



# CREATE A CULTURE OF MATTERING

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**To matter** is a:

1. Survival instinct
2. Basic need
3. Universal longing

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# Mattering

The experience of feeling significant to others that comes from **feeling valued** and **adding value**.

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# 65%

of workers feel underappreciated and undervalued in work

# 30%

of workers say they feel “invisible” or “flat-out ignored”

# 79%

of employees who quit their jobs claim that a lack of appreciation was a major reason for leaving

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# FEELINGS OF INSIGNIFICANCE

*lead to*



## ACTS OF WITHDRAWAL

Silence  
Withholding  
Isolating  
Leaving

## ACTS OF DESPERATION

"Gossip"  
"Complaining"  
Blaming  
Acting Out

← Importance relative to compensation →

**Toxic corporate culture**



**Job insecurity and reorganization**



**High levels of innovation**



**Failure to recognize employee performance**



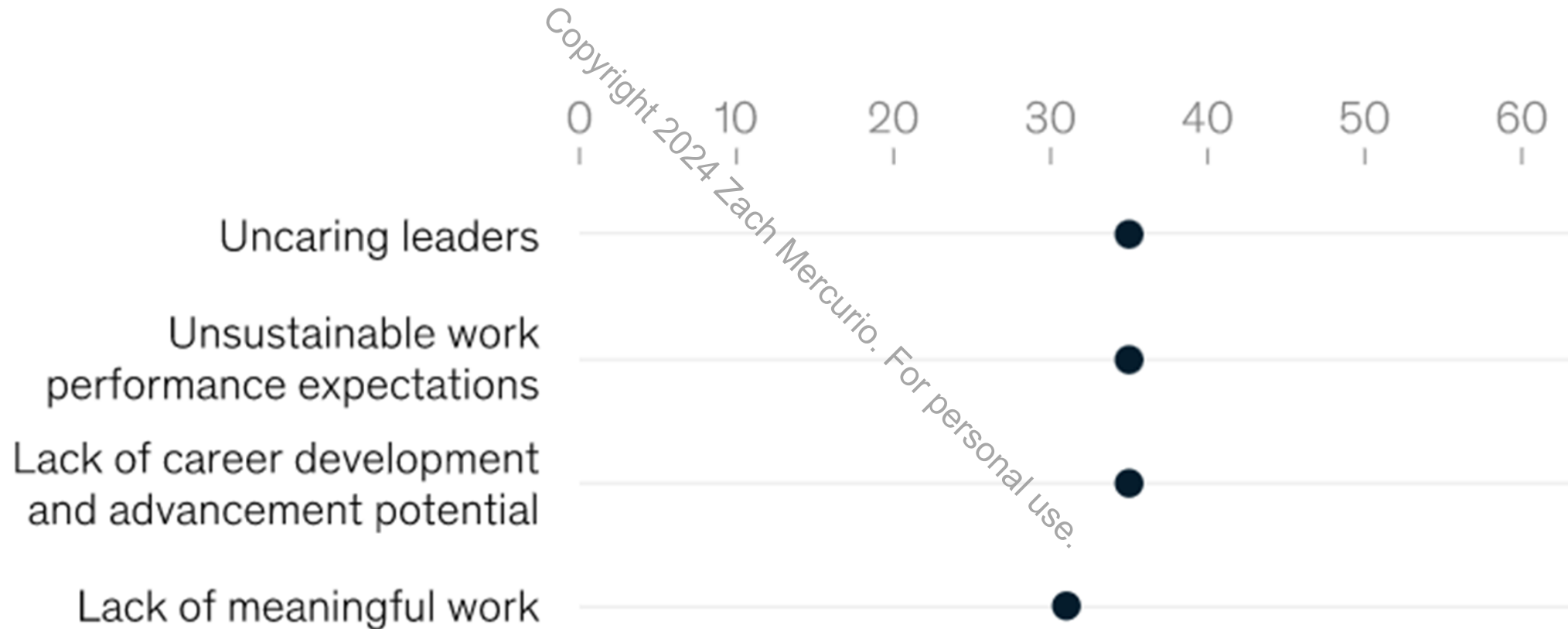
**Poor response to COVID-19**



- Undervalued
- Disrespected
- Non-inclusive

- No recognition
- Unnoticed performance

# Top Reasons Why People Left a Job Without Another Lined Up





Desire for Meaning

+

Demand for Dignity

+

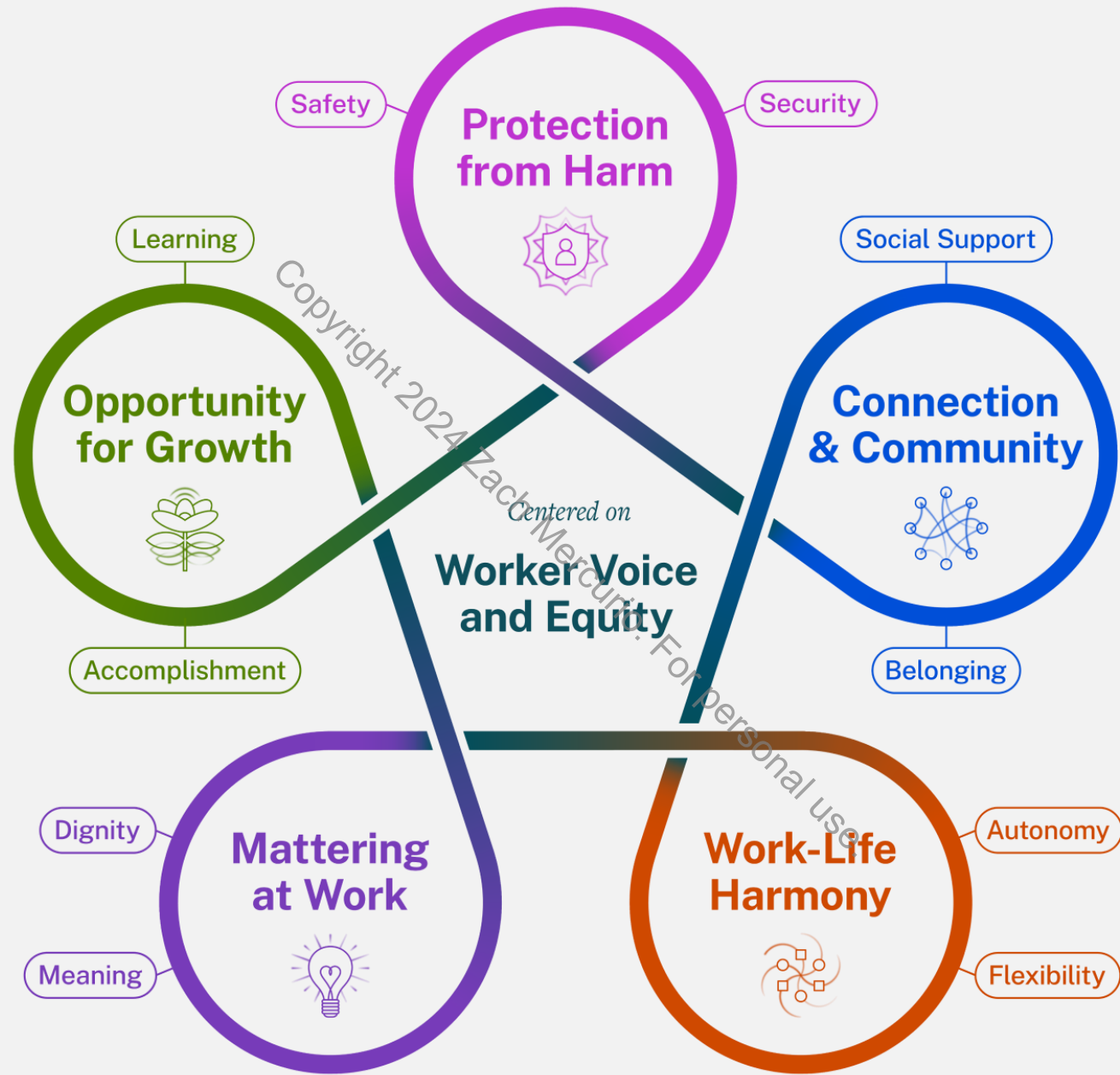
Infinitely Increasing Choice

=

A Focus on *Feeling*

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It's hard for *anything* to matter to someone who doesn't believe ***they*** **matter.**

People won't *care* until they feel **cared *for.***

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# I MATTER

**I'm valued.**

+

**I add value.**

You know my full name.

You ask about my life.

You know my struggles.

You remember me.

You miss me.

You check in on me.

You show me how I make a difference.

You affirm my unique gifts.

You ask for my opinion.

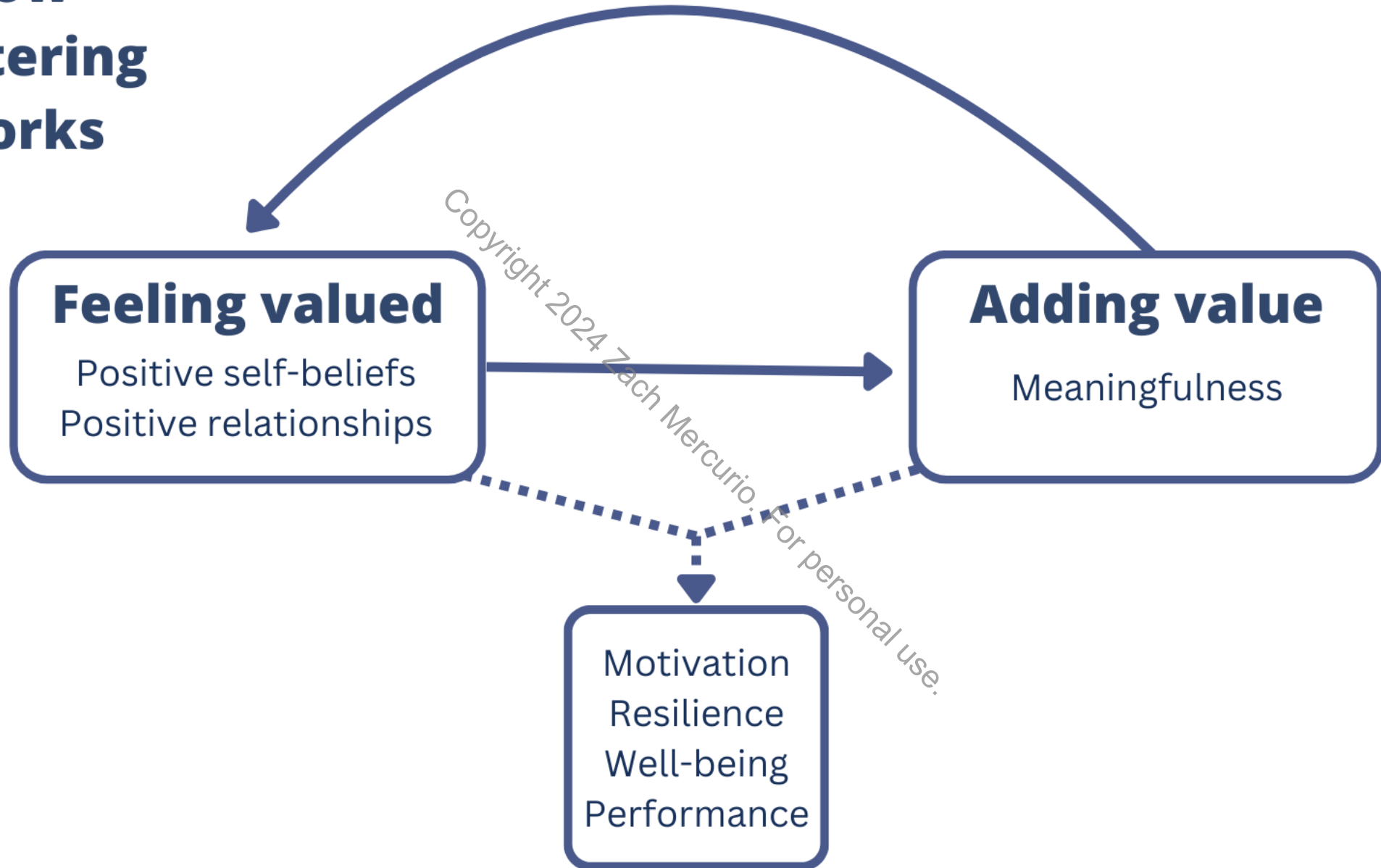
You give me responsibility.

You show me I'm relied on.

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# How Mattering Works



Common sense is usually not  
**common practice.**

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## Discuss (p. 2)

Think about the moment in your work when you **most** felt like you mattered to someone else.

When was it? What did they say?  
What did they do?





**NOTICED**

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People feel *seen*  
and *heard*.



**AFFIRMED**

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People see how  
their unique  
strengths make a  
unique difference.



**NEEDED**

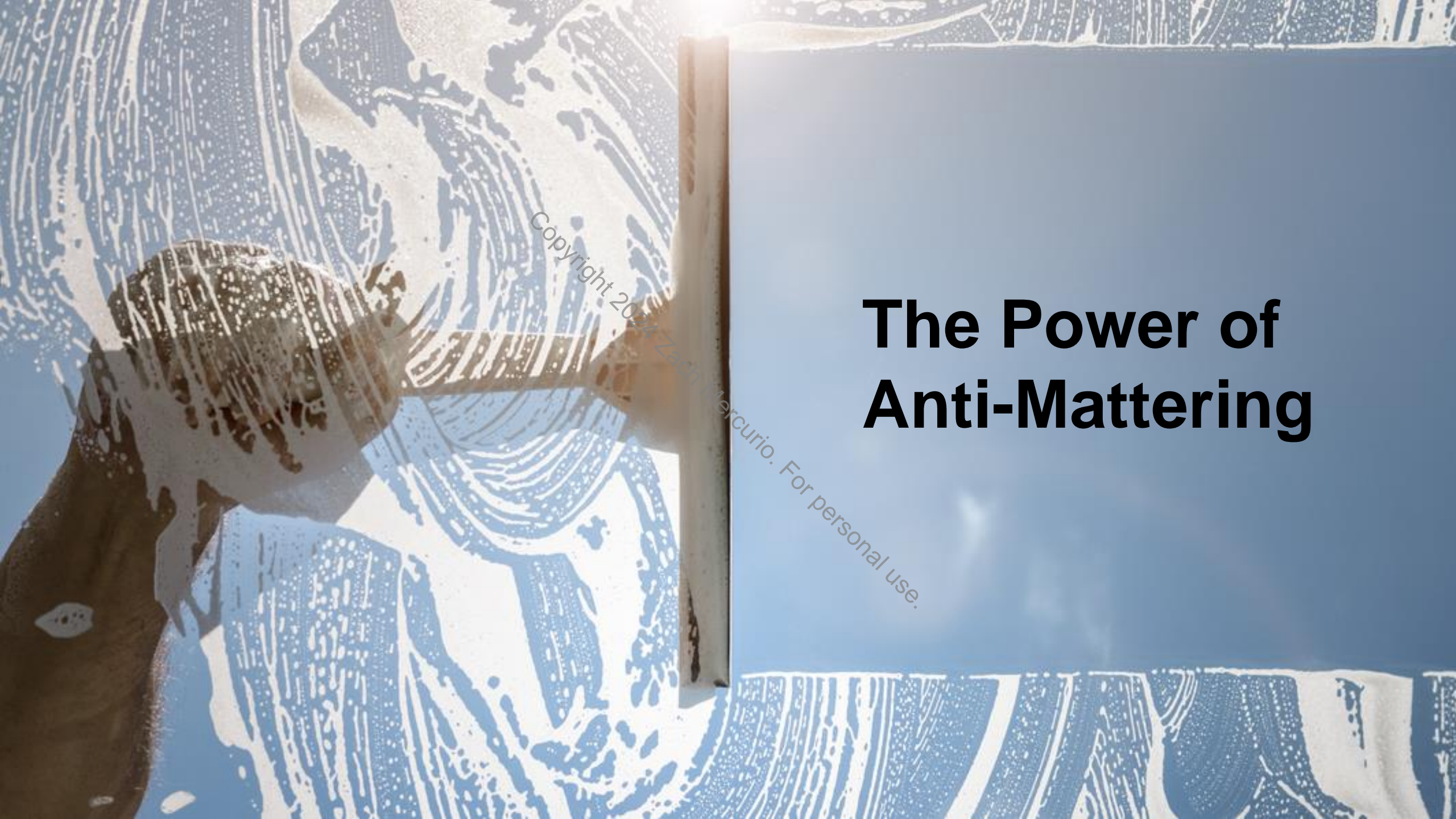
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People feel relied  
on, indispensable,  
and essential.

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# Regular moments of mattering...

1. Increase self-worth and motivation
2. Increase serotonin, oxytocin, and dopamine
3. Improve relationships
4. Lower risk of anxiety and depression
5. Predict lower stress



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# The Power of Anti-Mattering



## Discuss (p. 2)

Think about your current team/organization.

What are potential “sprinkler issues,” small experiences that may create anti-mattering?

What are the threats to mattering in your organization?

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Creating experiences of  
mattering is a **skill.**



**NOTICED**

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**People feel *seen*  
and *heard*.**

**Seeing someone** is paying attention to the details, ebbs, and flows of their lives and work while offering actions to show them you're paying attention.

**Hearing someone** means demonstrating a real interest in the meaning and feeling behind someone's words and inviting their experiences, perspectives, and feedback within a climate of psychological safety.



**Hurry and care can't coexist.**

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# Skill: Observe + Note + Share



# ASK MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS

~~How are you?~~

What has your attention today?

What kind of day have you had?

What's been most meaningful  
for you today?

What are you struggling with?  
How can I help?

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# Skill: Ask Meaningful Questions

- **Clear** (not vague)
- **Open** (not closed)
- **Exploratory** (not evaluative)

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# Skill: Do Energy Check-Ins



**Green** means you feel safe, passionate, content, or perhaps are in flow. You're able to be present, engage, create, and learn.




**Yellow** means you can be present but may be reactionary, you may feel overwhelmed or frustrated about something, or your attention is being pulled in another direction.



**Red** means you're overloaded, stressed, burned out, reactive, or feel it's difficult to be fully present.

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# Proactive Compassion

Anticipated Struggle	Signs of Struggle	Actions/Resources to Alleviate Struggle
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# DISCUSS + PLAN

- Think about the people on your teams or your employee groups. Who do you need to **see** more?
- What two actions can you take to help them feel more seen?
- What do you need to **stop** doing and **start** doing to help people feel more seen?

Being listened to  
≠  
**Feeling heard**

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# The Skill of Truly Hearing People



# Feeling Heard

Psychological safety is the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.

(Edmondson, 1999)

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# How Psychological Safety Works

- Risk to reputation
- Risk of being perceived as ignorant
- Risk of being seen as disruptive
- Fear of failure



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# Tool: Safe Meetings Checklist

## Psychologically Safe Meeting Checklist

- ✓ **No interrupting**
- ✓ **Point out silencing**
- ✓ **Assume good intentions**
- ✓ **Celebrate ideas and feedback**
- ✓ **Suspend judgment**
- ✓ **Respond instead of react**



# Tool: Mistake Policy

- What is your mistake policy?
- Reframe mistakes as learning
- Reframe mistakes as experiments

MISTAKES ARE GOOD,  
YOU SHOULD  
MAKE MORE.

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# Tool: Respond Better

Someone has an idea you don't think will work, have tried before, don't have the budget for, or you think is unrealistic.

PAUSE + LISTEN

Someone gives negative feedback on something you worked hard on, are already aware of, and are in the process of changing.

PAUSE + LISTEN

Someone gives you feedback without offering a solution.

PAUSE + LISTEN

Someone gives you feedback and you know they don't have all the knowledge of the situation.

PAUSE + LISTEN

# DISCUSS + PLAN

- Think about your team. What are three new practices you can implement to ensure people feel heard?
- What do you need to stop doing and what do you need to start doing to ensure people feel heard?



**NOTICED**

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**People feel *seen*  
and *heard*.**

- Pay attention to personal details:
  1. Observe, 2. Note, and 3. Share
- Ask Meaningful Questions
- Do Energy Check-Ins
- Practice compassion: Offer actions to alleviate struggles
- Cultivate Psychological Safety

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REMINDER

Schedule your good intentions.

Okay, got it!

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## **AFFIRMED**

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**People see how  
their unique  
strengths make a  
unique difference.**

Real affirmation is showing  
**how** someone's unique  
strengths make a unique  
difference.

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## **RECOGNITION**

vs

## **APPRECIATION**

vs

## **AFFIRMATION**

Showing gratitude  
for *what* someone  
does.

Showing gratitude  
for *who* someone  
is.

Showing  
someone the  
evidence of their  
significance.

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# Practice: Collect and Tell Stories of Significance





# Practice: Put a Face to The Work



**No Effect**



**33% more soap use**  
**10% more handwashing**

# DESIGN JOBS FOR MATTERING

## Significance

I know how the task benefits others.



## Necessity

I know what the task is necessary for.



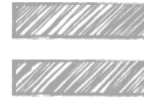
## Strengths

I know what strengths I can use on the task.

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# MEANINGFUL GRATITUDE



**SETTING** + **BEHAVIOR** + **GIFTS** + **IMPACT**



Describe when and where it occurred.



Describe the specific actions you observed or noticed.



Name the unique gifts the person exhibited.



Tell the story of the impact it had on you or others.

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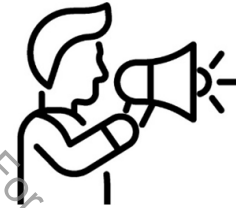
# Practice: 4 Gifts Everyone Has



Strengths



Purpose



Perspective



Wisdom

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# Practice: Give Wise Feedback

**To improve performance,  
people need:**

1. Your **belief**

“I believe in you and the impact you can make.”

2. Your **affirmation**

“I see the strengths you have to make this change.”

3. Your **support**

“I’m here to help.”



## **AFFIRMED**

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**People see how  
their unique  
strengths make a  
unique difference.**

1. Collect and tell stories of significance
2. Design and delegate jobs for mattering
3. Give meaningful gratitude
4. Know, name, and nurture people's unique gifts

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**NEEDED**

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**People feel relied  
on, indispensable,  
and essential.**

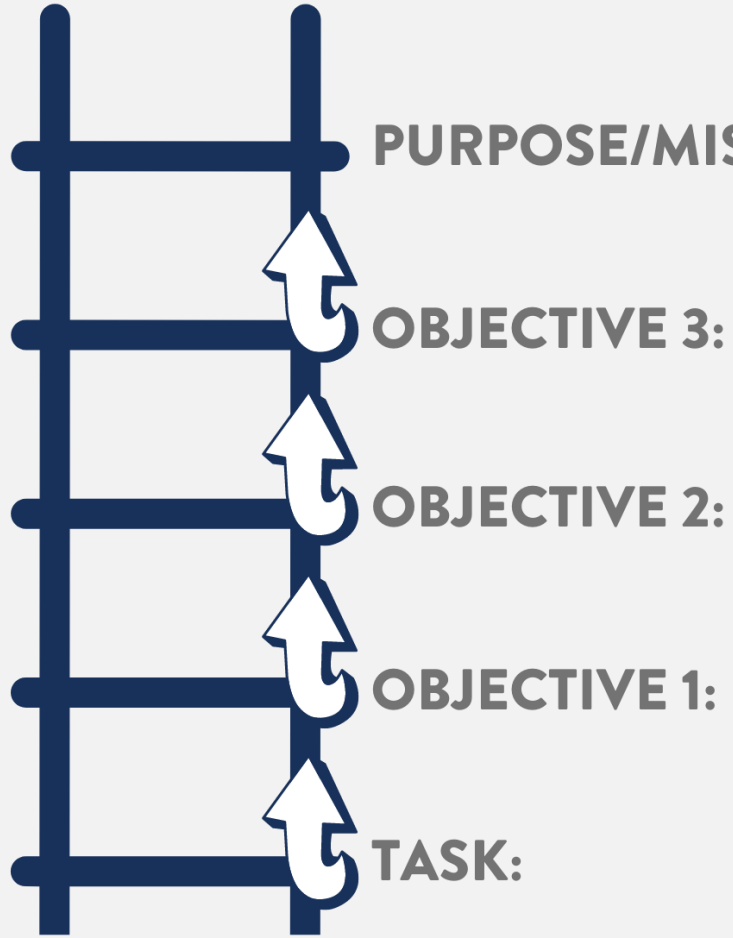
Treat everyone  
like they're  
essential.

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When people feel replaceable, they act  
**replaceable.**

When people feel irreplaceable, they act  
**irreplaceable.**

# Practice: Laddering



Source: Carton (2017). "I'm Not Mopping the Floors, I'm Putting a Man on the Moon": How NASA Leaders Enhanced the Meaningfulness of Work by Changing the Meaning of Work."





## **NEEDED**

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**People feel relied on, indispensable, and essential.**

1. Show people how they are indispensable to you and the bigger purpose
2. Tell people how you rely on them, notice when they're gone
3. Say, **“If it wasn't for you...”**

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\_\_\_\_\_, IF IT WASN'T FOR  
NAME

**YOU...**

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# DISCUSS + PLAN (p. 8)

What specific actions can you take to more meaningfully affirm people and their work on your team?

Consider how you might implement and scale:

- Collect and tell stories of significance
- Give meaningful affirmation
- (Re)Design jobs for mattering
- Laddering



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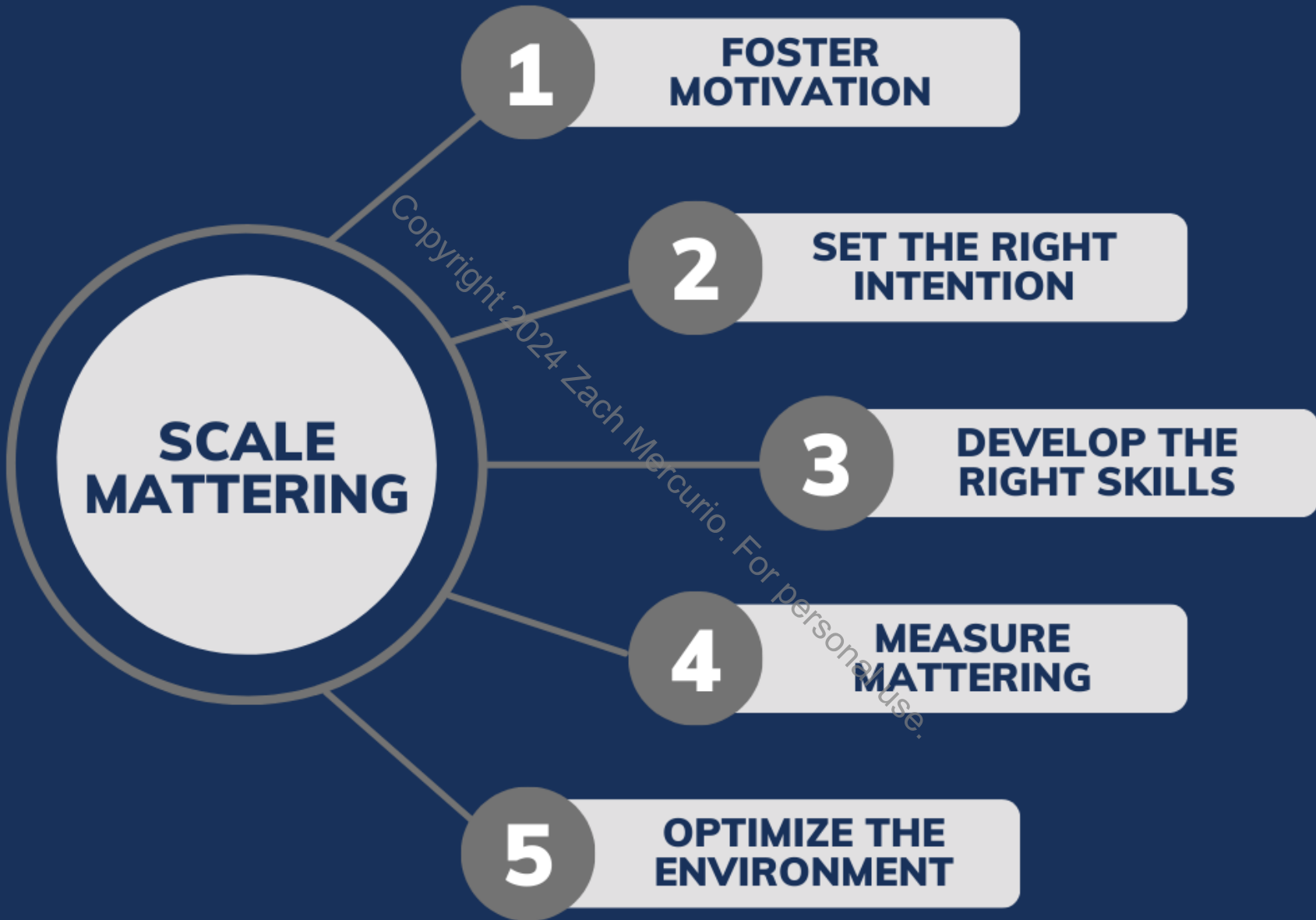
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# **SELF-ASSESSMENT (p. 10)**

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# TAKE ACTION

1. Share: Your overall scores: Which NAN practice area did you score highest in? What is one practice you will continue investing in?
2. Which NAN practice area did you score lowest in? What is one practice you will start? When? What will get in your way?
3. How would you rate your organizational culture on each of the dimensions? What should a priority action be?






# MATTERING AUDIT

Consider the people you see or work with daily. Write down your current practices to Notice, Affirm, or show them how they're Needed. If you're not doing anything strategic, leave it blank. If you lead a large organization, you can also replace "Name" with "Team" to assess employee groups.

NAME/GROUP	NOTICED	AFFIRMED	NEEDED

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The background is a dark, textured composition. The upper portion is a deep teal or dark green, speckled with several small, five-pointed yellow stars. Below this, there are rolling hills or mountains rendered with broad, horizontal brushstrokes in shades of brown, tan, and muted green. The overall style is painterly and atmospheric.

**Always assume  
your guest is  
tired, cold and  
hungry, and act  
accordingly.**

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NAVAJO PROVERB

Assume the people around you  
feel unseen, undervalued, and  
lonely, and **act accordingly.**

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# Q&A

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