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Create a Culture of Belonging

Many years ago, we had a CEO say to us,

“I’d be a great leader if it weren’t for those damn people!”

Of course, being a great leader is all about those damn people! So, it’s important to learn how to bring out the best in the people you so deeply rely on to create organizational success.

One of the most powerful ways to create a culture of belonging is by letting people know that you CARE about and VALUE them.

Research shows that:

- People who believe their leaders **care about them**, show greater loyalty to the leaders, share differing opinions in ways that further innovation, and are less likely to leave.
- People who believe their leaders **value their contributions**, are more aligned behind the vision, more likely to move initiatives forward, and are less likely to leave.

While the research separates these out, we’ve seen that it’s the **combination of demonstrating** caring for the individuals and valuing their contributions that’s most meaningful and can leave people with a sense of belonging.

The same is true in our families, friend groups, and community organizations. When people genuinely feel they belong to something beyond themselves, they are more engaged, committed, and innovative.



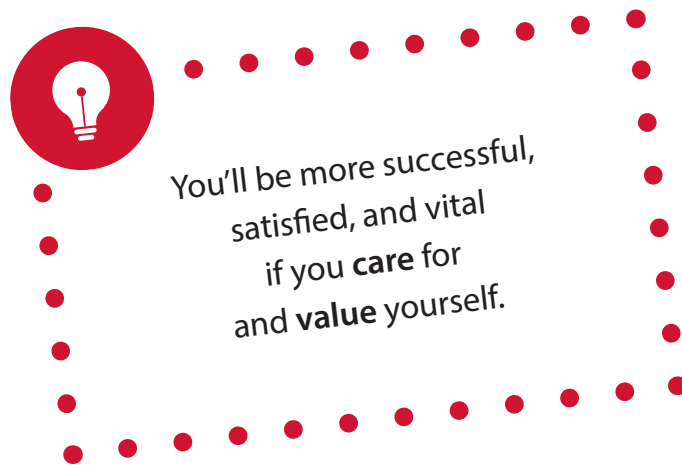
The Importance of Care/Value in Your Personal Life

We think the airlines are right, people need to “put the oxygen mask on themselves first” if they’re going to be able to succeed in their life, work, and world.

As we’ve been teaching the concepts of **CARE** and **VALUE** in the leadership context, we’ve gotten clearer that **CARE** and **VALUE** in your personal life is key to your success and is the foundation to your ability to demonstrate the same to others – staff, colleagues, children, friends, etc.

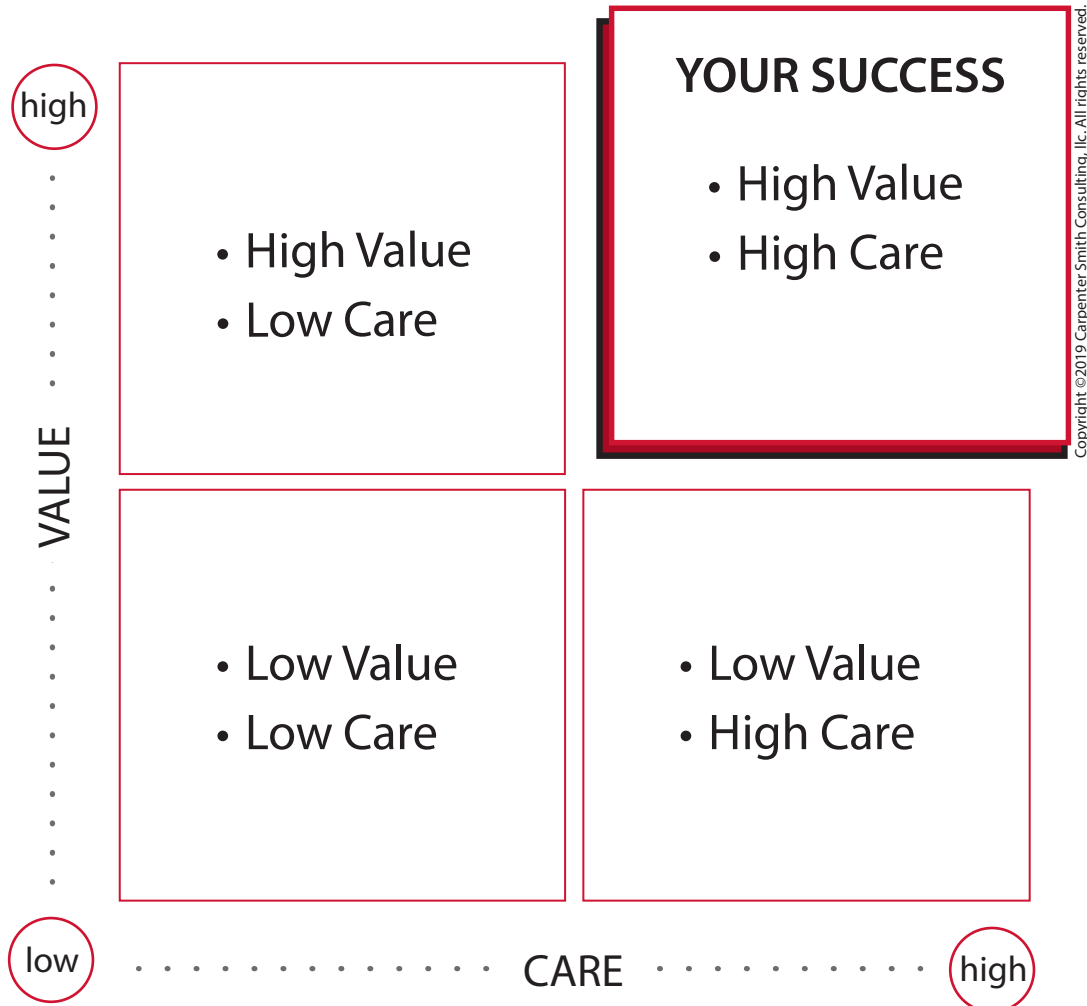
Think of it this way, if you’re **taking care of yourself** without valuing your unique gifts and talents, you may be spending your days doing things that don’t in any way nourish your soul.

Or, if you **value your unique gifts and talents**, but don’t care for yourself, you may be slipping into working nonstop which can leave you feeling worn out and unsatisfied and can lead to burnout.



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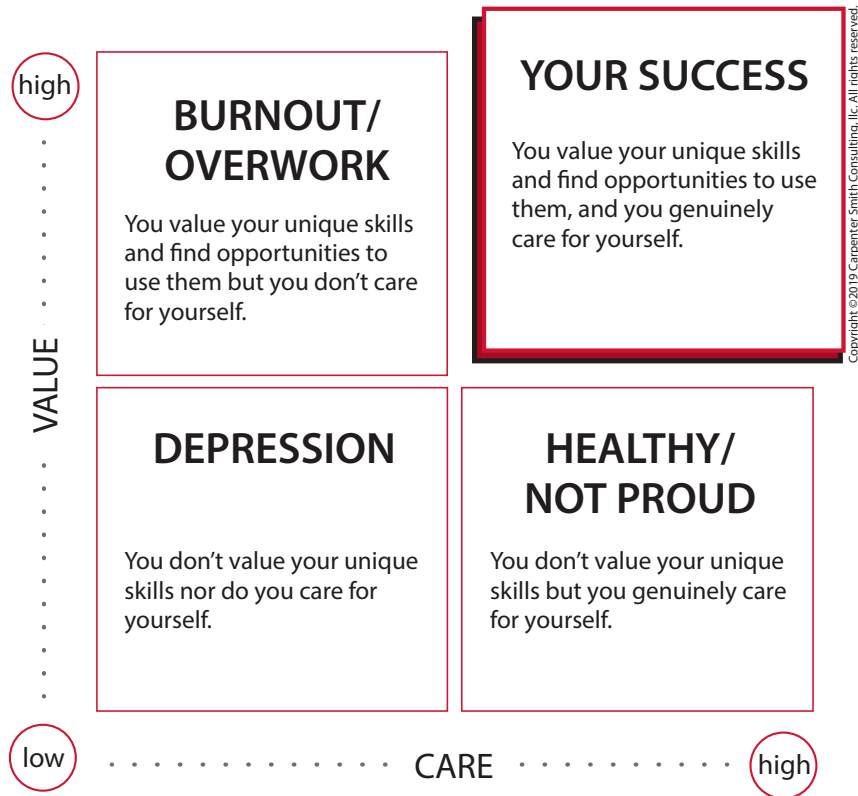
The intersection of **caring for yourself** and **valuing your contributions** is critical to managing burnout and to creating your personal vision of success.



Caring for and Valuing yourself will help you:

- Mitigate burnout
- Create new opportunities
- Fuel yourself
- Feel successful and satisfied
- Have more to give to the people and organizations you love
- Increase your sense of belonging in your own life

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Examples of CARE and VALUE

Care

- Healthy eating / sleeping / moving
- Speaking to yourself with respect and kindness
- Connecting with people you love and who love you
- Knowing and living your life priorities
- Reserving time for solitude to wonder and dream

Value

- Recognizing your unique gifts and skills
- Identifying opportunities to offer your talents more often (whether personally or professionally)
- Sharing your passions with your world
- Creating or sharing something beautiful, like a poem, music, or images you love

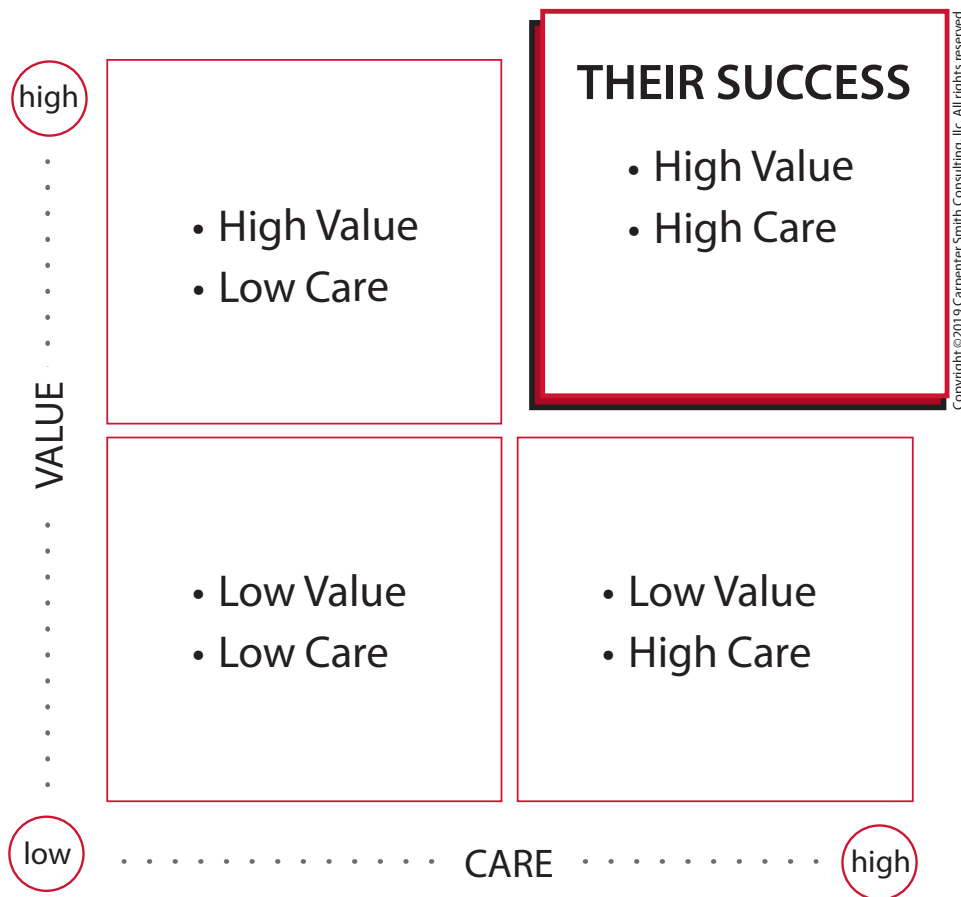
Where would you place yourself on the matrix? What is one new thing you can add into your days to get you closer to the success you envision?

Create a Culture of Belonging with the Care/Value Matrix

Over the course of our work, we've seen over and over again that leaders want to feel proud of their leadership and confident in their ability to magnetize the people they lead; to create strong commitments to success.

While they're committed to that success, they often report that they struggle with the people aspect of their leadership.

Since the people aspect is what leadership is all about, we've spent the past few years identifying the simple, core behaviors that create a culture of belonging; demonstrating **CARE** and **VALUE**.



Leaders often understand conceptually, how to demonstrate that they value their employees' contributions (although they may not always do it), but many of them aren't quite sure **how to demonstrate care**.

On the next page, you'll see that we've put together some simple ideas, to get you thinking about how you can demonstrate both of these things.

Create a Culture of Belonging with the Care/Value Matrix



Examples of Demonstrating CARE and VALUE

Care

- Say hello and welcome people into a meeting (especially if it's virtual).
- Be fully present in meetings and conversations - put away distractions like electronics.
- Ask about a vacation or weekend.
- Say "Happy Birthday" or "Happy Work Anniversary".
- Show up to meetings online and in-person with warmth and curiosity.

Value

- Offer recognition for contributions to the team or the organization.
- Don't forget to acknowledge things people do every day, that create a strong culture of belonging.
- Let people know that their skills help create success.
- Ask about professional goals and dreams.
- Give people opportunities to bring the skills they love using, to their work.

Care and Value in Your Hiring

Now, we'd like to talk about how **CARE** and **VALUE** can play a role in successful recruiting.

Your best hires for long-term success are people you:

- care about as a person and believe you would grow in that caring if they joined the team
- value how their unique skills and abilities will contribute to their role and possible future roles

As you interview potential candidates, use the framework below to help you think about the importance of **CARE** and **VALUE**.



If you'd like to stand out in the recruiting process, try these tips:

- Let them know that you **care** about them by getting to know more about their professional aspirations, their personal life (if appropriate), and offer ways that you can help them to create a successful and satisfying career as they go forward.
- Be very clear about what you **value** in their skill set and the ways you believe they'll be important to organizational success.