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Keynote

Empathy at Scale: Leading with Presence and Purpose in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Description

I was in an airport. Flight canceled. Running on fumes after ten days of travel. I opened the airline app, and the chatbot said something that stopped me cold. My body responded before my brain could remind me that no one was actually there.

That moment became the thesis of everything I now teach. Empathy has an imitator. It is getting better. And for leaders who have built their authority on trust, that changes everything. As AI absorbs more of the work reducible to pattern and logic, the work that remains is more irreducibly human than ever: interpreting meaning, holding consequence, navigating trust, and deciding what matters when the tradeoffs involve dignity. This talk makes the strategic case for empathy as a precision leadership discipline, not a personality trait, and gives audiences the tools to practice it at organizational scale.

Learning Objectives

- Understand why Empathy Theater is often more damaging than indifference, and how to recognize the four behavioral signals that reveal the difference to everyone around you.
- Discover how power erodes empathetic attunement over time, and the specific disciplines that counteract it at every level of leadership.
- Learn how to integrate AI thoughtfully without quietly transferring accountability to the machine, and what the research says about what happens when you do not.
- Walk away with the concept of Presence Debt, how it accumulates invisibly in your organization, and the practical steps to start reducing it beginning the following week.

References

Ahmed Hedayat – Regional Vice President – Industry Verticals

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