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# NEXT LEVEL LEADERSHIP

How to overcome the top 3 leadership challenges  
of service-based entrepreneurs

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# What's stopping you from building a business that is purposeful, profitable and sustainable?

Three of the most common challenges I see as a leadership mentor to service-based entrepreneurs are:

1. Difficulty **holding the team accountable** to the standards needed.
2. The leader feels like they **can't trust their team** with important tasks.
3. The eternal repeating of **the same things over and over** (and over!)

Does this sound familiar to you? If so, you and your leadership skills are likely the bottle-neck to growth for your business.

## Leading a team is hard.

There are heaps of roadblocks, challenges, and painful lessons to work through when you're a service-based entrepreneur learning to become a better leader.

## But, it can be done in a sustainable way, and I'd love to show you how.

Over 17 years, I've been growing myself and our team at The Physio Co from a start-up to an award-winning, multi-state team that's ranked as one of Australia's 50 Best Places to Work for 11 consecutive years.

Along with leading The Physio Co, I'm also Chief Guide at the [Culture Is Everything Club](#) where I mentor service-based entrepreneurs to become better leaders and ultimately build businesses that are purposeful, profitable and sustainable.

Enjoy the read and, most importantly, **take action!**

**Tristan White**

## →1 Create a more accountable team

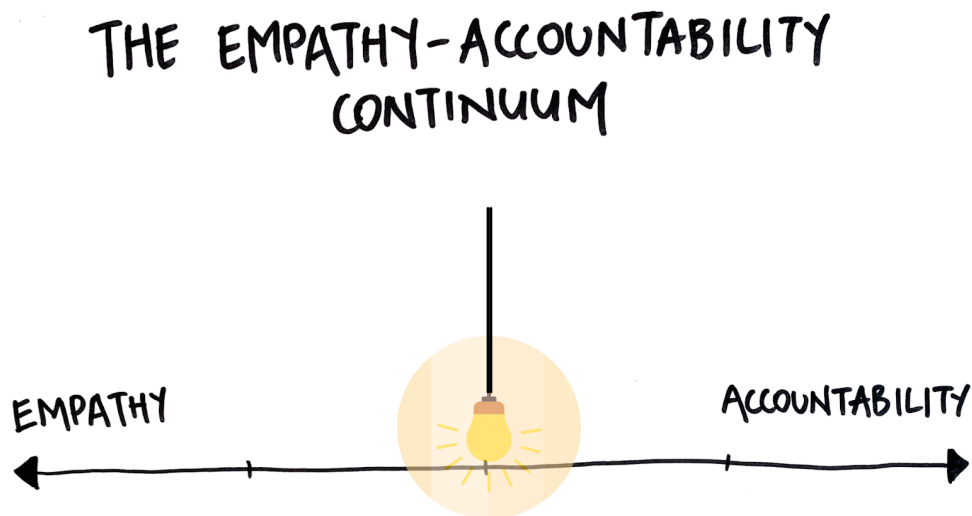
As leaders, we hear over and over that understanding how to use **empathy** is super-important. At the same time, we seem to have ever-increasing workloads and the demands of our own jobs get more and more.

**Because of this, there's an ever-present tension between when to connect with empathy and when to ensure accountability by flexing our assertiveness muscles.**

### Empathy-Accountability Continuum

I've devised what I call the 'Empathy-Accountability Continuum' to explain how we can master this complex challenge – and I think it could be super-helpful for you, your team and your relationships - at work and at home.

The Empathy-Accountability Continuum embraces the 'genius of the AND' concept. That is, **we don't have to choose empathy OR accountability. We choose BOTH.**



### How does it work?

For example, in a conversation with a teammate, your best approach might be a little empathy AND plenty of assertiveness to ensure accountability.

In a different conversation, more empathy and less accountability could be the best blend to connect meaningfully and make progress.

For most of the 17 years I've been running a business and leading a team, I was only really **using one half of the Empathy-Accountability Continuum.**

By default, I'm more naturally a people and empathy-oriented leader (even before the word 'empathy' became so popular!). Because of my **blind spot to the accountability side** of the continuum, I was only able to see and choose to act from the extreme empathy end of the continuum to somewhere near the middle.

By leaning into my accountability blindspot and **learning how to flex my assertiveness muscles**, I now have much more awareness and skill in choosing the blend of empathy and accountability I need to use in every conversation to be the connected leader who gets important work done with their team.

***“Creating a high-performing team where the right work gets done on time is a problem I seem to be forever stuck on. I wish my team was more accountable.”***

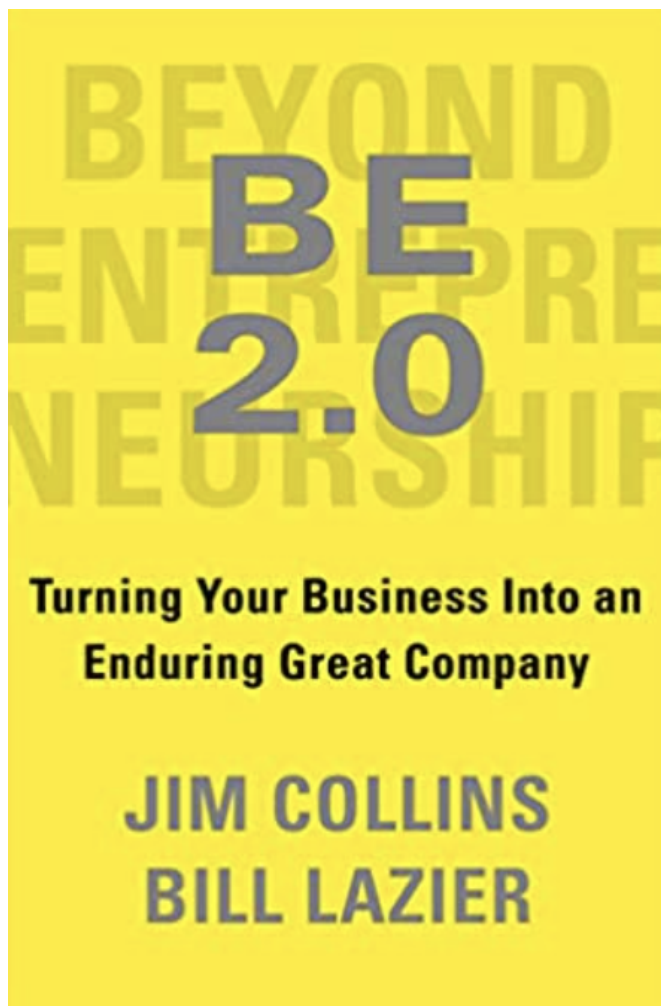
I urge you to dive into understanding and mastering how to use the Empathy-Accountability Continuum. It's been a critical factor in my success as CEO of a fast-growing and profitable company.

## →2 A more trusting team

### To get trust, you have to give trust.

How often are you talking about trust with your team? And do you give trust first or insist it is 'earned'?

In my experience, many leaders don't openly talk about trust with their team or give trust first, and I think both are mistakes. The most delicate and important topics are the ones we need to talk about the most. And as the leader of the team, it's your job to model the way.



In Chapter 1 of **BE 2.0** by **Jim Collins** and **Bill Lazier**, Jim recalls a conversation with his mentor, Bill, about the topic of trust. Despite, like all of us, having been burned by mistrust in the past, Bill shared with Jim:

***“...I find that people rise to what you believe of them. If you trust them, they feel responsible to merit that trust.”***

Service based entrepreneurs like you and I are risk takers. We have to be. After being burned a few times though, it's easy to become a little more risk averse and a little less confident in trusting others.

As challenging as the idea of giving an *'opening bid of trust'* to your team might seem when you think of the problems you've had, or maybe you worry about what problems that *could* happen, then consider this insight again from Bill Lazier:

***“...Have you ever considered the possibility, [INSERT YOUR NAME HERE], that by trusting people you actually help them to be more trustworthy?”***

The research from Great Place to Work Institute's annual study of workplaces has overwhelmingly found that the **defining factor of the best places to work around the globe is trust**. If you want to build a more sustainable business that is less reliant on you, the entrepreneur, then you're going to need to build more trust.

**Wherever you find yourself on the spectrum of trusting your team, I encourage you to bravely find just one of your team members today and talk to them about your idea of trust. After the conversation, in which you will have already been vulnerable and given trust in the way of sharing your thoughts, consider trusting that person even more. And repeat.**

## →3 Systemise your culture & communication

Lack of time is the biggest problem facing most service-based entrepreneurs. Why? Because 'the team' seems to need constant attention, on both small and big challenges.

***“The amount of time I spend communicating what’s needed; answering questions from the team, re-communicating what’s needed; and, answering the same questions again is infuriating! I wish my team was more aligned.”***

I used to feel like I was repeating myself and doing the same things over and over that should have been someone else’s job. It sucked. But I found a solution.

**Creating a strong and systemised culture changed our business, and my life, in many ways.**

By learning about the building blocks of a strong team culture, systematically putting them into place AND communicating to others how to use this simplified culture system I was able to create hours and hours of time in my life and in the lives of other members of our team that was previously taken up with rework (that is, the same work and the same conversations over and over).

# Culture by design

The 4-part, repeatable approach to creating a culture by design that I used, and now teach others to use in their business, is called the Culture Is Everything System and it is made up of:

## 1. Discover the Core

includes a compelling core purpose and set of core values

## 2. Document the Future

involves documenting and sharing the vision for your business.

## 3. Execute Relentlessly

involves empowering a sense of discipline in your team.

## 4. Show More Love

involves recognition, storytelling and team connection.



Those four foundational parts of the Culture Is Everything system are closely interrelated and all are critical for purposeful and sustainable growth:

First, we need to know who we are (**discover the core**) AND where are we going (**document the future**);

Second, to create a great business we need to both **execute relentlessly** and **show more love**.

**Growing a profitable business and simultaneously showing love to your team is not easy. It takes discipline and a robust system to follow, that's where the Culture Is Everything System has been so valuable for me and for a growing crew of service-based entrepreneurs.**



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# EXTRA STUFF...

Here's a list of some extra articles, podcasts and a free course to dive into next:

## 1 Read:

[How to manage the ongoing tension between empathy and accountability.](#)

## 2 Listen:

[The Empathy-Accountability Continuum podcast episode.](#)

## 3 Read:

[B.E. 2.0 - Book by Jim Collins and Bill Lazier](#)

## 4 FREE Book:

[Culture Is Everything](#) - The story and system of a start-up that became Australia's best place to work

## 5 FREE Course

[Culture Is Everything Kickstarter Express](#)

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**That's it. Thanks for reading.**

PS - If you have a question or comment, please email me, [tristan@tristanwhite.com.au](mailto:tristan@tristanwhite.com.au), I'd love to hear from you :)

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