The Adaptive Leader

Ajit Dodani
Ajit (a-gee-th) Dodani
"The CFO who speaks empathy & KPIs in the same sentence."

I am:
An Empathy Strategist©.

I am NOT:
A theorist.

My Values:
Family, Health, Self Care, Mindfulness, Relationships, Respect, Equity, Service, Laughter, Culture, People.

My Superpowers:
Empathy, Facilitator of Meaningful Conversations

I have been influenced by the works of:
Brene Brown, Simon Sinek, Gary V, Wayne Dyer, James Carse, Dr. Tedeschi, Dr. Yoshino, Stanford D-School...

Now this is the “real” important stuff :) 
Music: Anderson Paak, Maggie Rogers, Bruce Springsteen, H.E.R., KOAD, Raveena...

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Disclaimer

We do not claim to know it all.

Think of this journey as finding pieces of a puzzle.
If something is not clear, please ask questions, or reach out.
The intention here is to get us to become a better version of ourselves— you and us!

So, if we say something that challenges the status quo,
We ask you to give us, and yourself some grace.
Then take a step back, and revisit that thought a few times
before jumping to a conclusion.

And please remember, you will only get from this experience— what you put in.

"Just like the cocoon that morphs into a butterfly,
transformation is beautifully-difficult."
A set of skills that have been taught to and reserved for some of the highest performing individuals in our communities.

High Stakes Professions
High Pressure
Intense Scrutiny
Physically & Mentally Demanding
"We want leaders that are tough, resilient, that can think, and out-fight and out-smart the enemy. We want them to be adaptive and agile and flexible. And, we want them not only competent, but we want leaders of character."

General Mark A. Milley, Chief of Staff of the Army
Facets of the West Point Leader Development System
1. **Moral**: Internalization of the Army Values that results in the knowledge, integrity, and awareness to assess the moral-ethical aspects of every situation and the personal courage to take appropriate action regardless of consequences.

2. **Civic**: Demonstrates the empathy, loyalty, respect, and humility that enable an individual to treat others with dignity and to display selflessness.

3. **Social**: Acts with proper decorum in all professional, social, and online environments.

4. **Performance**: Possesses the sense of duty, resilience, and grit necessary to accomplish the mission and get results.

5. **Leadership**: Establishes a safe, positive command climate where everyone thrives while achieving results.
What did we learn?

Purpose

Routine

Values

Listening

Empathy

Presence

Skills
What did we learn?

SKILLS

- purpose
- presence
- vision
- routine
- values
- listening
- empathy

empathy
Leading through Chaos

Volatility
Layoffs
AI
WAR
Bank Failures
Safety
RTW
HYBRID WORK
Mental Health
LGBTQI+
Political Polarization
What did we learn?

SKILLS

- purpose
- presence
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- empathy
What did we learn?

SKILLS

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- empathy

empathy
Three Kinds of Empathy

Emotional (feeling)

Cognitive (understanding)

Compassionate (doing)

Strategic, Tactical, Empowering, Relevant, Transformative
"Empathy at Microsoft isn’t just talk. It is a way of running and developing the business."
“How Empathy Helped Generate A $2 Trillion Company” Steve Denning, Forbes

“Empathy is the skill of the future and practicing empathy every day as a business leader...helps you understand what your immediate team actually needs right now.”
Mr. Pferdt, Chief Innovation Evangelist

"Empathy Is The Most Important Leadership Skill According To Research."
Tracy Brower, Forbes Contributor September 2021
Empathy Increases
Company Revenue
by 83%
EY US, Empathy in Business Survey

Empathy Increases
Job Satisfaction
by 87%
EY US, Empathy in Business Survey

Empathy Reduced
Employee Turnover
by 78%
EY US, Empathy in Business Survey

Empathy Increases
Innovation
by 85%
EY US, Empathy in Business Survey
So, what is the ask?

"Leader need to be Strategic, Efficient, AND Adaptive, Empathic and Individualized”

Gartner
What is an Empathy Strategy?

Self Awareness x Stakeholder Understanding x Strategic Action
What is an Empathy Strategy?

Self Awareness: An honest understanding of ourselves and what drives our decision-making process.

Stakeholder Understanding: Who am I serving and do I really understand all our stakeholders.

Strategic Action: A clearly defined goal and impact you are seeking.
An Empathy Strategy
For A High Performing Culture
"Once I know who I am, and I empathize and learn to respect who you are, we are able to respectfully sit on the same table, bringing our whole selves to solve any problem that comes our way."
The Adaptive Leader
Skill #1
Understand Shadow Values
Shadow Values

A set of values that exist within us, and organizations that impacts the decision-making process.

"One would assume that decisions are being made objectively by simply keeping in mind the organization's goals. The reality is that most decisions are made with the individual's emotions and shadow values."
Shadow Values

Attention - being appreciated, fame
Authority - feeling in charge
Belonging - feeling part of something
Control - influence outcomes
Intelligence - recognition for academic knowledge
Rebelliousness - fighting authority
Superiority - better than...
Validation - recognition, importance
Skill #2
Belonging

The Adaptive Leader
Belonging is the feeling of being welcomed, honored and respected for bringing our best and whole self to any environment.
Othering is the feeling that we don't belong.
Belonging & Othering
are
Feelings,
Senses &
Chemical Inducers
"They're just lazy or unmotivated."
"They're being difficult or uncooperative."
"They're too sensitive or overreacting."
"They're just seeking attention or trying to get special treatment."
"They're not capable or competent enough for this role."
"They're just making excuses for their behavior."
"They're too socially awkward or weird."
"They're just being overly picky or nitpicky."
"They're not a good fit for our team or company culture."
"They're not trying hard enough to fit in or conform."
“They overreact when I ask them to change their routine.”
“They are loners: always needing so much time alone to recharge.”
“They are always fidgeting in meetings.”
• 15-20% of the world's population is Medically / Clinically Neurodiverse.
• 35% of entrepreneurs and 25-40% of Fortune 500 CEOs are dyslexic. (EY)
• 50% of entrepreneurs reported having a mental health condition. A full 30% reported a lifetime history of depression. (CNN)
• Up to 96% of disabilities are non-visible meaning that the chance of misunderstanding a coworker's intentions or context is high. (RespectAbility)
• For centuries a very small percent got diagnosed early, and although there is more awareness today, very few will self-identify.
• Cognitive Profiling Research conducted of over 100K profiles, no one hit “Medically / Clinically Normal”
Autism, Hyperlexia, ADHD/ADD, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Synesthesia, Tourette Syndrome, Tic disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Epilepsy, Seizure disorders, Intellectual disabilities, Developmental language disorders, Developmental coordination disorders, Specific learning difficulties, differences, and disabilities, Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Bipolar, Personality disorders, Giftedness, Sensory integration/processing disorder, Depression, Auditory processing disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Apraxia, Mental illnesses, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, Anxiety, Alcohol & Drug Addiction, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder...
PTSD is included in the neurodiverse umbrella. (NIH)

Before 2019, 3.5% of the population was diagnosed with PTSD yearly. After the last 4 years it is estimated 26% of our population is showing symptoms of PTSD. (Yale)

Most of the workforce that been impacted has NOT sought any support.

HR Insight: Manager Effectiveness is the #1 Priority for CHROs (Gartner), because Traumatized Managers cannot lead Traumatized Teams.

"When we solve for the outliers, we solve for all."
Skill #3
The Power of Presence
**Chronobiology**: the study of the intricate relationship between our biological rhythms and time itself.

- **Circadian Rhythms**: biological rhythms that play out over about 24 hours and are informed by the Earth’s rotation around the Sun.
- **Ultradian rhythms**: Help us optimize our internal body clocks for maximum efficiency and well being.
  - When correctly attuned to our biological rhythms, we experience 90 minutes of activity followed by rest, cycled throughout the day.
  - Problems arise when we ignore these rhythms and try to maintain constant activity throughout the day, failing to heed our regular need for a break.
Microsoft’s Human Factors Lab used EEG caps to measure beta wave activity—associated with stress—in the brains of meeting participants. For those given breaks, their average beta wave activity remained largely steady over time; the “coolness” of their stress levels is visualized here in blues and greens. For those deprived of breaks, their average beta wave activity rose as time passed, suggesting a buildup of stress; that increase is depicted here with colors shifting from cool to hot. The chart represents the relative difference in beta activity between break and no-break conditions at the top of each meeting (averaged across the 14 research participants).

Illustration by Brown Bird Design
The average American’s breath rate:
In 1939 was 4.9 breaths/minute.
In the 1980’s it was 7.8 breaths/minute.
In 2021, we were taking an average of 15 breaths/minute- a 3X increase from 1939!
(BTW the average sized person only needs about 5 breaths/minute)

That is one of the reasons why our teams are distracted and not able to pay attention.
Breathe
Aware
Move
Breathe
4 seconds in
6 seconds out
every time you pick up your phone.

Breathe
4 seconds in
6 seconds out
every time you pick up your phone.

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4 seconds in
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every time you pick up your phone.
Aware

5: See ~ 4: Physically Feel ~ 3: Hear ~ 2: Smell ~ 1: Taste
"Imagine a workplace where everyone... is mentally and physically present in the moment, actually listens, is invited to the table to communicate their ideas, cares enough to put out their best work, feels like they are appreciated and belong."
Self Awareness
What shadow values impact your decision-making process?

Stakeholder Understanding
What are you doing to create a neuro-inclusive workplace?

Strategic Action
Are you creating a high performing culture on the foundation of empathy?

Are you present?
No really, are YOU present.
Special Handout for the NAIC Community
Additional Resources, Videos & Podcasts

Self Awareness
Stakeholder Understanding
Empathic Action
Workshops, Keynotes, Coaching.

With gratitude,
Ajit Dodani
www.EmpathifyU.com
ajit@EmpathifyU.com
Kansas City National Security Campus IDEA Sustainable Structure

Dr. Joseph Hamlett
DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION PROGRAM
INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCEPTANCE (IDEA)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY’S KANSAS CITY NATIONAL SECURITY CAMPUS (KCNSC) MANAGED AND OPERATED BY HONEYWELL FEDERAL MANUFACTURING AND TECHNOLOGIES, LLC (FM&T)

PRESENTER:
DR. JOSEPH HAMLETT
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION LEAD
IDEA VISION DEFINITIONS

DEFINITIONS

**Inclusion:** Active engagement with employees to drive authentic and empowered participation aimed at creating a true sense of belonging

**Diversity:** Celebrating and encouraging the involvement of employees with a wide range of human differences

**Equity:** Treating all employees fairly and impartially providing equal opportunities to our employees.

**Acceptance:** Receiving employees as they are, respecting both their differences and commonalities

**Customers:** All employees on all shifts at all locations.
MISSION

To embed and inspire inclusion, diversity, equity and acceptance throughout our business.
One of our strategic objectives at the KCNSC is to “unlock the value” through our people and processes.

We believe that championing a diverse and inclusive workplace starts at the top.

The KCNSC Senior Leadership team sets the pace for the organization’s diversity & inclusion journey to ensure to workplace productivity.
**Employee Networks**

**Inclusion/Diversity/Equity/Acceptance**

<table>
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<th><strong>11 Chartered Employee Networks (ENs)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Employee engagement within ENs rated at 3.4 out of 4.0</strong></th>
<th><strong>A fulltime Diversity &amp; Inclusion Team supports workplace inclusion at KCNSC</strong></th>
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- Black Employee Network
- Experienced Professionals Employee Network
- Hispanic Employee Network
- Native American Employee Network
- Pride Employee Network
- Veterans Employee Network
- Women’s Employee Network
- Young Professionals Employee Network
- All Abilities Employee Network
- Minority Serving Institutions Employee Network
- Experienced Professionals Employee Network
- Pride Employee Network
- Women’s Employee Network
- Young Professionals Employee Network

IDEA: Inclusion/Diversity/Equity/Acceptance

**IDEA**

**INCLUSION/DIVERSITY/EQUITY/ACCEPTANCE**

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2024 EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE AND IDEA COMMITTEE CHAIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Steering Committee
12 ESC Members
Chair/President

- Ambassador Committee Chair
- Audit, Compliance & Governance Committee Co-Chairs
- Finance Committee Chair
- Activity Committee Chair
- Communications Committee Chair
• Extending IDEA Footprint in KC Metro area with IDEA Community Partners Memberships

American Indian Chamber of Commerce
New Mexico

Asian American Chamber of Commerce
Kansas City

Heartland (Black) Chamber of Commerce
Kansas City

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Kansas City

Kansas City, Kansas Chamber of Commerce
Kansas City Kansas

Center for Disability Inclusion
Kansas City

Central Exchange
Kansas City

Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce
Kansas City

National Association of Asian American Professionals
Kansas City

IDEA Community Partnerships
What is NEXT?

NEXT Partners with Human Resources to onboard and develop new talent. We foster a welcoming environment that supports our new employees by providing opportunities to engage, network, and learn about the KCNSC.

The NEXT / HR Partnership maximizes time the new employee can spend learning their role while engaging deeply with the Honeywell FM&T Culture.

• New Employee Orientation includes an EN Membership Drive!
IDEA Mission

To embed and inspire inclusion, diversity, equity and acceptance throughout our business

Mission for Employee Networks (ERGs)

Grow and enhance high performing Employee Networks by focusing on people, community, and enhancing our inclusive culture.
PURPOSE OF ENs

KCNSC recognizes that Employee Networks (ENs) enhance a culture of belonging, inclusion and enhance employee engagement. Other benefits include:

- Attracting, recruiting, and retaining diverse employees
- Promoting diversity, cultural awareness, and an inclusive work environment
- Increasing employee engagement, morale, and productivity
- Fostering a culture of learning by offering professional development, mentoring, and networking opportunities
- Providing a safe and supportive space for employees
- Supporting KCNSC business by reinforcing IDEA’s diversity initiatives throughout the various locations
IDEA Employee Network Groups (ERG)  
Three Areas Of Focus

People

Intentional Culture

Community
Build Exceptional Talent

Create a Sustainable & Positive Employee Experience
Drive Intentional Culture

- Inclusion Week
- Cultural Calendar & Newsletter
- Signature Months
- 11 Employee Networks
- Training
- Being Intentional
EMPLOYEE NETWORKS

Sense of Belonging

Asian American Pacific Islanders Employee Network
All Abilities Employee Network
Black Employee Network
Experienced Professionals Employee Network
Hispanic Employee Network

Minority Serving Institutions Employee Network
Native American Employee Network
Pride Employee Network
Veterans Employee Network
Women’s Employee Network
Young Professionals Employee Network
EMPLOYEE NETWORKS  
Sense of Belonging

- Results of a 2020 Global Human Capital Trends survey:
  - 79% of organizations consider belonging important for their success
- Research by BetterUp found that when employees feel like they belong:
  - 56% improved job performance
  - 50% lower turnover risk
  - 75% fewer employee sick days
- Results of the Great Attrition Survey, found that:
  - 51% of employees who left their jobs in the past six months lacked a sense of belonging at work
- According to Gallup, employee engagement relates to:
  - Involvement and enthusiasm
  - More productivity
  - Focused, and attentive to customer needs
- Based on Gallup's analysis, businesses with highly engaged employees experience:
  - 41% reduced absenteeism,
  - 17% increased productivity,
  - 10% better customer ratings,
  - 20% increased sales,
  - 21% greater profitability.
COMMUNITY

IDEA Community Partnerships  Service Partnerships
2024 IDEA COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Kansas City
Center for Disability Inclusion Kansas City
Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce Kansas City
American Indian Chamber of Commerce New Mexico
National Association of Asian American Professionals Kansas City

Increased Diverse Sourcing
Cultural Awareness Programs

**Cultural Calendars**

Every month, a curated cultural calendar page is released and showcased on the KCNSC Main Portal Page with a banner on this page. Leaders are encouraged to use this tool as an awareness builder and meeting opener for each of their meetings.

**Cultural Awareness Lessons**

Cultural Calendar Day Lessons are flowed down each week throughout the business, completing a deeper dive into a particular holiday, including history, resources, demographic information and considerations for the business — a section geared to support team discussions — all to raise the cultural competency of the KCNSC workforce.

**Newsletters with Education Articles**

IDEA publishes a monthly newsletter to the KCNSC workforce that includes highlights of its employee networks and Community Ambassador Programs, IDEA monthly updates, highlights of upcoming events and how employees can get involved, as well as a monthly education article ranging on a wide array of topics including pronouns, holiday, and building workplace belonging.

**Leading Edge Articles**

Each month, IDEA publishes a training article geared specifically to people leaders on a variety of topics including performance reviews, resources available, inclusive leadership and inclusive interviewing techniques.
Appendix

Executive Steering Committee Reading List:

- Building a House for Diversity
- Beyond Race and Gender
- Employee Resource Group Excellence
- Action Guide for Diversity Beyond Lip Service
- How to Be an Inclusive Leader
- The Necessity of Psychological Safety
QUESTIONS
Diverse by Design
Capturing the Power of Who We Are

Nikki Lewis Simon
‘Diverse by Design’
Capturing the Power of Who We Are

2024 4th Annual NAIC DE&I Conference

Nikki Lewis Simon | Senior Vice President, Shareholder & Chief DEI Officer

JUNE 24, 2024
Today’s Discussion

Key Topics:

• Understanding Inclusion: Everyone Has a Seat at the Table
• DEI Objectives @ Top, Middle & Bottom
• Integrating DEI into Your Ops
• Championing Your People & Wins
• Serving Clients & Other Stakeholders
Understanding Inclusion: Everyone Has a Seat at the Table
The GT Model

Elements that have helped drive inclusion at GT:

• Committed firm leadership
• Individual commitment/involvement
• Raising awareness/training
• Employing achievable short-term goals to drive long-term change
GT DRIVES

A valuable resource for:

- Searching GT biographies to build teams
- Identifying DEI opportunities at GT and in local communities
- Locating internal DEI resources, including Affinity Groups
- Accessing DEI-centric data, accolades and rankings important to clients
Designed and led by our GT colleagues, and open to all attorneys, the groups support their members, which include allies, in many ways:

- Business Development Networks
- Recruitment Events
- Retention Forums
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Mentoring Circles
- Social Exchanges
DEI Objectives @ Top, Middle & Bottom
Buy-in & Action at All Levels

Senior Leadership

Middle Management

Professional & Support Staff
Internal Communication is Key

- New Objectives & Resources
- New Policies & Initiatives
- Key Wins in DEI
Integrating DEI into Your Ops
Integrating DEI into Your Ops

Achieving DEI success through a “business as usual” mindset and including all operational departments.
Championing Your People & Wins
Championing Your People & Wins

A few considerations:

- DEI “noise” can hurt the potency of your messages and accomplishments
- Colleagues read your external statements
- Be strategic
Championing Your People & Wins

• Involve GC (or outside counsel) & internal subject matter experts
• Have a “people-first” mindset
• What do your images say about your DEI “intelligence” and strategy?
• Vet content & strategies with Affinity Group Leaders
• Align messaging & culture with DEI communications
Serving Clients & Other Stakeholders
Serving Clients & Other Stakeholders

Reasons DEI can deliver quality client service:

- Diverse Perspectives
- Empathy & Understanding
- Inclusive Culture
- Wider Talent Pool
- Problem-Solving Efficiency
- Retention
- Reflecting Customer Base
Serving Clients & Other Stakeholders
Engage clients where your values & goals align.

Hosting CLE programs lead by experienced attorneys
Combining networks to expand relationships with external groups focused on DEI
Strengthening mentoring programs
Utilizing the firm’s Affinity Groups to make additional connections
Serving Clients & Other Stakeholders

Greenberg Traurig’s Social, Racial & Economic Justice Action Plan
Questions?
Contact GT’s DEI Team:

DiversityEquity&InclusionTeam@gtlaw.com
THANK YOU