



Rewriting Success: The 3 Rs of Sustainable Leadership

Hi Leader,

Corporate America is facing a crisis of meaning. Amid rising burnout, declining engagement, and increasing turnover among leaders, the traditional definition of success has become unsustainable. For too long, leadership has been measured by relentless productivity, constant availability, and the ability to push through exhaustion. Yet those very behaviors are leaving talented leaders depleted and organizations struggling to retain them.

This guide introduces the 3 Rs of Sustainable Leadership: Rest, Reflection, and Regeneration. Rather than viewing these practices as personal luxuries, this framework positions them as strategic leadership disciplines. Leaders who intentionally care for their own capacity are better equipped to make sound decisions, inspire trust, navigate change, and create environments where people can do their best work.

This guide is designed for leaders who want to thrive without burning out. Leadership will always require resilience and commitment, but it should not require sacrificing your health, relationships, or sense of purpose. Sustainable leadership is not about doing less. It is about leading differently by making intentional choices that create lasting impact for both people and performance.

What's Actually Going On?

Research consistently shows that burnout has become a leadership challenge rather than an individual one. Seventy-two percent of senior leaders report experiencing burnout (PMC, 2023), seventy-seven percent of employees say they have experienced burnout in their current role (Deloitte, 2023), and more than one quarter of executives report symptoms associated with clinical depression (McLean Hospital, 2023). These statistics point to a systemic issue rather than a lack of resilience.

When leaders operate with an empty tank, their teams experience the consequences through slower decision making, increased conflict, lower trust, and higher turnover. Sustainable organizations require sustainable leaders.



1. Rest: Not a Reward. A Strategy.

Rest is often treated as something leaders earn after the work is finished. In reality, rest is what makes excellent leadership possible. Energy, emotional regulation, creativity, and sound judgment all depend on leaders having the capacity to bring their best selves to work every day. Resting is not the opposite of productivity. It is one of the conditions that makes sustainable performance possible.

Begin by reclaiming the pause. Consider how you're caring for yourself before burnout becomes the norm.

- What is my current rest rhythm?
- What am I avoiding or simply pushing through?
- When is the next time I can truly disconnect and use my vacation time?

2. Reflection: Less Autopilot. More Awareness.

Leadership improves when leaders create intentional space to think. Reflection allows us to identify patterns, question assumptions, learn from mistakes, and make better decisions instead of simply reacting to whatever feels most urgent. Reflection works to build self-awareness, which is the foundation of effective leadership.

Take time to rediscover your "why" by creating space for intentional reflection.

- Block time to think, not just do.
- Consider the definition of success you're working toward. Where did it come from?
- Identify the people who challenge, encourage, and strengthen your leadership.
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3. Regeneration: Refuel the Leader. Rebuild the Culture.

Regeneration goes beyond rest by intentionally restoring the energy, purpose, and relationships that allow leaders and teams to flourish over time. When leaders consistently model healthy practices, they give others permission to do the same. Culture follows leadership.

Start building habits that support long term leadership sustainability.

- Choose one new practice this week that restores your energy.
- Review your calendar and remove one unnecessary demand.
- Ask your team what they need to stay energized and supported.



Putting the 3 Rs into Practice

You do not need to transform everything overnight. Sustainable leadership is built through small, consistent habits practiced over time. Please don't aim for perfection. Sustainable leadership is not about having all the answers. It is about consistently choosing habits that allow you and your team to thrive. Every meaningful change begins with one intentional step.



What's Next?

Awareness is the first step. Sustainable leadership is built through intentional practice. If this guide helped you identify opportunities to lead with greater energy, clarity, and purpose, take the [Sustainable Leadership Snapshot](#) to reflect on your leadership through the lens of Rest, Reflection, and Regeneration. You'll receive a brief overview of where you are today and a starting point for becoming the kind of leader you aspire to be.