

## 5 ways to improve how you lead in a VUCA world

To lead well in our VUCA world where volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity reign, you've got to tap into different skills than what you've relied on to date. For example, you can't depend on yourself and your smarts since the shelf life of knowledge is almost shorter than milk.

Instead, focus on interdependency. To do so, be more intentional about involving and working with others, as well as being more inclusive and inquisitive, especially to achieve innovation.

How do you become more intentional, inclusive, and inquisitive? Embrace your humanity by using your most important tool/organ: your brain. Here are five ways you can lean into being more human and become a better leader for our VUCA world.

### 1. Learn how to help your brain when you're under pressure.



Being self-aware helps you work better with others as well as manage yourself. Self-awareness extends to knowing how your brain responds in different circumstances, especially when you're under pressure. The brain is our most complex organ serving as the body's command center. While all human brains share the same architecture, each individual brain is unique. That's why learning how your brain responds and reacts can transform how you feel and perform.

Here's [How to become more self-aware: get to know your brain](#)

### 2. Build and maintain “psychological safety” with others.



When individuals don't feel they're intentionally included in a group, they feel excluded. And they can start to fear being ridiculed, rejected or retaliated against. (This is how the brain responds to perceived threats.)

As a leader, regularly send clear signs to your team members and others that they belong, you want to hear their voices, and they're valuable contributors. When you provide psychological safety, people feel they can be more creative, make better decisions and innovate.

Here's [Why you need safety for a high-performing culture](#) plus ideas for building it.

### 3. Spend more time inquiring rather than advocating.



While many leaders assume their role is to influence and inspire others, effective inclusive leaders make a concentrated effort to practice inquiry. By listening and asking instead of primarily advocating your point of view, you learn more as well as show you care about others.

When you take time to ask about others' life experiences, backgrounds, aspirations and their stories, you better understand their perspectives.

That gives you insights about them and their work, helps you develop stronger relationships, and build mutual trust.

Check out [How to be more comfortable with inquiry and advocacy](#) and [How to be a better ally: improve your listening](#)

#### 4. Speak like you drive.



As a leader, you can't assume that you'll always have people's attention when you want it or need it. You need to communicate very intentionally to cut through clutter, gain people's attention and get them focused on taking appropriate and meaningful actions.

You can do so by practicing the 4 S's: be succinct, specific, sincere, and signal where you're going. When you use all four together – similar to what good drivers do – you can stay on track and drive messages home in a clear and credible manner.

Here's more on how [How to speak like you drive](#).

#### 5. Show kindness, caring and empathy.



Employees are looking for leaders who show their humility and vulnerability as they express kindness, compassion and empathy. And employees also expect their leaders to navigate uncertainty and ambiguity as they successfully steer the organization. This is what executive presence looks today.

Yet, some leaders may struggle with empathy in these two situations: they favor analytic thinking over relationships and they rely on power.

Ask yourself: [Can you overcome two obstacles to lead with empathy?](#)

### How you can be a more intentional, inquisitive, and inclusive leader



If you recognize that you need to revisit how you're leading, that's an important first step. Next, keep in mind there's no playbook you can follow to deal with all the external volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

Instead you need to reach inside yourself and figure out how to be more intentional, inquisitive and inclusive. That's what you need to lead now.

Leaders who want these skills hire me, Liz Guthridge. I've got a strong track record in serving as a trusted catalyst to help leaders thrive in our VUCA world. By applying my deep listening skills as well as my broad expertise, I help leaders become better, more resilient versions of their authentic self. They boost their thinking, deepen their relationships and conversations, create a more inclusive environment, improve their decision-making, and follow through on actions, including building habits.

As an executive coach, consultant and facilitator, I draw on change leadership, applied neuroscience, behavior design, habits, communications, and culture.

I also pledge to be helpful, authentic, and humble. I look forward to connecting with you!  
Contact info is below – Liz

