

THIS MONTH'S INSIGHT

Leadership | Ownership | Vision | Empathy

From the L.O.V.E.™ Desk

Make it a habit to pause before you respond. Not every situation requires an immediate reaction. Some require understanding.

Empathy asks you to slow down long enough to consider what may be influencing someone before deciding how to address it.

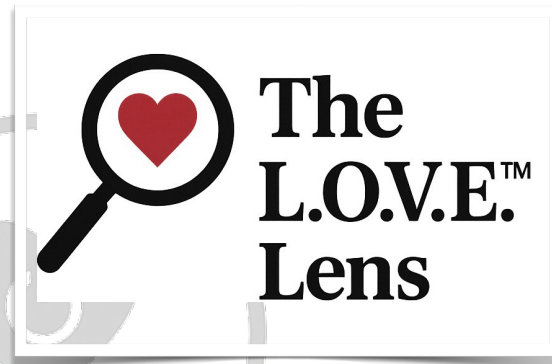
Still Rising: Monthly Reflections

Empathy requires more than awareness. It requires intention. The way you respond in difficult moments will shape how people experience you long after the moment has passed.

L.O.V.E.™ Gem

Empathy begins with perspective. When you take a moment to consider the experience of others, your response changes.

Try This: Before responding in your next interaction, ask yourself, *"If I were on the receiving end of this, how would I want to be treated?"* Then lead from that answer.



Empathy: A Necessary Superpower at Work

By Simone Daniels, M.S., HRD

Empathy is not loud. It is necessary.

It does not always show up in big moments. Most of the time, it shows up in how we respond when things are not going well, when expectations are not being met, and when people are not showing up the way we expect them to.

In the workplace, empathy is often misunderstood. It is not softness. It is not avoidance. It is not lowering standards.

Empathy is awareness.

It is the discipline of pausing long enough to recognize that there may be more beneath the surface than what we see. It is choosing to understand before we correct.

The employee who is not meeting expectations may not be disengaged. The colleague who responds quickly may not be trying to be difficult. The team member who has gone quiet may be doing their best to hold it together.

We do not always know what people are carrying. But how we respond still matters. Empathy does not remove accountability. It strengthens it. It allows leaders to address performance without dismissing the person behind it. It creates space for clarity, support, and honest conversation while still moving the work forward.



In your next one-on-one or team conversation, notice the moment when you feel the urge to correct, redirect, or respond quickly.

Instead of moving straight into the work, pause. Create space for understanding first; then say, "Help me understand what's been happening here. What am I not seeing that I need to understand?"

This Challenge:

- Encourages leaders to slow down and recognize when they are reacting instead of leading.
- Creates space for perspective before moving into expectations and correction.
- Reinforces accountability while ensuring people feel heard, not dismissed.

"If you don't understand the root of the issues, how can you respond with the correct solutions?"

-Simone Daniels

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L.O.V.E.™ Reflection

1. Am I trying to be right, or am I trying to understand?
2. What is my immediate reaction telling me, and is it helping or hurting this situation?
3. How do my words and tone impact how others experience me when things are not going well?
4. What would it look like to address this situation with both clarity and care?

People may not remember every word that was said in a meeting, but they will remember how they felt when they left it. That feeling becomes part of how they interpret the interaction, and over time, it shapes how they engage moving forward.

That becomes their experience of your leadership, and that becomes your legacy. It is not built in one conversation, but in the consistency of how you show up, especially when things are not going well.

Empathy is not about having all the answers. It is about asking yourself, "If I were on the receiving end of this interaction, how would I want to be treated?" That question has the ability to slow you down just enough to respond with intention instead of reaction.

In moments where expectations are not being met, it can be easy to focus only on the outcome. Empathy shifts the focus just enough to consider the person behind it, without losing sight of what still needs to be addressed.

This is where strong leadership is developed. It is not in avoiding difficult conversations, but in having them in a way that maintains clarity while also preserving dignity. That balance is what allows people to remain engaged, even when they are being challenged.

When leaders take the time to understand before responding, they begin to see patterns they might have otherwise missed. They recognize where support is needed, where clarity is lacking, and where expectations may need to be reinforced. That level of awareness allows them to respond more effectively, not just in the moment, but in a way that strengthens performance over time.

In the workplace, empathy is not optional. It is necessary.

Leadership rooted in L.O.V.E.™ creates a legacy worth leaving behind.