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# As We Return To Work, Leaders Need To Be A Positive Influence — Here's How



**Luis Costa** Forbes Councils Member

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Many people and teams are returning to the office to find “smart working” environments with complicated mixes of face-to-face, virtual and hybrid realities. The physical distance of the past 18 months has shifted the quality of our relationships. Many teams’ rituals have been diluted. Many companies’ cultures are out of sync with the current reality. Clients’ behaviors have been transformed and are uncertain. Our partners are trying to recover and society is working to reframe into this new reality. As a leader, you have a responsibility to be a positive influence for those around you — and it all starts with these seven simple tips:

### **1. Be passionate.**

Don’t waste your time with things that are not important to you and others. Carefully choose those things you care about and be mega passionate about them. Make them your mission. Get others on board. Be consistent about your messages. Be inspiring in your actions. Gather the tribe to nurture and care for those things that truly matter. Be consistent and follow through.

### **2. Be compassionate.**

As you reconnect with your people and your teams, you will find tremendous asymmetries. People have gone through very different experiences. They are in very different moments. They are searching for clarity, stability and trust as they move into this new reality. Be there and be present. Understand and support your people as they go through this unique journey. Help them find their way and connect with their meaning as they journey into this new reality.

### **3. Respect those around you.**

Lifestyles, priorities and perspectives have changed. People are choosing to live their lives differently. The “one solution fits all” paradigm has shifted. Respect different perspectives and points of view. Be prepared to entertain different options and new ways forward. Listen deeply and with intent and set apart your biases, your prejudices and your privileges. Respecting others can open new windows of opportunity.

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#### **4. Be a teacher.**

Framing a new reality, re-shaping our teams, re-designing our corporate cultures and creating new ways of being and doing is not easy. It's not always clear nor quick. The process is painful and often murky. Your experiences, your insights and your life lessons can all contribute to this process of reframing. So, be a teacher. Be generous and share what you know, what you feel and what you have experienced. Not as absolute truths or definite solutions, but rather as inputs, triggers and door openers to help others on their journey. Your insights are precious gifts.

#### **5. Spread happiness.**

Human beings are at their best when they're happy. Happy people and happy teams are more productive and creative. The past 18 months have seriously challenged our ability to seek and maintain

happiness. As we build a new reality, we must reclaim happiness as a central tenet to who we are and how we live. As a leader, you're a beacon to promote a happy environment. I believe the real secret to happiness is to make others happy. So, be a source of happiness to those around you. Work to be happy and to make those around you happy.

## **6. Take care of yourself.**

To lead yourself and others, and to build productive relationships, you need to take care of yourself. Sleep — you repair and reenergize yourself when you sleep. Exercise. Run, swim, lift weights, power walk. Do whatever you enjoy to revitalize your body. Aim for a balanced diet that fills you with energy. Meditate. Focus, raise your awareness and achieve mental clarity and emotional stability. Get creative. Play an instrument, paint, sing, do theater or anything that stimulates your creativity. Connect with your spiritual self. Far beyond religion, this is about nurturing and growing your spiritual self, “your soul.” Some pray, some read, some walk in nature, some engage in deeply meaningful conversations.

## **7. Don't rush.**

Important things take time. When dealing with deep and significant transformations, people need time to think and feel. Understanding the impact of what is changing and appreciating how it is redefining us as human beings and professionals is a fundamental part of the journey to embrace a new reality. So, don't rush. And don't rush those around you. We can rebuild important relationships and develop lasting commitments if we give ourselves the benefit of time.

Many of us developed as leaders in a different reality. In a different world. Our terms of reference have changed. As we move toward a new reality, we begin to understand that it is anything but linear. The next few months will bring many challenges and significant opportunities. As leaders, we have a responsibility to ourselves and to those around us to stop and reflect about our leadership styles. Whatever your leadership style, these seven simple levers will guide you on your journey to this new reality, to support your people and develop your teams.

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