



## Leading Through Languish

We all hit that patch. The gears are turning, the to-do list is growing, and yet something feels...flat. It's not burnout. It's not boredom. It's something in between. That murky middle ground where motivation drifts and focus fogs over. Psychologist Adam Grant calls it **languishing**; "the neglected middle child of mental health."

It's that subtle sense of stagnation where you're doing stuff, but you're not moving. Especially for seasoned leaders, this feeling often sneaks in not during crisis, but in the calm when the major fires are out and the routine resumes.

I know for myself, and a few of my clients, this feeling rears its ugly head in the summer months - when it is slower in the office or you are the one covering for those that are away. It's too eerily quiet and things are just going...slowly.

If you're feeling stuck in a professional pause - not failing, but not flourishing - you're not alone. This isn't the end. It's a checkpoint.

A pause for recalibration. Sometimes the breakthrough comes after the rut, not around it.

None of this required a title change, a sabbatical, or a life overhaul. Just a **new lens** and a **few brave choices**.

Be Inspired. Be Inspiring.  
Stacie

## Client Story

Client Story: Director of Engineering at a Technical Consulting Firm

My client recently shared that he felt like he was in "the Wednesday afternoon" of his career. Not at the start, not at the end, just...in the thick of it. When my client realized he was feeling disengaged, we broke it down together. He wasn't burned out - he still had gas in the tank. But the spark was gone. What had once excited him now felt like rinse and repeat. He said: "I'm hitting my numbers, leading the team, putting in the hours...but I'm not moved by any of it. I'm managing, not leading."

He wasn't looking for a reinvention. He was looking for re-engagement. We worked together to uncover what used to ignite him - mentoring younger engineers, simplifying complex systems, and creating spaces where others could shine. His next act isn't about pushing harder - it is about reconnecting with purpose. We mapped out what used to bring him energy - not just in the work, but in how he worked:

- **Reclaim the Joy of Mentorship** - He remembered how much he loved mentoring young engineers, but over the years, his calendar had been swallowed by status meetings and boardroom politics. So he carved out time each week for "curiosity conversations" with two emerging leaders - no performance talk, just growth and vision. **Try This:** Schedule one 30-minute "non-agenda" conversation each week with someone a few steps behind you. Ask what lights them up - and see what sparks in you, too.
- **Get Back to What Got You into This Work** - My client was missing the technical puzzles - the part where you get to solve, not just oversee. So he joined a struggling project team as a strategic advisor - not to micromanage, but to decode what was holding them back. **Try This:** Think back to what you loved doing in the early part of your career. Is there a way to reintroduce even a small piece of that into your current role?
- **Redefine What "Finishing Strong" Looks Like** - Rather than counting down the days to retirement, my client set a legacy goal: to help shift the culture so technical talent didn't feel they had to become managers to be seen as leaders. He became a champion for visible career paths, peer recognition, and a broader definition of leadership. **Try This:** Ask yourself: What do I want to leave behind, beyond results? Whether it's people, culture, or mindset - legacy is leadership's quiet crescendo.

This three pronged approach became his **North Star**. His career languishing has shifted back into career flourishing.

*"DON'T ASK YOURSELF WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS. ASK YOURSELF WHAT MAKES YOU COME ALIVE, AND GO DO THAT." - HOWARD THURMAN*