

# COMPANION PDF

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SECOND EDITION

# CONNECTION CULTURE



• THE •  
COMPETITIVE  
ADVANTAGE of SHARED  
IDENTITY, EMPATHY,  
and UNDERSTANDING  
AT WORK

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23 22 21 20                      1 2 3 4 5

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Parts of this book are adapted from articles in *Leader to Leader* from the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute.

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ATD Press is an internationally renowned source of insightful and practical information on talent development, training, and professional development.

**ATD Press**

1640 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314 USA

Ordering information: Books published by ATD Press can be purchased by visiting ATD's website at [td.org/books](http://td.org/books) or by calling 800.628.2783 or 703.683.8100.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020936302

ISBN-10: 1-950496-52-X

ISBN-13: 978-1-950496-52-5

e-ISBN: 978-1-950496-53-2

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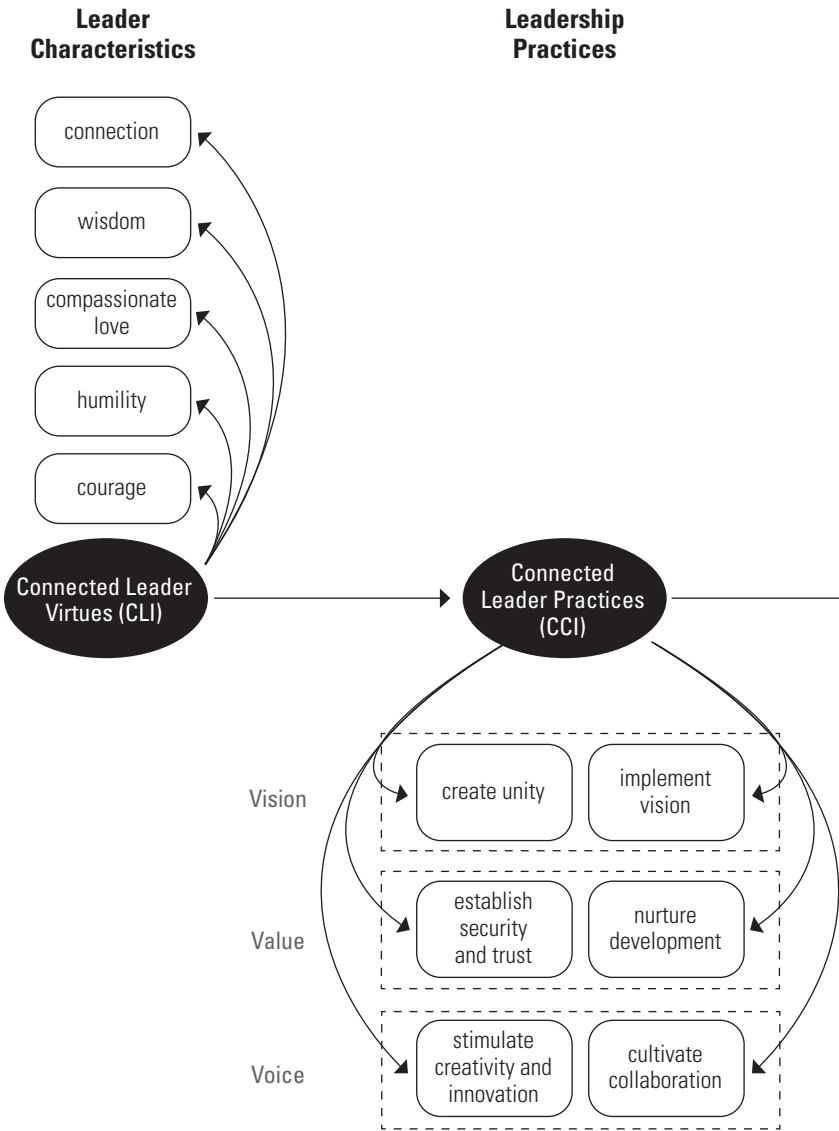
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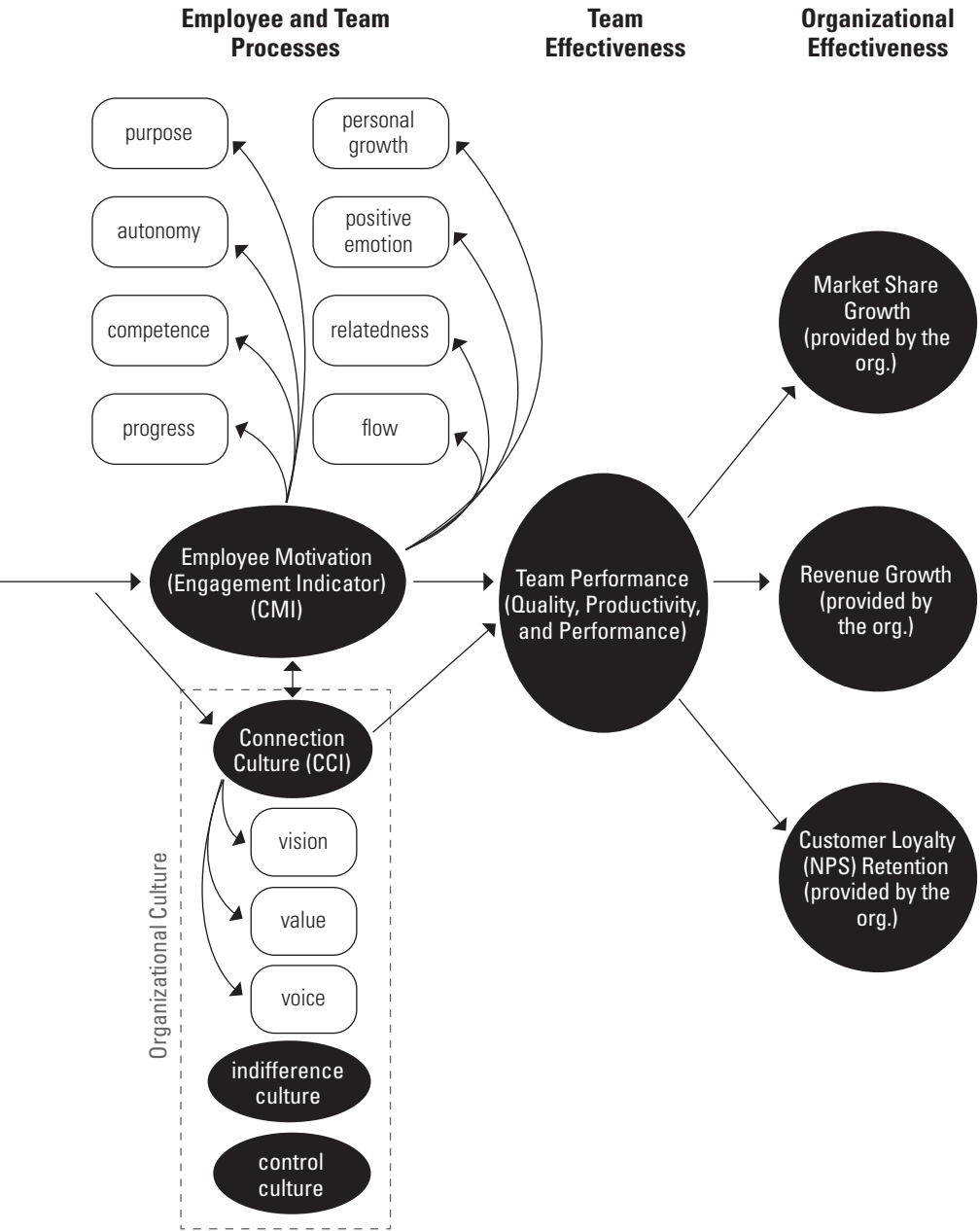
Printed by Color House Graphics, Grand Rapids, MI

**FIGURE 3-1. THE CHARACTER > CONNECTION > THRIVE CHAIN**

24 Character Strengths	Create the Connection Culture	That Meets Universal Needs	That Help People and Organizations Thrive	
			Individuals Thrive	Organizations Thrive
Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence, Hope, Leadership, Perseverance, Self-Regulation, Spirituality, Zest  Fairness, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Humor, Kindness, Love, Social Intelligence, Teamwork  Bravery, Creativity, Curiosity, Honesty, Humility, Judgment, Love of Learning, Perspective, Prudence	Vision	Respect	Wellness	Employee Engagement
	Value	Recognition	Well-Being	Strategic Alignment
		Belonging	Trust	Better Decisions
Voice	Autonomy	Cooperation	Innovation	
	Personal Growth	Empathy	Agility and Adaptability	
	Meaning	Enthusiasm	Productivity	
	Progress	Optimism	Profitability	
		Energy	Customer Satisfaction	
		Creativity	Employee Retention	
		Superior Problem Solving	Safety	

**FIGURE 5-2.** CONNECTION VALUE CHAIN





# Appendix I

## VIA Institute Classification of Character Strengths

The following are descriptions of the 24 character strengths. Based on the findings of positive psychology, the character strengths were developed by the VIA Institute on Character, a not-for-profit organization focused on advancing both the science and practice of character strengths. (Note that here the 24 character strengths are organized into six virtue categories rather than into vision, value, and voice, as we organized them to show how they support a connection culture.)

### The Classification of Character Strengths

1. **Wisdom and Knowledge:** Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge.
  - **Creativity** (originality, ingenuity): Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it.
  - **Curiosity** (interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience): Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering.
  - **Judgment** (open-mindedness; critical thinking): Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly.
  - **Love of Learning:** Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows.

- **Perspective** (wisdom): Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself or others.
2. **Courage:** Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of external or internal opposition.
- **Bravery** (valor): Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what's right even if there's opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it.
  - **Perseverance** (persistence, industriousness): Finishing what one starts; persevering in a course of action in spite of obstacles; "getting it out the door"; taking pleasure in completing tasks.
  - **Honesty** (authenticity, integrity): Speaking the truth, but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.
  - **Zest** (vitality, enthusiasm, vigor, energy): Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated.
3. **Humanity:** Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others.
- **Love** (capacity to love and be loved): Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people.
  - **Kindness** (generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, niceness): Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them.
  - **Social Intelligence** (emotional intelligence, personal intelligence): Being aware of the motives and feelings of others and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick.

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4. **Justice:** Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life.
- **Teamwork** (citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty): Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share.
  - **Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.
  - **Leadership:** Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the same time maintain good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.
5. **Temperance:** Strengths that protect against excess.
- **Forgiveness** (mercy): Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting others' shortcomings; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful.
  - **Humility** (modesty): Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is.
  - **Prudence:** Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.
  - **Self-Regulation** (self-control): Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions.
6. **Transcendence:** Strengths that forge connections to the universe and provide meaning.
- **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence** (awe, wonder, elevation): Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.
  - **Gratitude:** Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.
  - **Hope** (optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation): Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about.



- **Humor** (playfulness): Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes.
- **Spirituality** (religiousness, faith, purpose): Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort.

# Appendix II

## Study Questions for Book Groups

### Chapter 1

- Reflect on a time when you were energized by your work. What factors were present that contributed to your energy?
- Reflect on a time when your work felt draining. What factors were present that contributed to your fatigue?

### Chapter 2

- Describe a time when you truly connected with another person or a group. How did that make you feel?
- Is your current work environment an example of a culture of control, a culture of indifference, or a connection culture? Why?
- Which of the seven universal human needs to thrive at work are being met in your workplace? Which are not being sufficiently met?
- What steps can you take to help meet the seven universal needs for others in your workplace? Commit to taking two actions in the next week to meet others' needs (for example, affirm a colleague for a job well done).

### Chapter 3

- Share an example of an organization that you believe exhibits a high degree of the connection culture element of vision.
  - How is this vision communicated?
  - Has the vision produced a shared identity that people connected with the organization feel proud about?

- Share an example of an organization that you believe exhibits a high degree of the connection culture element of value.
  - How do the leaders show that they value employees?
  - Has value in the organization produced a bond of shared empathy among people in the organization?
- Share an example of an organization that you believe exhibits a high degree of the connection culture element of voice.
  - How does the organization encourage employees to provide feedback?
  - Has voice in the organization resulted in a greater shared understanding?
- Which of the 24 character strengths do you believe you exhibit? Which do you believe you need to strengthen?

## **Part I: Profiles in Connection**

- Take a moment to reflect on the stories that you read in this section. Which story did you find most inspiring? Why? Which story challenged you the most? Why?
- Write down three ideas you learned from the leaders highlighted in this section that you would like to implement in your own organization.
- The common theme through each of the profiles is a commitment on the part of the leader or organization to vision, value, and voice. How does your organization or team embody each of those elements? Which element needs to be strengthened?

## **Chapter 4**

- What research presented in this chapter really jumped out at you? How is it relevant to your work and your life outside of work?
- Research clearly shows that connection is critical for our personal health and well-being. On a scale of one to 10 (with 10 being fully connected), how would you rate your current level of personal connection?
- Based on what you learned in this chapter about the importance of using connection to manage stress levels, write down two positive

actions you can take the next time you feel overwhelmed at work. If you are a supervisor, write down two ways you can use connection to help your direct reports feel less stressed.

## Chapter 5

- What research presented in this chapter really jumped out at you? How is it relevant to your work and your life outside of work?
- Research clearly shows that connection provides a performance and competitive advantage to organizations. On a scale of one to 10 (with 10 being fully connected), how would you rate your organization's current level of connection?
- Organizations often display two or more of the three types of cultures. Which culture describes your team? Which cultures are present throughout the organization? If your team lacks a connection culture, consider contacting a leader in your organization who is an intentional connector and ask for tips on turning your team's culture around.

## Part II: Profiles in Connection

- Take a moment to reflect on the stories that you read in this section. Which story did you find most inspiring? Why? Which story challenged you the most? Why?
- Write down three ideas you learned from the leaders highlighted in this section that you would like to implement in your own organization.
- The common theme through each of the profiles is a commitment on the part of the leader or organization to vision, value, and voice. How does your organization or team embody each of those elements? Which element needs to be strengthened?

## Chapter 6

- An important point made in this chapter is that connection occurs in subgroups, including across departments. Which departments or people are most critical for you to have strong relationships with? What is the current state of those relationships?

- This chapter gives many practical tips for implementing a connection culture within your organization. Which three actions do you believe are most critical for your team at this point in time?
- Connection is not just for the workplace. It's critical in all relationships, including community organizations, religious groups, families, and friends. What actions will you personally take to build connection in groups outside work?

## Chapter 7

- Can you identify specific individuals you've known who fall into each of the categories of intentional disconnecter, unintentional disconnecter, and intentional connector?
- Of the factors mentioned in "The Changing Workplace and Future of Work" section, which do you expect might have the most relevance to you over the next three years? What other potential issues do you see on the horizon?
- What are your spheres of influence? What steps can you take to build connection in those local cultures?

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