

# LOST AND FOUND

## When Crisis Becomes Gateway

*“I found myself sitting through team meetings with a persistent thought: 'Is this it?' The pandemic created uncertainty, but way more troubling was how I'd become disconnected from what had previously energized me about leadership.”*

*-R.W., VP for Customer Success, International Enterprise Software Solutions Provider*



### THE DRIFT



Twenty-six years into my career, something had gone missing.

On the outside, I was working harder than ever. I looked as successful as ever. But inside, I felt like my team and I were treading water—reacting rather than creating. The internal compass that had guided my decisions for decades felt broken.

My pattern wasn't helping: push through, move to the next priority, hope the old enthusiasm would somehow return. It didn't.

I started questioning whether I belonged in leadership at all. Maybe it was time to step away.



### THE COMPASS



Chris didn't try to fix my situation. He helped me see it differently.

“What if whatever brought you here won't take you there?” he asked. And I realized my challenge wasn't external. I had lost my “Why.” I needed to recover my compass, not escape my circumstances.

In our first conversation, he asked if there might be a connection between my need to have all the answers and my team's reluctance to contribute ideas. I'd never made that link.





The foundational work involved creating space to examine situations without immediate problem-solving pressure. Learning to sit with discomfort rather than rushing to escape it. Recognizing my contribution to the problems I kept looking for others to fix.

Then came the pivotal reframe. Instead of asking “How do I get through this?” I started asking “What is this trying to teach me?” When I became willing to learn from difficulty rather than just endure it, I discovered resources I didn’t know I had.



## THE SHIFT



One of my biggest realizations: I never celebrated. My team would accomplish something meaningful, and I'd immediately transition to the next project without acknowledgment. No pause. No recognition. Just the next problem.

I learned to stop. To mark progress before moving on. To actually receive recognition instead of deflecting it.

I started practicing Both /And: ambitious *and* grateful. Focused *and* present. Driving results *and* acknowledging the humans producing them.

Through consistent practice, I developed the ability to handle difficult conversations without reflexive reactions. The shift from enduring to learning was subtle but profound.





## THE EVIDENCE



Within a year, I was selected for our competitive global leadership development program, something I'd been working toward throughout my career. More importantly, I could actually receive the recognition instead of immediately questioning whether I deserved it.

I've since transitioned to a new role as VP for Customer Success with an international enterprise software provider. The work feels like an authentic expression of who I am rather than a role I have to assume each morning.

My approach to team challenges has fundamentally changed. I ask "What is this trying to teach us?" and watch energy shift from problem-focused to learning-focused. The most surprising discovery: Purpose isn't something you find externally. It's something you uncover right where you are. What began as a desire to quit evolved into growth I couldn't have imagined.

I still catch myself falling into old patterns. But now I have the tools to recognize and shift them, to be curious about my reactions rather than just pushing through.

If you're going through the motions—successful by every measure but feeling disconnected from what used to energize you—that's not burnout. It might be your compass telling you something important. Sometimes crisis becomes gateway. But you need someone who can help you see that possibility while you're in it.



# lead yourself well ... serve your great purpose

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