grace and resilience. During the pandemic, we started to see morning yoga swapped out for childcare, hours previously spent reading for pleasure spent spiraling through the news, and mid-day meditation booked over by back-to-back meetings. But we quickly learned that attention to wellbeing helps with everything from decision-making to sleep to relationships to performance. As we look to the future, we encourage you to focus on employee wellbeing as a foundational piece of your organizational culture.

How to reimagine wellbeing at work

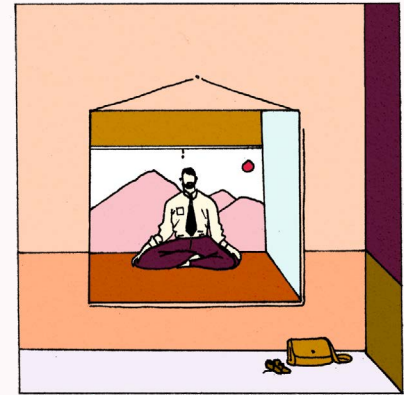
Mental and physical wellbeing: When our brain experiences stress, it impacts our hippocampus (critical for long-term memory) and prefrontal cortex (essential for attention, decision-making, and focus). Dr. Wendy Suzuki, Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology at NYU, recommends giving your brain a break whenever you feel anxiety or stress peaks. “There’s a reason why deep breathing is one of the most ancient forms of meditation in our culture,” she says. This basic exercise stimulates our parasympathetic nervous system and naturally calms us.

Tip and tool: A breathing exercise from our friends at [Calm](#). Save it to your favorites, link to it in your 1-on-1 agendas, or put it in a calendar invite that your entire team has on the books each day.

Access resources from Virgin Pulse for supporting [employee mental wellbeing through times of crisis](#).

Emotional and spiritual wellbeing: Addressing emotional wellbeing at work is critical to helping employees survive and thrive. “Emotions are not only part of our wholeness, but they are intimately connected to our ability to be creative,” says Larissa Conte, Founder of Wayfinding. Her advice: make space for conversations about grief, trauma, and stress – these emotions are inevitable, and “by denying grief and focusing on life, we are denying a certain aspect of our being.”

Tip and tool: Larissa Conte offers this [Toolkit for Turbulent Times](#) to help build resilience.




INSIGHT

“Especially in response to challenging situations or circumstances, we can easily fall into default autopilot mode, but we want to pivot to be intentional about how we want to act. We do that through mindfulness practice by becoming aware of our bodies and the mental and emotional states we’re occupying.”


Rich Fernandez

CEO, Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute (SIYLI) & Co-founder, Wisdom Labs

What helps our community redefine the future of work?

 Book: [The Power of Now](#)
Author: [Eckhart Tolle](#)

Key takeaway: [Be here now](#)

 Book: [The Hybrid & Remote Work Playbook](#)
Host: [LifeLabs Learning](#)

Key takeaway: [Audit and optimize your company's hybrid skills](#)

A human workplace starts with *leadership* vulnerability

Nina Simone once said, “You use up everything you got trying to give everyone else what they want.” Throughout our conversations with leaders, there was one common theme: boundaries. Of course, problems need to be solved, and decisions need to be made, but it’s impossible to do this effectively unless leaders feel well-equipped, well-rested, and well-informed enough to take action.

4 questions to ask yourself when leading through uncertainty


Meredith Haberfeld, Founder and CEO of ThinkHuman, shares her top questions to reflect on when leading a team during hard times. Read, reflect, and respond to ensure that you’ve looked inward before you lead forward.

1. What are the assumptions, actions, or dynamics that are draining or filling you?
2. Who are the people on your team who can help you think that through?
3. What are the routines that you need to thrive?
4. What do you need to deprioritize to keep the boat afloat?

Tip and tool: Culture Amp’s [1-on-1 guide](#) breaks down the ins and outs of building more meaningful connections with your team.



What helps our community redefine the future of work?

 Podcast: [Unlocking Us](#)
Host: [Brene Brown](#)

Key takeaway: [Inspiring stories of human limit](#)

Recommended by Iryna Halaway,
Marketing Project Manager, Culture Amp

 Book: [Good Habits, Bad Habits](#)
Author: [Wendy Wood](#)

Key takeaway: [Understanding bad habits makes behavior change fun](#)

Recommended by Josh Berman,
Culture Enablement Lead, Culture Amp

INSIGHT

“Real leadership starts with giving ourselves permission to have our own humanity – to have compassion for ourselves, to not have it all tied up in a bow and looking good.”

Meredith Haberfeld
Founder and CEO, ThinkHuman

Empathy is a *must-have* soft skill for high-performing teams

As the global landscape continues to evolve, uncertainty has quickly become the new normal. To help you strengthen empathy across your organization, we've compiled a list of ways to better support employees, HR, and colleagues through difficult times in both the world and their personal lives.

6 ways to support employees through difficult situations

Politics & Race

1. Understand the difference between ally and accomplice – there is one, and it's important to recognize which you can show up as.
Articles: [“Don't be an ally, be an accomplice”](#) and [“One black employee's response to ‘How Can I Help?’”](#)
2. Recognize your place in the conversation. CEOs can be leaders, they can also be listeners. **Video:** Heart of the c-suite with Didier Elzinga (CEO, Culture Amp) and Alicia Jessip (Inclusion and Diversity Manager at TEKsystems)
3. Focus on boosting the psychological safety of the people in your team. Be prepared to carry the conversation before you start it.
Articles: [“How to manage your team in times of political trauma”](#) and [“Embracing political discourse in the workplace”](#)

Layoffs

1. Understand the emotional and psychological impact that layoffs and major transitions will have. **Articles:** [“Adapting to the new normal after company layoffs”](#) and [“Adapting organizational culture during an economic downturn”](#)
2. Secure a partner (we worked with LinkedIn) to host a workshop for alumni on making the most of their LinkedIn profile, updating their resume, or prepping for an interview. **Video:** [“How We Work: Reckoning with career uncertainty in unpredictable times”](#)



INSIGHT

“You don’t feel inclusion and equity at the company level, you experience it at the team level. If you don’t feel the daily interactions with your team is one of respect, equity, and fairness, then you’re not going to think anything of it from the companywide statement.”

Michelle Kim
Co-Founder and CEO, Awaken

3. Encourage senior-level employees to set time aside for brainstorming. Have them reach into their networks to see who is hiring and make introductions. **Articles:** "Humans helping humans through crisis" and "The importance of shared suffering in the workplace"

Burnout

1. Find effective ways to support your employees through periods of burnout. **Article:** "How companies are responding to employee burnout"
2. Double down on your commitment to wellbeing to ensure employees have resources to help recover from burnout. **Article:** "A guide to holistic wellbeing during times of crisis"
3. Teach empathy at all levels so that leaders, managers, and employees can serve as support systems for their peers. **Podcasts:** "Empathy, compassion, work" Part 1, with Michael Ventura and Part 2, with Taryn Hughes

What helps our community redefine the future of work?



Book: The Memo
Author: Minda Harts

Key takeaway: Lift others up when you can

Recommended by Sahra Kaboli-Nejad,
Senior People Scientist, Culture Amp



Book: Yes to Life
Author: Viktor Frankl

Key takeaway: Finding meaning is key

Recommended by Aubrey Blanche,
Director of Equitable Design & Impact,
Culture Amp

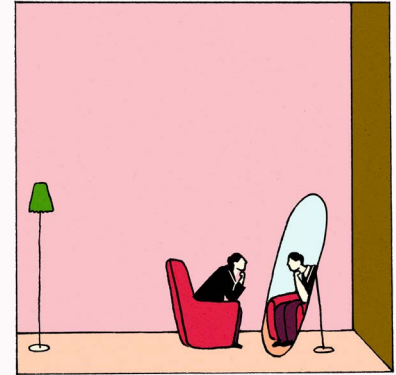
Emotional intelligence is the *guiding light* in an uncertain world

Emotional intelligence (EQ) helps you read the room and ask thoughtful questions to learn how someone is *really* doing. EQ needs to be developed and practiced, so in this part, we share a framework to help your team do just that.

5 exercises to develop your emotional intelligence

1. **Self-reflect.** Recognize your own emotions and identify what's causing them. Take note of which situations lead to specific emotional responses.
2. **Self-regulate.** Consider how your emotional expressions affect others. Practice finding the appropriate ways and times to express your feelings instead of merely reacting.
3. **Build intrinsic motivation.** Identify the tasks or challenges that satisfy or fulfill you regardless of any external motivators.
4. **Practice empathy.** Put yourself in the shoes of each person you interact with to understand how they feel. Then respond thoughtfully with that insight in mind.
5. **Improve social skills.** Let active listening, nonverbal communication, and problem-solving skills be your guide in all of your interactions.

This framework has been adapted from Daniel Goleman's "Emotional Intelligence – Why It Can Matter More Than IQ".



INSIGHT

“Emotional intelligence is the foundation for self-empathy. It allows us to confront and overcome challenges and ultimately become better collaborators, partners, and problem-solvers with those around us.”

Michael Ventura

Founder & CEO Sub Rosa,
Author of Applied Empathy

What helps our community redefine the future of work?



Podcast: [On Being](#)
Host: [Krista Tippett](#)

Key takeaway: [In crisis, actively listen with empathy](#)

Recommended by Aoife Johnston,
Lead Project Manager, Culture Amp



Book: [When Things Fall Apart](#)
Author: [Pema Chödrön](#)

Key takeaway: [Make room for grief, joy, and everything in between](#)

Recommended by Maggie Coughlin,
Account Executive, Culture Amp

Communication and *connection* will set your organization apart

If there's one thing that makes challenges bearable, it's navigating them with others by your side. Constant decision-making, meetings, and problem-solving can feel exhausting. But it can also inspire teams to feel like they're not alone in their stress, confusion, frustrations, and especially those moments of pride when you surmount an obstacle together. In this section, we share a communication tool to help you build deeper connections with your team – to learn how to communicate better, more often, and more effectively.

Check-in questions to build connection

Every face-to-face meeting or digital interaction is an opportunity to build a connection with your team. Start every meeting with a check-in question to set the tone and acknowledge the humanity of everyone involved.

1. What are you doing for yourself today?
2. What's something I can do to support you today?
3. Is anything making it particularly hard for you to be present right now? (feel free to share or not)
4. What are you watching on TV right now?
5. What song are you listening to on repeat?
6. What's one practice that helps keep you centered?



INSIGHT


“When you have the three keys to connection – a sense of physical contact, vulnerability, and playfulness – if you have one exercise or activity you can do with your team that involves aspects of all three of them, I have found that to be the quickest and deepest way to get a group to feel bonded and connected.”

Jenny Sauer-Klein
Founder and Executive Director,
The Culture Conference

What helps our community redefine the future of work?

 Book: [Emmanuel's Book](#)
Authors: [Pat Rodegast](#) & [Judith Stantont](#)

Key takeaway: [We're all interconnected](#)

 Podcast: [Work of Fiction](#)
Host: [NOBL](#)

Key takeaway: [Get insights into organizational design by analyzing fictional organizations](#)

Recommended by Paula Cizek,
Chief Research Officer, NOBL

It's time to make performance management more *inclusive* and human

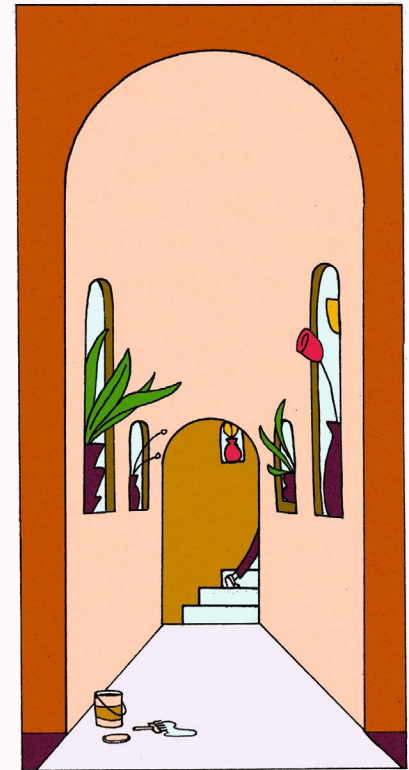
Performance can take a hit when teams are focused on survival, so it's important to check-in with your employees to better understand where their motivations lie and how you can help them do their best despite the circumstances. This allows you to look at performance with a more human lens and adjust your measures of success accordingly.

Resetting questions

As priorities shift, managers and leaders can use these questions to help get a clearer focus on key goals, communicate them to your team, and measure success.

1. What's the main problem we're trying to solve?
2. What do we want to accomplish this week? This month?
3. What's an experiment we can try?
4. How are our skills most useful to the current environment?
5. What can we deprioritize for now?
6. What are the things we *can* control?
7. What short-term solution can help set us up for long-term success?

These questions have been adapted from [LifeLabs Learning](#).



What helps our community redefine the future of work?



Book: [Year of Yes](#)

Author: [Shonda Rhimes](#)

Key takeaway: [Be a doer not a dreamer](#)

Recommended by Tenesha Craig,
Recruiter, Culture Amp

INSIGHT

“My mantra is ‘impact over intensity.’ With so many competing demands for our time and energy, it’s impossible to keep up the breakneck pace.”

Casey Cole

Senior Advisor, Coaching & Performance, W2O

Looking forward means embracing *humanity* at work

Life-altering events often speed up the process of change. While much is unknown about the path forward, we all play an instrumental role in forging this path, and we can use our learnings as a guide. After a period of rapid change, it's time to release the old ways of doing things and identify new and better approaches. This is a fantastic opportunity to work together to develop creative solutions to evolve the world of work.

Listen to your employees

Simply listening and engaging in a conversation is a hugely important way to support your employees during crisis. Use these survey questions to start a dialogue with your entire workforce.

Learn

Step 1. Spend time fully understanding your feedback

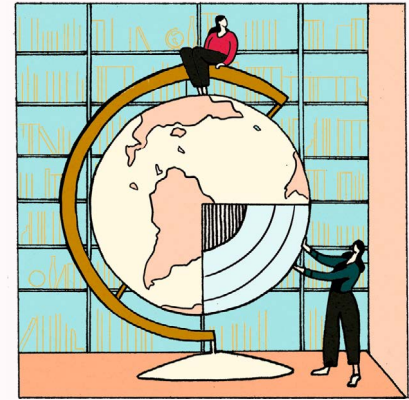
Whether your feedback is exactly what you expected, or some parts took you by surprise, remember that the purpose of the feedback is to help you develop and improve. It's not uncommon to seek guidance in contextualizing the feedback from a peer, mentor, or HR team member.

Act

Step 2. Discuss the results with your team

Discussing your results requires the courage to be vulnerable. A helpful tactic is first to consider your expectations and anything that surprised you. Then focus on what surfaced from the group as your greatest strengths and where you have development opportunities. Ahead of the discussion, try to answer the following questions for yourself:

1. Are the results aligned with what you expected? Any surprises?
2. What did the team report as your top strengths?
3. What stands out for you as an opportunity?
4. When reviewing the feedback, what made you feel good? Why?
5. What were the areas that challenged you? Why do you think that these felt challenging?



INSIGHT

“As a leader, now is the time to look around your organization for the people you don’t normally call on. You’ll be amazed by all the hidden talent and ideas within your organization – and what they can do when given permission to try.”

Cameron Welter
Principal, Kotter

Step 3. Select a focus

Once the results have been shared and discussed, you're ready to select a focus area to get started on it straight away. Stick to a small number (e.g., 1-3 focus areas at a time), so you can make meaningful change.

Step 4. Brainstorm ideas for action

Once you've selected your focus area, commit to specific actions you can take to improve. To ensure that changes are made and not just talked about, give yourself a timeline to keep yourself accountable.

Repeat

Following your action planning, you can already start thinking about the Repeat stage. We've found it helpful to answer these questions while you're still in action mode.

1. What changes in results do I want to see? Write down your focus area and what changes you would like to see next time you ask employees for their feedback. This will give you a goal and connect your actions back to survey results in the future.
2. When will I survey again? Consider how long it will take for your proposed actions to be implemented and experienced and see their effect. Keep tabs on when your HR team plans to survey again, so you don't overlap in efforts.

These steps have been adapted from Culture Amp's [Manager's guide to understanding and taking action](#).

Simply [listening and engaging in a conversation](#) is a hugely important way to support your employees during periods of change – and this typically starts with managers. Use this step-by-step model to help your workplace transition from outdated practices to a more human approach.

What helps our community redefine the future of work?



Book: [The Power of Moments](#)

Authors: [Chip & Dan Heath](#)

Key takeaway: [Set milestones to elicit moments of pride](#)

Recommended by Eduardo Siu,
Lead Account Executive, Culture Amp

Conclusion

As we look to the future, one thing is clear: there is an overarching need for more humanity at work. This means that organizations can no longer ask their workforce to leave their personal lives at home. It's time we fully embrace the call to bring your full self to work. However, we can't make this adjustment without laying the foundation.

This guide's tools are designed to help you set your organization up for a more human workplace and ultimately long-term success.

