

The AI conversation your team is already having without you - TRANSCRIPT
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Welcome to Victory Leadership, where good leadership leads to victory. Here we help emerging and established leaders win through clarity, confidence and growth. Let's get started.

Hello friends, and welcome to the leadership pit Stop where we help emerging and established leaders win through clarity, confidence and growth.

My name is Earl Airey with Victory Leadership, and today we're going to step in one of the biggest workplace conversations that is happening right now.

So today's episode will be the AI conversation that your team is already having without you and how leaders can create clarity, confidence and responsible adoption.

AI is, it's already changing how people think about work, how people think about a lot of things, and how even work and organizations, you know, think about doing business. And I've already mentioned many times about how the human condition is, is really interested in self preservation.

So anything that can potentially threaten that self preservation may manifest itself as fear. And fear contributes itself to, you know, of course, being scared, anxious, insecure, weak, rejected, feeling threatened.

People feel maybe exposed, nervous, persecuted. There the, the list goes on.

And there's so many elements that when things like that occur, people's minds can just, you know, really go off the rails.

And when we look at how AI is changing how people think about, about work, I mean, let's not even talk about the personal space or other circles of influence because that, that's, you know, another, that's another episode, all winning of it, of itself.

But when we look at some of the possibilities, depending on your viewpoint, your viewpoint, you, you know, your historical connection with, you know, change, whether it's small or whether it's radical in the environment, some people are going to be excited looking at the possibilities. And some people are going to be skeptical. They're, you know, kind of very cautious. And some are going to dip their toe in the water.

They're going to try it, they're going to do a little bit of experimenting. There's just gonna be some that are just going to outright avoid it.

And then, not that this ain't for me, this is almost like when automation replaced people in, in factories. And there are those others who are quietly using the AI tools and they're not, they're not saying much about it.

You know, they're almost kind of like hidden or gone underground or, or they're, it's, it's in the shadows. There are some that are going to be worried if AI is going to replace part or all of their role.

And I'll be honest, in some places that is going to happen, it has already happened. There are those who are utilizing AI that may not have even been at the point where they hired any people to do the work.

They just went straight, you know, to the AI. And there's a lot of reasons for why this is, why this is happening, why this is done.

But one of the things that people are kind of trying to get a little bit of an idea and some, and some guidance on is that they're waiting for leadership to explain what is approved, what is expected, and what does responsible use actually look like. Now, they may not be consciously thinking about these things, but subconsciously, and no doubt that some of them are, you know, very much so.

It's at the very, you know, forefront of their mind.

Someone will use this tool, and the governance policy has not been created, or it's not well known, or people have not been communicated with and saying that this is the just, you know, the route that we're going to go. So some of these things are challenging, and that means that the AI conversation is already happening.

But who's having it and what are they talking about? And what are leaders doing to help shape it in their organizations? And here is the central idea. I can accelerate the work. It can.

I mean, pretty much that's what computers have done, is that they've taken the work that we can do. There's nothing that a computer does that a human being cannot do. We just can't do it as fast.

It can accelerate the work, but only leadership can create the clarity, trust, help us learn the skill and the judgment that is needed to use the AI. Well, that matters, because AI adoption is not just a technology conversation. It is a leadership conversation.

It is a trust conversation, learning judgment conversations. And for many teams, it is also a fear conversation, as I alluded to earlier.

And of course, someone admitting that they're fearful just helps to further expose that there that they're fearful. So a lot of people are not going to necessarily come right out and say, well, you know, this here, this here AI has got me scared.

But in many cases, all of these concerns when someone mentions them is that there are some elements of fear that set the foundation for the way

that people may feel or why they may feel that way. So today we're not going to focus on which AI tool is best. I've used a couple of them. Some of them kind of blend together and feel the same.

It's like I can't quite tell if I'm using this one or that one. And in the others, they are tuned, you know, so there are ones out there that are tunable.

But what we're really going to look at is how, how we're going to focus on what leaders can do to start the right conversations. So let's go ahead and pull in today's leadership Pit stop. Let's get filled up and ready to get into the race.

So as we start to head back out to the track and there's that green flag moment, we're about to start the race, we can take a look at that. Elements of technology accelerate what's already present.

And computers are very much, you know, like garbage in, garbage out and they've been called high speed idiots. And essentially there's the, the thought is that there's no creativity there.

However, algorithms and our geniusness in developing even faster hardware to support the algorithms that process the information that are working collectively.

And what we have created in our genius is this service, the, that starts to feel like it's, it's building up knowledge and is utilizing and we can utilize it in, in a meaningful way.

Where AI really starts to take hold is when you're interacting with it and you think you're interacting with a person and that's where the AI can reach. You know, I think that's where it's eventually trying to go.

But as it is, it has the capability of just further enhancing what's here as well as it can be creative and think about other things. Again, like I said, I don't believe that AI can do anything that the human condition, that people cannot, it just has the ability to do it faster.

So it gives the impression like it's, like it's better.

And if you think about time is money and if people who really believe in that, then obviously then the AI is going to have a financial bottom line contribution because it can accomplish things quicker. And through that it can also increase profitability. And I'm not saying that that's a bad thing. It's just what is the context and how it is utilized.

Because if it speeds up what's already present, then if you've got an environment that utilizes wisdom, creativity, service, learning and stewardship, then it's going to accelerate those qualities. But it can also speed up confusion, bias, broken processes, fear and poor judgment.

Because if the processes are not firm in place, then the AI just has the potential to amplify what is already there. And it's not going to make you do anything.

It's going to come back with recommendations and then we're going to make the choice whether or not we're going to enact on them. So if we do not feel confident with results and we just utilize or we tune it to move in the direction that we feel is going to be the best outcome.

Okay, give us the best outcome based on these restrictions. That doesn't make any sense because the best outcome may think beyond.

But if we're now ready to accept that, you know, that quote unquote, outside the box thinking, then we might as well just continue to do it our own way and just not move down the road to perdition as fast as the AI could, could potentially take us. So if it speeds up those elements around confusion and busted processes and poor judgment, that is a leadership issue. That is not a technology one.

AI is just going to help the organization move faster in a particular direction. And what direction is it going in the same direction that we want to go or that we were going in?

Because we feel that this is the direction we don't need to change, we just need to do this better and faster and, and that in of itself will bring about the positive change. Or is it our logic, our methodology, the way of thinking that is actually the problem?

And then if we apply the H I and it just doesn't come out right, then who do we blame? Well, this technology was supposed to do all of this and everything else and, and even slice bread thinner. However, it's not happening. Well, you.

Because we want to look at those elements that help to provide things that are our clarity and provide support and help enhance the skill set and help alleviate the unsured feeling that we have about what responsible AI use looks like or even how it integrates into our processes or into our environment. Because speed without clarity can create chaos. Speed without trust can create resistance, and speed without governance can create unnecessary risk.

And speed without judgment, proper judgment, or I should say being curious, can create harm.

So the leadership challenge is not simply how do we use AI, but the better question is how do we help people use AI with clarity, confidence, responsibility and wisdom. And that's where leadership matters. So AI is here now, what? Because it's not some distant future conversation?

And what AI could potentially evolve into? Of course those are going to be conversations looking at how, what the evolution will be tomorrow.

But right now, what we got here has already accelerated by leaps and bounds. Now, AI, of course, is not a new concept. It goes back to decades.

It's just as computer technology in continuous evolution and investment into the, into the concept, into the eventual product is where we are today. Now where are we going to go tomorrow?

As the technology continues to accelerate to ever faster levels of evolution and Are we as individuals, as we as a collective society, as we as human beings, can we keep pace? Can we utilize the technology in a meaningful way while the enablement of it is taking us where, where are we going with that?

So already we see it showing up in writing tools, search tools, meeting summaries, analytics, customer service, HR systems, marketing platforms, and the list goes on. I remember utilizing it to create a report in five minutes on some metrics that would have taken me several hours.

So people are already interacting with it. Some, you know, some know that they're interacting with it. They are purposefully reaching out and connecting with it.

And then some may not fully realize how often AI is already touching their work. It may not be directly, there may be others that are involved with it.

And the outcome of a process that someone, you know picks up and moves to the next stage may have already been imprinted with some AI traces. So leaders do not have the luxury of ignoring this AI conversation and they do not need to respond with panic. Or how do I have that conversation?

I don't know that much about it as it is. Or I already got so much stuff to do, now I need to squeeze this in. So understandable.

And there are other ways, of course, we can approach those concerns and alleviate some of the frustration and move forward in a more meaningful way. And as I mentioned before, it's more of a conversation about leadership instead of the technology itself. So it's not about chasing every new tool.

It's not about replacing human beings with software, although we know that's happening. But we want, we, we need to be very mindful about what that looks like and what that is, because we can't pretend that there are no risks.

And it's not about standing still as our competitors or the rest of the world moves forward with this technology. The leadership posture should be a sobering optimism, because AI can create tremendous value when it is studied, planned, governed, and used well.

It can help reduce friction, reclaim time, support learning, generate ideas, help us see patterns emerging, give us a better starting point, help us to move from a blank page to a better first draft. But AI does not remove the need for leadership.

In many ways, it actually increases the need for leadership, because the more powerful the tool, the more important the curiosity and good

judgment of utilizing it. Guiding it becomes. So as technology accelerates what's already present, then how do we work with that? So let's stay with that idea for a moment.

Technology accelerates what is already present.

It's almost, I remember, I remember when I was sitting in Just reading with somebody for a play wasn't a play that I was going to be involved in, but reading through the lines with them. And it was about someone who won the lottery. And then one person said, well, you know, this person wasn't like that after they won that lotto.

Now they're this, that, and the other. And I would argue in many cases that there are certain things that we can enact on when we have the ability to do it.

And I say adoo much to adoo about nothing. Adu the ability, the desire and the opportunity. You remove any one of those, then whatever the subject matter at hand is, does not occur.

It doesn't happen. And if all three are in place, then things can change.

Now, you may not necessarily like the choices that you have available, and sometimes doing nothing is a choice in of itself. So when all three of those are present, then things can happen.

So if a team has a clear purpose, then AI may help them move forward with more meaningful outcomes. A team could have strong judgment, which then the AI can amplify with better and useful thinking partnerships.

If a team is creative, then AI can help generate more options. And if a team is committed to service, then the AI can reduce the administrative drag so people can spend more time creating value.

But if a process is broken, AI may help the broken process move faster. You know, are you really asking the AI to look at those elements that may hang up the process?

Depending on what information you give the AI, it may may detect that it, it may not.

So depending on how transparent you are with the AI, you know that you know, it, it may just take what you already got and just move it along quicker. So if you are already going down, well, now you're going down in flames.

Because if the communication is unclear, AI just might multiply those unclear messages. And if people don't know what good looks like, then the AI may just help create more of that type of output without improving the quality.

If leaders have not defined the boundaries, employees may just create their own. And if there is a fear that is already amplified, then AI just might increase or may further amplify that feeling.

So AI is not only an accelerator, but it can also be a revealer. It can reveal when things are not clear. It can review where we are not.

It can reveal where people are skilled, where they need development, where the processes are disciplined, where the processes are fragile, where trust is strong or thin. That's why such important leadership is necessary more than ever.

With AI becoming ingrained in our cultures, Think about a time well Think about this. I say a lesson from refrigeration.

So history, if we look at it, this is just nothing more than history repeating itself through another subject matter. Consider refrigeration. Before mechanical refrigeration became widespread, ice delivery was a real business.

Ice was harvested, it was stored, it was transported and it was delivered. People had an ice box that they could use to keep food cold so it wouldn't perish as easily.

But of course that ice would melt and then ice delivery was something that you subscribe to on a regular basis. But refrigeration changed the model, it changed the game.

For those who identify with the business that was tied to ice delivery, refrigeration could look like a threat. You know, there's new technology is coming along and how are we going to compete? And if they felt that, that it was a threat, it, yes it was.

I mean, just. And, and again, like depending on where you're at with AI, AI could feel like a threat. And depending on certain processes, yes it is.

And that might be a good thing. But if we look, look at the threat that refrigeration created for the ice industry, which is not totally gone.

I mean, usually you go to the gas station and you can get a bag of ice, you know, for, you know, if you have a celebration and you don't have enough ice on hand, so it's not totally going away.

But imagine if that, that's all, that's the only way that you could get, you know, that you get ice or cool your refrigeration, which is, which is basically an ice box, you know, it wasn't a refrigeration. However, if we look at refrigeration, it did not simply disrupt ice delivery, it created new possibilities.

Food could preserve longer, medicine could be stored more safely. So now you're talking about life saving opportunities. Grocery systems changed, restaurants changed, transportation changed, homes.

Now you could live in areas of the country that were not very hospitable.

So with the quality of life improved because of refrigeration, that the disruption to the ice industry, it was just a matter of retooling those who are a part of the ice industry to become part of the refrigeration industry. The development of leadership.

The question was not only what job does this threaten, it was what new value becomes possible when this capability is studied, planned, governed and used. Well, AI deserves the same kind of leadership. Maturity, not blind enthusiasm, not fear based resistance.

Careful study, clear purpose, responsible use, and human judgment. When leaders only see new technology as a threat to the current model they may miss new value systems that it can create.

But when leaders rush towards new technology without asking hard questions, they just might create confusion, risk and in distrust. So the leadership challenge is to hold both truths. AI creates opportunity and AI creates risk.

How much do we do in business that that already encompasses? And we've done it for hundreds of years, if not thousands. Leadership determines how the organization learns, adapts, governs and grows.

This is, I mentioned that AI is an accelerator. It's a revealer in a leadership test. Because if we look at leadership first being an accelerator, it can help move work faster. No doubt.

Now we've anybody who's got deep enough into AI and utilized it to try to reword an email for a more of a strength based approach instead of a deficit based one can attest to that interaction. So it can definitely help accelerate, move the work faster. But it can also reveal, it can expose what is already present in the human system.

So if there's elements and it has enough information to look at how things flow, it may be able to find some things that are hampering that flow. And then third, AI is a leadership test. I mean we don't maybe necessarily think about it in, in the sense of a test.

However, when we encounter these things, we are being tested. I remember some, some pastor friends of mine, one who used to say, you know, there's no testimony without a test.

You know, there's, you know, for every mess there is a message. You know, so there's, there's all of these opportunities that through our adversary that we can come out stronger on the other end.

Just like going to the gym, we build muscle mass through resistance. That resistance makes us stronger. So in this case, if we embrace it in a meaningful way, this can in will make us stronger. I've seen it happen.

It can help reduce repetitive work so people can concentrate on things of more meaningful value. It can help people start faster. Like one of the sayings, once begun, it's half done, suggesting that getting started at times is the hardest part.

It can help the team generate options because it can see so much that's out there, or it can take information that you provided that you know is good, high quality information and it can disseminate it a lot quicker and a lot more thoroughly than we might be able to within a given time frame. It can help make learning more accessible.

There are a lot of options and a lot of incredible things in the learning platforms that I've seen where certain simulations that AI can help us get a little more experience with some of those challenges.

And since we're not necessarily in a threat mindset, because we're working with an AI in our simulation and we know it's a simulation, we know we're not going to get harmed.

And if we get yelled at by a simulation, then, you know, we may not necessarily be comfortable with it, but it's not as bad as if it was the real thing.

Our creative mind is a little bit more open to help circumvent that amygdala hijacking because it's not a real threat and it can help us to discover and be creative about solutions that we can reference later when the time comes and we really need it. So we can accelerate all these things.

And it's not the same as being effective with them, because if the work is unclear, then the faster output may not really help. If the processes are broken, then the execution, it just might create more waste.

And if the decision criterias are weak, then faster analysis may not produce wiser decisions because the speed has to be guided by purpose. And that's where AI can, can reveal, it can only reveal what you tell it.

And it might be in our minds to think about this is the way things are in this environment. And if the AI doesn't know that, then it cannot take that into account when it is making a recommendation. So it's difficult. It's challenging.

You can walk up to somebody and you can say, tell me everything you know. And they can sit there for days telling you what they know and inadvertently they're going to forget something. It's just a part of who we are.

We're not going to have total recall, you know, on all of those elements. So, so when AI reveals, it's only going to reveal what it's exposed to.

And if it has enough information, it can potentially reveal where people don't know, you know, when people don't know what tools to use or what they can use. You know, if there's any, is there any AI governance, any policy, you know, on it in the organization.

And if employees are afraid to ask questions, then if the AI is given that consideration or that possibility, then it may create some recommendations, you know, based on that, you know, based on those

observations, you know, so those things can, can, can occur. It can provide some insights.

If managers have not created space for experimentation, then that in of itself does not provide much wiggle room for people to experiment. Try this, try that, and see what works, you know, works best.

And that's one of the things that, you know, that Edison had, was Essentially had like a, like an idea factory. He gave people the room to try things out and experiment.

And that's, you know, I understand that that is not possible in every environment to that extent, but there should be some room to allow some freedom of thought and creativity to emerge.

And when that is revealed to the AI and it's used in a meaningful way with proper guidance, then some wonderful things can emerge or happen from that. So a lot of the elements that it can reveal again is based on what it is exposed to or what it knows. Sometimes the, again, sometimes the tool.

So if you put this stuff into the AI and it's again not coming out or what you're looking for, because that could be a concern within of itself. I mentioned briefly earlier that silence is an option.

So you got all these different choices and you don't make a choice that is enough so of in of itself as a choice. So when we utilize these sophisticated AI tools and we're not getting back out what we're looking for, it might not be the tool that has the problem.

I mean, it, it's possible.

But we need to kind of take a look at what some of those elements that the AI knows when it goes to work towards creating some recommendations towards a solution. And that's where leadership comes in.

Because again, as I mentioned, that the AI adoption is not simply about accessing the technology, but it does mean that people have, have the tool, they do have the resource available to help them succeed at what they're being asked to do or what they want to contribute. That helps to move towards the goals that we want to achieve as an organization.

So when we look at what we're going to adopt, people will know why, when and how to use it responsibly. And that's where leadership can come in, help provide that guidance.

But when you look at those elements, you know the how, when and so forth, that there are different things and the leader can give people access to the tool and they could still be unclear as to what to do next. Okay, I've got this, I got an instruction manual. Here's some tutorials. However, what do I do with all of this?

And here's where a leader can encourage the experimentation, but they may still fail to create guardrails. So how do you provide that guidance?

Because a leader can talk about innovation and still punish mistakes, but mistakes are going to happen.

If people don't feel safe enough to utilize it in a meaningful way, then they may not move in a direction that we ultimately hope that they will go. Because A leader can tell people to use the AI and still provide no training examples or boundaries. Is it. Well, it's an AI. Just ask it how to use it.

Oh, it's. It does go a little, a little deeper than that. It goes a lot deeper than that.

So these are the elements that contributes to why AI is also a leadership test.

It's going to test how you interact with this resource in a meaningful way that contributes to the tools and resources that people understand how to use them in a way that follows organizational policies, that helps to reach the goals and maintain what the organization's meaning in the environment is for in the first place. So let's consider a commonplace workplace story. Renee, she leads a team that is under pressure. The work is moving fast in the deadlines are tighter.

There are more reports, emails, more meetings, more data, more requests, more opportunities for potential confusion. However, some of the members have started using AI quietly. They're not exactly sure how leadership will respond.

They enter information in is, you know, well, are they entering in any trade secrets, any internal processes that need to be confidential to the organization, but they're not exactly sure. Entered to one of those it's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission type of situations.

So one person tries to use it to summarize meeting notes, and another may brainstorm on first drafts. Another person may use it to organize ideas, but they're not talking about it openly because they're not sure what they can and cannot do.

And if they found something that helps to ease their workload or ease their workflow, then of course they are not necessarily going to want to risk it being taken away. So they might just be kind of quiet.

Now those are those who are adopting it and they're the first movers and they're, they're getting comfortable with the technology and they see the virtues that it can provide. But then you've got some others that just say, I don't trust it. It even says they're at the bottom.

You know, double check, you know what it tells you because it might be incorrect. Another person, they just don't know where to start there. Where do they go? Which one do they use? Do they have to get an account?

What's the difference between free and paid? And, you know, so there, there's that someone else may be worried. Is this going to be the first step towards replacing people?

If I start to embrace this technology, am I just contributing to my own demise?

And then there's others that say, well, leadership says that AI is important, but no one's explained what success looks like, or what does this mean to us, or even to me in my role. So the team is divided. They may not be openly divided, but quietly. They may be talking amongst themselves.

And some may say, okay, well, that's good for you, but I'm going to do things the old fashioned way because I know that's what works for me. And there's just this workplace uncertainty that is emerging in the absence of a conversation does not mean the absence of concern.

So Renee realizes that the issue is not just about AI access. It's there. People can get to it, even the free stuff. It's. It's there, so it's here. But the issue is clarity.

There's an issue of trust, there's an issue of skill, and then there's an issue of how to utilize it, the judgment. So she calls a team meeting.

She wants to discuss this, but instead of starting off by saying, here's the AI tool that we're going to use, she starts a little bit differently. She says, I know AI is already a part of workplace conversation.

Some of us are curious, some of us are cautious, some are already experimenting, and some may have concerns. But what I don't want is for this conversation to be happening in the shadows. Today. We're not starting with which tool to use.

We're going to start with the work. Then she asks, where is our work? Creating unnecessary friction. Those are the type of questions that change the room.

People begin talking about repeated reports, meeting notes, handoffs, emails, duplicated data entry, status updates and information searches, and more. So Renee interjects and asks, where could AI support our work without replacing human judgment? That question keeps the conversation balanced.

The team identifies a few possibilities.

Some meeting summaries, first drafts of some routine conversations, maybe some checklist creations, idea generations, document comparisons, training support. Again, the list can go on. The list goes on. But then Renee asks, what concerns or risks do we need to name?

Now the real conversation begins, because now we're talking about it.

We're starting to define it, identify it, recognize it, you know, so there's some discussion around the accuracy, the privacy, the confidentiality, the bias, you know, over reliance, job security, quality, customer trust, professional judgment. And then she further

asked a question around what are the boundaries that can help us use AI responsibly?

And this is where you start bringing in the discussion about guardrails.

How do we want to utilize this and guide the use of it so that it is productive and it does not potentially bring harm, harm to the organization or the members, you know, of IT or our clients. So they look at some elements that contribute to how do we manage this? Do not enter confidential information into unapproved tools.

Do not send AI generated content without human review. So many times I've seen that and it looks like a big boondoggle.

And I think in some cases there's people who are against AI and they use AI in a less meaningful or unproductive way just to try to prove the point that AI shouldn't be used. Do not use AI as the final decision maker. So they, they draft that guideline. Do not use it to avoid difficult human conversations.

You can get some ideas, but by no means utilize it in a way that avoids those. Do not use AI to reduce administrative drag when quality and privacy can be protected.

And do not use AI to support learning, brainstorming and preparation in place of human oversight.

So of course we can use AI to support the learning, brainstorming and preparation, but not just take it as the end product and go run with it as, you know, as the, as the alpha. So Renee then wraps up I saying, what?

So we, we got this understanding, we got these ideas, we've got some boundaries around how we're going to utilize it, but what small experiment could we run and learn from? So the team thinks about it and they come up with one that they could, that they could point at.

And for two weeks, they will use an approved AI tool to create a first draft of meeting summaries and action item lists. Each summary will be reviewed by a person before distribution.

And at the end of the experiment, the team will evaluate the time saved, the accuracy, the usefulness and any concerns, and that is responsible adoption. It's not hype, it's not fear. It's learning to help support clarity, good judgment and quality influence, which is leadership.

And again, we want to start with the work because again, going back to that saying on computers, garbage in, garbage out.

You want to make certain that you're looking at the work and how you're going to utilize it into an AI, into a large language model in a meaningful way. Many organizations may begin by saying, okay, well, which AI tool should we buy? What platform should we adopt? Which system should we integrate?

Should we, you know, take our HRIS system and put it into an AI or take our accounting system? These questions may matter later. They are important questions. However, for now, leaders should ask what work needs to be better?

What work needs to be clearer? What work needs to be faster, needs stronger judgment? What work is draining human energy without requiring human excellence?

So what are some of those mundane tasks, you know, that we can offload and place that person on more thought provoking meaningful work. And what work should not be automated because that human relationship matters too much.

So there are quality services like hospitality systems that make certain that they want to have that human interaction and human touch, where others may have an AI generated or managed interactive voice recognition IVR system where you just go through a bunch of prompts and hope that you can get your question answered before getting handed off eventually to a person anyway. Or some systems I've seen that just keep you going in circles until you get fed up and hang up. So AI should not be the hammer looking for nails.

It should be a capability applied to meaningful work. And if the work has not been understood, then the AI might just be simply a confusion acceleration. So before using AI, audit the work.

Where is the friction? Where is the rework? Where are the delays? Where are people copying and pasting? Who are the people who are creating reports that no one reads?

Where are people searching for information that should be easier to find? And where are people doing routine work that prevents them from doing higher value work? That is where responsible AI conversations begin.

So let's be very clear. AI can support the work, but human judgment must remain in control. It must be the central element, because that's what we're here for.

That's who we serve, that's what we do. We contribute to the human condition. Who's best to do that? Humans. Can we utilize tools that can help us do that better? Absolutely.

But human condition must be seen central. And AI can help with that.

It can help by drafting, summarizing, organizing, research, preparation, pattern recognition, brainstorming, scenario planning, administrative lift, tons of different things.

But the human must remain responsible for the ethics, the empathy, the context, the accountability, the final decision, relationships, sensitive conversations, meaning trust, stewardship. There are moments where AI can help prepare humans, obviously, but it should not replace humans.

A leader may use AI to prepare a difficult conversation, but the AI should not have the conversation for them. A team may use AI to identify possible risks, but the humans must decide what those risks mean.

A manager may use AI to draft a development plan, but the employees still deserve a human conversation marked by care. Listening in context. That is the difference between using AI responsibly and then hiding behind AI conveniently.

Here are five questions leaders can use to guide an AI conversation with their team. We talked about a little of this earlier, but I'll just put them here collectively. The first question is where is the work creating friction?

Ask people where the Work is slower, heavier or more repetitive than it needs to be. Look for the friction before looking for the tool. Question two, where could AI support human work?

Ask where AI could bring people drafts, summaries, organize, analyze, brainstorm, or prepare. But also ask where human judgment must remain in control. Question three, what concerns need to be named? Make space for real concerns.

Accuracy, bias, privacy, confidentiality, ethics, job security, quality, customer trust. Concerns do not disappear because leaders avoid them. They often become stronger in those cases. Question 4. What guardrails do we need?

Clarify those boundaries.

And this may happen over time, but the initial conversation should look at things like what tools are approved and if there hasn't been any approval, then of course, governance needs to be created and move forward on that so that we're not utilizing resources that might be in opposition with the direction that we want to go. What information should not be entered?

You know, if it's not our own closed system that's going to run on our resources, then we want to be concerned about, you know, maybe, you know, corporate theft of information or lost information. Because when you utilize someone else's system, you're trusting that their security is in place to maintain, you know, that confidentiality.

So you want to make certain, there's certain assurances in who you may use that may help provide guidance. Who, or I should say, what outputs require review.

So there are certain things, when the AI provides, you know, a recommendation that certain ones, yeah, we can, we could pretty much go with that, still have a set of eyes, take a look at it, make the final call. But for the most part, certain things, certain pieces of information, we would require minimum oversight.

Other things might require a lot of oversight. So who takes a look at that? What uses are encouraged?

So when there are certain things that, you know, that happen in the environment that are prime use for plugging into an AI, then we want to make certain that people are encouraged to use it for that purpose. What uses are not appropriate?

So maybe we do open it up and if someone has a personal question about something that contributes to their own edification, maybe it's perfectly fine that they can use it for that in other cases, maybe not.

Maybe we don't want this model that is trying to learn who we are as an organization and understand what we do so that it can provide us with better information in the future. We don't necessarily want to cloud that with personal questions fielded to the AI.

So some governance around that can help to determine how we should or should not utilize it. And again, not forgetting the human condition, you know, what decisions require human accountability?

We can't say that the AI is accountable in of itself. It's a tool and we have to be accountable for how we utilize that tool.

These guardrails contribute towards creating trust because it helps to remove some of the vulnerability around the ambiguity around proper use. In question five, what small experiment can we run? Choose one experiment. Keep it specific, keep it bounded, keep it measurable.

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You know, you can use a SMART goals and that acronym is just know that it's specific, you know that it's measurable, it's achievable that it is measurable, and that it's time bound. Share what works, name what did not adjust, then decide whether to continue, stop, or try something else. That's how the team can learn responsibly.

So victory Leadership may hear us talk about clarity, confidence and growth. And AI adoption requires all three. Clarity says we understand why this matters, where it fits, and what responsible use looks like.

Confidence says we can learn this. We can practice, we can ask questions, we can build skill. Growth says we are willing to adapt, but we will do so responsibly.

That last part matters because growth is not just movement. Growth requires responsibility. Not everyone, or I should say, not every use of AI is wise.

Not every output is reliable, not every task should be automated, and not every human movement should be delegated. Responsible Growth asks, what are we becoming as we use this? That's a leadership question. That's really an everyone question.

So here's the ask for this week. Hold one AI conversation with your team. Do not start with the tool, start with the work. As I shared earlier, you can ask, where's the friction?

How could AI help? Where must human judgment remain central? What concerns do we need to name? What small responsible experiment could we try?

You do not need to solve the entire AI strategy in one meeting. This is going to take some time. You may simply just need to move the conversation out of the shadows and into a safe, clear, responsible space.

That may be the first leadership win. So in the next episode, we're going to continue this conversation from a different angle.

If this episode is about leading responsible AI adoption, the next one will be about the human advantage in the age of AI. Because AI becomes powerful and human strengths may become more important, not less.

Again that judgment, empathy, curiosity, courage, discernment, creativity, context, trust, meaning making, these are. These are not outdated leadership qualities. They're very much necessary.

They may become the qualities that determine whether AI creates value or confusion. So next time we will ask what can humans bring that AI cannot fully replace or replace at all?

How can leaders create a healthy partnership between human capability and artificial intelligence? That will be our next conversation.

So again, can AI accelerate the work, but only if leadership creates clarity, trust, skill and judgment needed to use it well.

As technology accelerates, it's only going to accelerate what is present if we can speed up wisdom, creativity, service and learning, and stewardship. Excellent. But we want to avoid and refrain from speeding up confusion, bias, broken processes, fear and poor judgment.

That means leaders cannot avoid the AI conversation, but what they do not have to lead with is fear. They can lead with clarity, confidence, responsibility and with a commitment to human centered growth.

So again this week, start with the conversation, not the tool, with the work. Because good leadership leads to victory. I will see you in the winner's circle. Thank you everybody. Have a great day.

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