

How You Show Up Matters

5 Strategic Shifts to Embed a Relational Culture Across Teams and Leadership



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**A practical guide for HR and OD leaders
transforming culture and team performance**

What Teams Need Most From Leaders Right Now

A frontline perspective on disconnection, culture, and the leadership shifts that make a difference.



Your people are telling you something. Quietly. In their absence, their disengagement, their hesitations. You're seeing it in:

- Teams struggling to embed new ways of working
- High attrition, low trust, and surface-level engagement
- Wellbeing efforts that aren't changing team behaviour

I'm Matthew Adam, a systemic psychotherapist turned organisational consultant and executive coach.

For over 20 years, I've worked with teams under pressure in health, care, charities, and complex public and private sector organisations.

And here's what I've seen:

The biggest influence on team performance isn't process or policy. It's how leaders show up in relationships.

This guide shares 5 strategic relational shifts that create trust, unlock performance, and align people around purpose — quickly.

Relational Leadership- Why It's Now a Strategic Priority

Relational leadership creates the conditions where people feel safe enough to think clearly, speak honestly, and act collaboratively.

It's not soft - it's the system for how teams stay connected under pressure.

Relational leaders:

- Build psychological safety intentionally
- Align people with purpose, not just performance metrics
- Use conversations to surface truth, reduce fear, and build accountability
- Model presence, reflection, and trust, consistently

Why OD and HR Leaders Use This Approach:

Relational leadership underpins:

- Culture transformation programmes
- Team and leadership development
- Psychological safety, EDI, and retention strategies
- Succession and capability frameworks

Comparison Table:

Traditional Leadership	Relational Leadership
Top-down control	Shared responsibility
Performance-only focus	Purpose + performance
Individualist	System-aware
Fixing and telling	Framing and inviting thinking
Instructive	Collaborative and reflective

“Relationally led teams outperform peers on engagement, trust, and resilience, especially under stress.”

5 Strategic Shifts That Change How Teams Work

Use these shifts to reset how your leaders relate, influence, and perform.



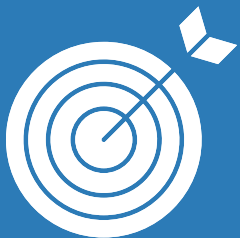
1. From Fixing to Framing

Old habit: Jumping to solutions

Relational shift: Lead with curiosity before action

Try this: “How are you making sense of this?”

Why it matters: Builds shared understanding and co-ownership



2. From Performance to Purpose

Old habit: Chasing KPIs

Relational shift: Reconnect work to shared purpose

Try this: Link individual goals to team or mission objectives

Why it matters: Purpose fuels motivation and alignment

5 Strategic Shifts That Change How Teams Work

3. From Position to Partnership

Old habit: Leading from hierarchy

Relational shift: Share power and build agency

Try this: Involve people early in decisions that affect them

Why it matters: Strengthens trust, accountability, and initiative



4. From Structure to Safety

Old habit: Prioritising process over people

Relational shift: Make emotional safety part of team norms

Try this: Ask, “What are we avoiding saying right now?”

Why it matters: Encourages candour, innovation, and risk-sharing



5 Strategic Shifts for Relational Leaders



5. From Response to Reflection

Old habit: Reacting under pressure

Relational shift: Use presence to influence impact

Try this: “What’s my effect on this room right now?”

Why it matters: Prevents escalation, models emotional maturity



Bring These Shifts Into Your Organisation

Embed Relational Leadership Where It's Needed Most

Whether you're navigating:

- A team in breakdown or transition
- Organisation-wide culture change
- A fragmented leadership group
- Strategy rollouts that need buy-in and trust

These two offers support real, lasting change:

Rapid Team Development

- ✓ Designed for teams in crisis, conflict, or dysfunction
- ✓ Fast, high-impact intervention (4–5 weeks)
- ✓ Creates clarity, accountability, and trust
- ✓ Perfect for OD and HR leaders supporting stuck teams

Relational Leadership Coaching

- ✓ 1:1 and group coaching for mid–and senior leaders
- ✓ Builds capability in presence, communication, and influence
- ✓ Aligns leadership behaviours with cultural and strategic goals
- ✓ Supports succession, values-led leadership, and engagement



Ready to Build Relational Capability That Lasts?

If you're ready to:

- Repair a high-risk team or department
- Build relational leadership at scale
- Align culture with values and strategy
- Deliver leadership development that sticks

Book a Discovery Call

Let's explore what's possible for your team or organisation

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