Why Your AI Strategy Needs Fewer Dashboards and More Humanity

Allegra Care-Dare-Share Newsletter - Issue #4 - 5 min read

When I stepped away from the C-suite in December, I'll admit - I had my doubts.

After years driving digital transformations at some of Europe's large financial organizations, helping bloom the Netherlands' first digital bank, and leading award-winning AI initiatives at Virgin Money, I wondered: could I really build something meaningful starting from scratch? Just me and a simple question: what if software and humans could work like a team, amplifying each other?

That experiment became Claridora, and then 4 AI agents. Since launching my "How-to Guide to Agentic AI" and beginning interviews for my upcoming book "Care, Dare, Share: Lead and Thrive with Heart, Mind, AI" something unexpected happened. Board members, CEOs, and chairmen started reaching out, not for polished consulting presentations, but for honest conversations about their AI transformation struggles.

The pattern became clear: transformations were an art at the best of times, but now, with the advent of AI, they are crucially needed and require a real balance between difficult choices: on people, on processes, on methods, on strategy. Senior leaders are facing difficult choices with little basis of experience.

So in this Newsletter, I will tackle, week after week, the key questions senior leaders raise with me and propose a simple, practical, action-driven approach to solve them.

When I first started working with executive teams on AI transformation, the same scene played out almost every time. A polished 50 pages deck produced by a consultant would emerge: full of traffic-light dashboards, five-stage maturity models, and 2030 vision statements.

But by the end of the meeting, I realised something uncomfortable:
Not a single person had asked what problem we were solving for the people in the organisation.

That moment stayed with me.

Since then, I've seen a familiar pattern repeat itself in boardrooms across industries. Faced with AI's complexity, leaders retreat to what feels safe: dashboards, frameworks, and delivery plans. Well laid out and colour-coded. The illusion of progress.

But here's what I believe now, more than ever:
Dashboards don't drive transformation. People do.

Your AI strategy doesn't need more quarterly KPI pack. It needs more *human* questions. More courageous listening. More trust in the messiness of real change.

So in this issue, I want to unpack a truth few AI consultants say out loud:
If you want to succeed in AI transformation, you need to **focus less on visibility** and more on **vulnerability**.

The Dashboard Delusion

Dashboards are designed for control. They tell us what's happening, how fast, where the bottlenecks are.

But control is not the same as *understanding*. And it's certainly not the same as *alignment*.

I sat recently with the exec team of a fast-scaling fintech. Their AI deployment status dashboard showed everything "on track." But when I ran a quick set of unfiltered conversations with their product and frontline teams, I heard:

- "We don't know what to do when the AI suggestion doesn't make sense."

- "I feel like I'm expected to trust the tool more than my own judgment."

- "No one explained why we're even doing this."

Everything was green on the chart. Everything was red in the culture.

We've trained ourselves to optimise processes, not *conversations*. This feeling of "being imposed a process" is the beginning of a transformation losing any chance of long lasting impact.

The Metric That Matters Most: Feeling Heard

I often ask senior leaders a provocative question:
When was the last time your AI strategy made someone feel truly heard?

Usually, I get a pause. A glance at the floor.

And then: "What do you mean? Isn't this about productivity, automation, ROI?"

Yes. But also no.

AI is not just a technology project. It is a *catalyst project*. It forces questioning the way we do things, to redesign processes, to redefines roles. Identity. Purpose. Trust.

A risk manager told me last month:
 "I used to *know* what my value was to the company. Now I feel like a babysitter for an algorithm."

This is passive resistance, turning to almost grief and feeling unheard. These things don 't show up on a dashboard, but they eat at the performance and the enthusiasm of your human capital everyday and they often become the root causes of people not spotting when systems go awry and disaster (reputational, processing or other) unfolds. It is at the root of tis type of sentence "I did not realise I could question the AI system" or "ze did it because the AI system said so".

If your AI strategy doesn't acknowledge emotional reactions, you're not doing transformation. You're just upgrading your tech stack and downgrading your human capital.

CARE: Start With Empathy, Not Efficiency

In my *Care-Dare-Share* model, the Care piece always comes first—for good reason.

Because before your people adopt AI, they need to be seen. Before they trust the system, they need to trust *you*.

Empathy is not a soft skill. It's a strategic lever.

Here's what empathy looks like in action:

- One retail bank scrapped its initial chatbot rollout because a frontline service rep pointed out that elderly clients would feel excluded by the change. That rep's insight led to a human-AI hybrid model, and a 40% increase in customer satisfaction.

- At a UK insurer, we ran a series of "AI Experience Circles" with junior staff, asking one question: *"Where do you feel unsupported in your daily work?"* What surfaced wasn't a need for automation, it was a need for more intelligent information summarisation. That changed the roadmap.

Empathy is your shortest path to relevance. Because it starts with what people, customers or employees, *actually need*, not what the market is shouting.

DARE: Let Go of the Illusion of Control

There's an addiction in leadership to having a "plan." But with AI, you often need to act before you're ready, learn before you're comfortable, and adapt faster than your reporting cycles.

This is deeply countercultural in many organisations. We like to know. To measure. To control.

But AI transformation is not a Six Sigma project. It's more like learning jazz improvisation. You can't script it, you have to *feel your way forward,* you have to develop intuitions as a leader and as an organisation.

This is what daring looks like:

- Launching low-stakes experiments with teams who are *curious*, not just compliant.

- Piloting before your policies are finalised, so policy grows out of practice.

- Giving people room to question the tool, critique it, and suggest alternatives.

One of my favourite examples:
A payments firm I worked with encouraged their compliance team to "break" a generative AI tool, on purpose, ie to bring it to give the wrong answers to their daily situations. The learnings didn't just improve risk controls. They shifted the team's posture from fear to ownership.

When you dare to involve people early, before everything is figured out, you get smarter solutions and deeper engagement.

SHARE: Make Your AI Story Personal

Most AI comms I read are cold, generic, and lifeless: "We are proud to announce the successful deployment of…"

But the reality of AI transformation is personal, vulnerable, and messy. And your people need to *see* that.

I'll never forget the CHRO who started her internal AI learning campaign by sending a video to her entire staff, no script, no slides. Just her, on her phone, saying: "I'm not an expert. But I'm learning. Let's do it together."

Guess what happened?
Within two days, dozens of employees responded with their own stories. They shared use cases, frustrations, and early wins.

That company's AI playbook wasn't built by consultants.
It was built by *dialogue*.

When leaders share honestly, they invite others to do the same.

Build Your Own Human-Centric AI Framework

If I had to give you one tool to start realigning your AI strategy with people, it would be along these lines. And of course, you should adapt it to your specifics, so that it becomes your one way to transformation:

The Human-Centric AI Maturity Ladder
 (Adapted from my CARE-DARE-SHARE framework)

Level 1: Personal Engagement
Have senior leaders use AI tools *personally,* from summarising reports to drafting presentations to small autmations. The goal is to develop personal intuition.

Level 2: Team Co-Creation
Have some AI experiments co-designed with cross-functional teams, with listening sessions before rollouts.

Level 3: Organisational Dialogue
Set up feedback systems to track *feelings*, not just metrics. This way human experience becomes a core KPI, not a fluffy anecdote.

Level 4: Embedded Humanity
Review the AI strategy not just for ROI but for emotional and cultural alignment. Your governance should include questions like "Who feels excluded?" and "What does this tool assume about people?"

If your organisation jumps straight to Level 4 without moving through Levels 1–3, you're not scaling insight. You're scaling disconnect.

Ask Better Questions

AI doesn't replace leadership. It amplifies it. And good leadership starts with good questions.

Here are five to take into your next boardroom conversation:

1. What human problem are we solving with this AI initiative?

2. Who feels heard, and who doesn't, in our current deployment model?

3. What do we know about how this tool is experienced, not just how it performs?

4. Are our leaders using AI personally, or just signing off on budgets?

5. What's the story we're telling our people, and is it honest?

Your Next Move

Here's your 30-minute challenge this week:

Run a "Silent Signals" Session: sit with a small team. No slides. No agenda. Just ask:
👉 *"Where does our current AI plan feel like it's missing the human point?"*

Then listen. Not to answer. To understand.

Your greatest insight will not be hiding in a spreadsheet, it is hiding in the story someone hasn't felt safe enough to tell you yet.

Next week: Why a great AI strategy starts with being uncomfortably honest.
Until then…..care deeply, dare bravely, and share humanly.

Allegra