



THE LEADERSHIP RESET

DESIGNING THE YEAR
BEFORE IT DESIGNS YOU





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The First 90 Days of 2026: Setting Yourself Up for Leadership Wins



When I look back at 2025, I notice many people were carrying more than they could comfortably manage. In my work with leaders and employees, I could feel the mix of fear, self-doubt, and uncertainty that came with fast organizational changes and the pressure to keep up with AI. Even for myself, there were moments I felt heavier than expected.

When we start a year already stretched, it becomes harder to stay focused and grounded. That's why I believe the first 90 days in 2026 are important as they give us a chance to reset, find our footing, and start from a steadier place.

Here are a few practices I'm reminding myself of, and I hope they support you too.

Reset your inner compass

Before we decide what to do in 2026, it helps to be clear about who we want to be. Start with a simple personal check-in and write down your reflections:

- *What part of myself have I outgrown, and what part is ready to emerge?*
- *What action would I take if I trusted myself a little more?*
- *What behaviour of mine, if improved slightly, would help others grow or feel more supported?*
- *What is within my control that I haven't fully owned yet?*

Choose the one skill that changes who you become in 2026

With AI and rapid change, learning everything isn't realistic. What's more powerful is choosing one skill that shifts the kind of person you are becoming. This could look like:

- *Speaking up even when it feels uncomfortable*
- *Regulating your emotions when pressure builds*
- *Building the confidence to lead conversations instead of following them*
- *Learning to use AI in a way that expands how you think, solve problems, and make decisions instead of just making your work efficient*
- *Strengthening judgment so you make clearer, steadier decisions*

Clear one mental or emotional block you've been carrying

Everyone brings something from the previous year:

- *An unresolved issue*
- *A worry you keep replaying*
- *A difficult conversation you avoided*
- *A belief that holds you back*



Xin Yuan Low
Director, Solution
Innovation & Excellence
Human Dynamic Group,
APAC

Pick one and take a small first step. You can write it down, talk to someone, or decide on the next action. This frees up mental space for the rest of the year. The first 90 days don't have to be perfect. They just need to be intentional. Small steps and clearer alignment can set the tone for the rest of 2026. No matter your role, you are a leader in the way you influence your own decisions, energy, and environment. How you start the year becomes the signal for the year you want to create.



• FROM ALIGNMENT TO ALCHEMY: •

Turning Teams into Innovation Catalysts

Many organizations work hard to align their teams by clarifying roles, setting goals, and ensuring everyone moves in the same direction through training and team-building workshops.

However, in today's fast-shifting landscape, alignment alone is no longer a competitive advantage. Teams are now challenged to move beyond mere coordination and alignment toward alchemy—a state where trust, energy, and diverse ideas blend into positive chemistry that produces far greater results than any individual effort.

Leading a team to this state is never easy. Team alchemy is not magic; it is a transformative process that requires every individual to commit to working, learning, and growing together to create performance breakthroughs.

TEAM TRANSFORMATION



A Newly Promoted Manager Leading Peers

Amy, a manager we coached, struggled to lead a team composed of peers, some of whom were her seniors. Amy scheduled a weekly "insight huddle" where everyone discussed obstacles and tested ideas in a safe space. Eventually, despite conflicts arising, the open dialogue deepened trust and allowed the team to witness positive changes. The team began co-creating solutions rather than waiting for directions, their innovation speed increased, and Amy gained credibility through her efforts in facilitating the team discussion rather than her position.

A Creative but Inexperienced Team

Tom, another leader, was responsible for a team full of creative ideas but lacking discipline in execution. By setting clear decision-making norms, holding monthly learning retrospectives, and rotating team roles in project sprints, he provided structure around their creativity. The team learned to prototype quickly, exchange constructive feedback, and take shared accountability. Each member grew into a "leader," contributing to collective creative outcomes.



A Change-Fatigued Team Regaining Momentum

Ben, a senior leader facing multiple change initiatives, noticed rising frustration and declining engagement in his team. Instead of pressuring the team, Ben implemented "energy check-ins," celebrated small wins, and invited the team to co-prioritize their workload. This restored clarity, autonomy, and psychological space, which reduced fatigue and rebuilt momentum to progress.

BUILDING THE CULTURE OF ALCHEMY

These are some encouraging stories we heard from leaders coached to observe team dynamics and harness team synergy rather than being drained by managing. Turning innovation into reality is not a one-off event; it is a culture built intentionally over time.

Commitment

Each member understands their role, commits to delivering on it, and supports others in doing the same.

Confidence

Team members trust that everyone is reliable and committed to working better together.

Conflict

Acknowledge differences and welcome disagreements, as they help the team see diverse perspectives.

Co-ownership

Everyone takes accountability, not only for their own actions but also for the team's collective results.

Challenges

Team members view challenges as opportunities to learn, and they reflect on successes and failures.

Catalyzing

Every member is willing to lead change, encourage others, and support the team's transformation.

Continuity

The team continues to move forward, growing together rather than staying static or falling back into a comfort zone.

When teams reach alchemy, they don't just execute strategy—they elevate it.

The Management Drives (MD) survey is an assessment tool Human Dynamic uses to identify team dynamics and support leaders through one-on-one or team coaching.

MD helps uncover what motivates individuals and teams, and how these inner drives influence the way people work, lead, and succeed together. The tool enables leaders to understand not only behaviours, but also the underlying energy behind them: what energizes people, what blocks them, and why. These insights provide a powerful foundation for leaders to interpret team dynamics more accurately and harness team synergy to achieve team alchemy.

Lina Lam

Chief Transformation Officer,
Human Dynamic Group,
APAC



AI AND
ETHICS:

AI

THE
LEADERSHIP
BALANCING
ACT

January is when many leaders reset dashboards and targets.

In 2026, I would ask a different question to start: "What role is AI playing on my team right now, and what role is left for my humans?" One of the more interesting articles in my reading set, a 2025 article in the Journal of Ethics in Entrepreneurship and Technology, talks about another conflict: fairness vs. Freedom. The authors propose a dual-layered approach to thinking:

- **System level:** How the AI was made. Is it trained on data that is fair? Is it checked for bias on a regular basis?
- **Human level:** How do people feel about it? Are there easy controls and clear choices so they still feel in charge?

That idea of two layers is also very helpful for leaders.

At the system level, we need clear rules about what AI can and cannot do, where human approval is required, and what "good" means in terms of fairness and privacy. We need the freedom to say, "This does not feel right," and go against the machine. The more I read and think about it, the more I see that the tired "innovation versus ethics" debate misses the point. Ethics is not a stop sign; it is the software that lets AI grow without losing trust, burning people out, or leaving whole groups out.

My second commitment for 2026 is personal. In an AI world, being a leader is not just about using tools; it is also about building a character that knows how to use them well. Philosophical traditions and contemporary leadership research serve as a reminder that humility, equity, and accountability must guide my actions. Without them, AI will quietly push us into boring work where we do not have to make decisions that matter.

So, I have one clear design rule: AI does the hard work. People do the heavy work.

- **AI is responsible for:** options, speed, scale
- **Humans are responsible for:** judgment, escalation, exceptions

Make that explicit in role charters and team agreements.

Then, make the collaboration visible. Whenever an AI-assisted decision is presented, ask three questions out loud:

- 1 What did the system optimize for?
- 2 Whose perspective or data might be missing?
- 3 What do we choose, knowing our values?

Those questions keep humans firmly in the loop.

I'm also connecting ethics to energy management: A useful January activity - have your team finish the sentence,

"AI helps me most when..." or "AI worries me most when..."

Let those insights guide meaningful improvements, refine the way we work, how people are trained, and the rules.

Ultimately, it is not about who is more "tech-savvy" when it comes to bridging the gap between AI and the next generation. It depends on who is willing to listen, share power, and come up with a way to work where curiosity, caution, and care can all be present.

Steven Khu

Corporate Marketing Manager,
Human Dynamic Group, APAC



Focus in the Age of Distraction: Mental Clarity for 2026



Distraction is no longer a nuisance; it's the new background noise of work. Leaders today face an unprecedented cognitive load: relentless notifications, hybrid meetings, decision fatigue, and the pressure to respond instantly to everything. The result? Declining attention spans, digital overwhelm, and an ongoing sense of mental fog.

The truth is, focus isn't a personality trait, it's a capability we can train. And when leaders learn to protect their attention, they don't just elevate their own performance; they also set the tone for a calmer, more intentional workplace culture.

If you often feel mentally scattered, easily pulled between apps, or drained despite "not doing much," you're not alone. But you can reset. Below is a practical toolkit we share with leaders across industries to help them reclaim clarity amidst the noise.



THE 2026 MENTAL CLARITY TOOLKIT

Whether you tend toward perfectionism or a "superhero complex," the solution is to set boundaries.

1 THE 10-2-2 RESET RULE

Start your morning with 10 minutes of undisturbed focus. Take two small nervous-system resets after lunch. Reduce heavy digital input two hours before bed to recharge mental bandwidth.

2 SINGLE-TAB LEADERSHIP

Keep only one browser tab open during high-focus work. This lowers cognitive switching costs and preserves energy.

3 MICRO-RECOVERY MOMENTS

Every 90 minutes, take a 3-minute break — stretch, look outside, breathe. These small resets restore clarity and prevent burnout.

4 MORNING INTENTION SETTING

Identify your one non-negotiable priority for the day. Revisit it before saying yes to new requests.

5 NOTIFICATION CURFEW

Silence non-essential alerts during deep-work blocks. Even 45 minutes of uninterrupted time can renew your clarity.



Shalini Gunarajan

Senior Consultant,
Human Dynamic Group,
Malaysia



Quick Self-Check:

How Focused Are You Today?

To complement the toolkit, take a moment for a quick focus check-in. This brief self-assessment helps you gauge where your attention currently stands and identify which practices to prioritize.

Instructions: Choose the option that best reflects how often each statement is true for you.

1 I can concentrate on one task for a long time when necessary.

☐ 1 Almost Never ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Almost Always

2 When I get distracted, I can return to my work quickly.

☐ 1 Almost Never ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Almost Always

3 I can stay focused even when there is a lot happening around me.

☐ 1 Almost Never ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Almost Always

4 I can control my thoughts so they don't drift away during important tasks.

☐ 1 Almost Never ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Almost Always

5 After an interruption, I can resume my work without losing momentum.

☐ 1 Almost Never ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Almost Always



Scoring Guide:

Add your total score (range 5–20):

5–10: Your attention is under strain. Start with one daily practice to rebuild focus.

11–16: You have fair attention control. Strengthen consistency and reduce digital load.

17–20: Strong attentional control — you model focused, intentional leadership.

By combining the toolkit with this simple self-check, you can identify attention gaps, protect your focus, and act with intention. In an era engineered to fragment your mind, clarity becomes a leadership superpower in 2026.

This assessment is adapted from:

The Self-Regulation Assessment by Ralf Schwarzer, Manfred Diehl & Gerdmarie S. Schmitz, (1999). https://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/selfreg_e.htm

The Psychometric Properties of Attentional Control Scale and Its Relationship with Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5483236/>



CHARTING THE LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE OF 2026

Facing the New Year Full of Uncertainty and Challenges with Purpose and Hope



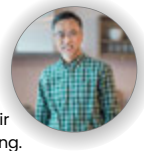
When I am writing this article, Hong Kong people had just experienced the biggest loss of lives and properties from the Taipo Wang Fuk Court tragic fire, in which over 160 people died. Hong Kong people together mourn, care, help, and comfort each other during and after the disaster, which could have been avoided. People now turn their attention to question why such disaster could happen. There is growing public concern about underlying systemic issues and whether there will be space for open dialogue.

That is the “life situation” we are facing in the year end of 2025 in Hong Kong. When we start the New Year, we cannot just forget what happened in 2025 and focus on what lies ahead. That is the reality of life and business regardless of where you are. You and your business/career are facing different or similar uncertainty and challenges. You feel sadness, anxieties, and perhaps pains and losses. You do not have that sense of control over your life and business/career which has helped you focus and thrive towards your goals. Here, it is time to be still and rest in your purpose and hope.



“Visionary leadership” often gives us an impression that we are driving towards our visions, and we are always on the move. Perhaps, starting the New Year 2026, we could be still, sense, and appreciate what we have. That may include your life, your family, your friends, your cats/dogs, your possessions, your faith, your purpose, and your hope.

In the world of business/career we often focus on growth and innovation in terms of revenue, profit, revolutionary technology, and dominating products so much that we fail to appreciate and be grateful to what we have. In the Taipo fire, over 2000 families lost their homes and all their possessions; some lost their families and loved ones. Visionary leadership is revealed when the whole community extend their care and concerns, they came out to provide for the needs of the impacted families, they lined up for two hours to pay their respect to those who died in the fire, they demanded justice to find out the causes of the fire and to hold those concerned contractors and stakeholders accountable for their corruption and negligence. Love, peace, and justice are the drivers of visionary leadership in Hong Kong.

**Eric Kung**Chairman & CEO
Human Dynamic Group, APAC