# Defining YOUR

# Leadership Style

## May 18, 2022

**Meredith "Mer" Curry Nuñez**
*Executive Director, Northern California College Promise Coalition*

# HI! I'm Mer!

★ **Executive Director** | NorCal College Promise Coalition

★ **Member** | NCAN 2022 Advisory Task Force (Fellow '21-22)

★ **Commissioner** | SCC Comm. on the Status of Women, D2

★ **Board Member** | LEAD Filipino

★ **Honoree** | 2021 Silicon Valley Business Journal 40 Under 40

★ **Alumni** | 2019 APALI Civic Leadership Program @ De Anza

**AND a product of all three public higher education segments**
**Dual Enrollment + Continuous Learning** @ De Anza College, Evergreen College, LA Harbor College, El Camino College
**Bachelor of English** at UC Los Angeles
**Master of Business Administration** at Cal State Long Beach

# Objectives and Agenda

## Objectives
❏ Explore how our routines and the pandemic have informed our leadership style.
❏ Discuss ways to work smarter remotely and in teams
❏ Discuss management strategies that are heart-centered

## Agenda
  I.   Introduction & Agenda
 II.   Recap of the morning session
III.   Working remotely and in teams
 IV.   Managing Down, Up, and Every Which Way
  V.   Meaningful Meetings Matter
 VI.   Q&A
VII.   Closing & Review of last session

**Peace.** It does not mean to be in a place where there is no trouble, noise, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and **still be calm in your heart.**
~ Lady Gaga

# YOUR Intersectionalities

"All of us live **complex lives** that require a great deal of **juggling for survival**.

What that means is that we are actually living at the **intersections of overlapping systems** of privilege and oppression."
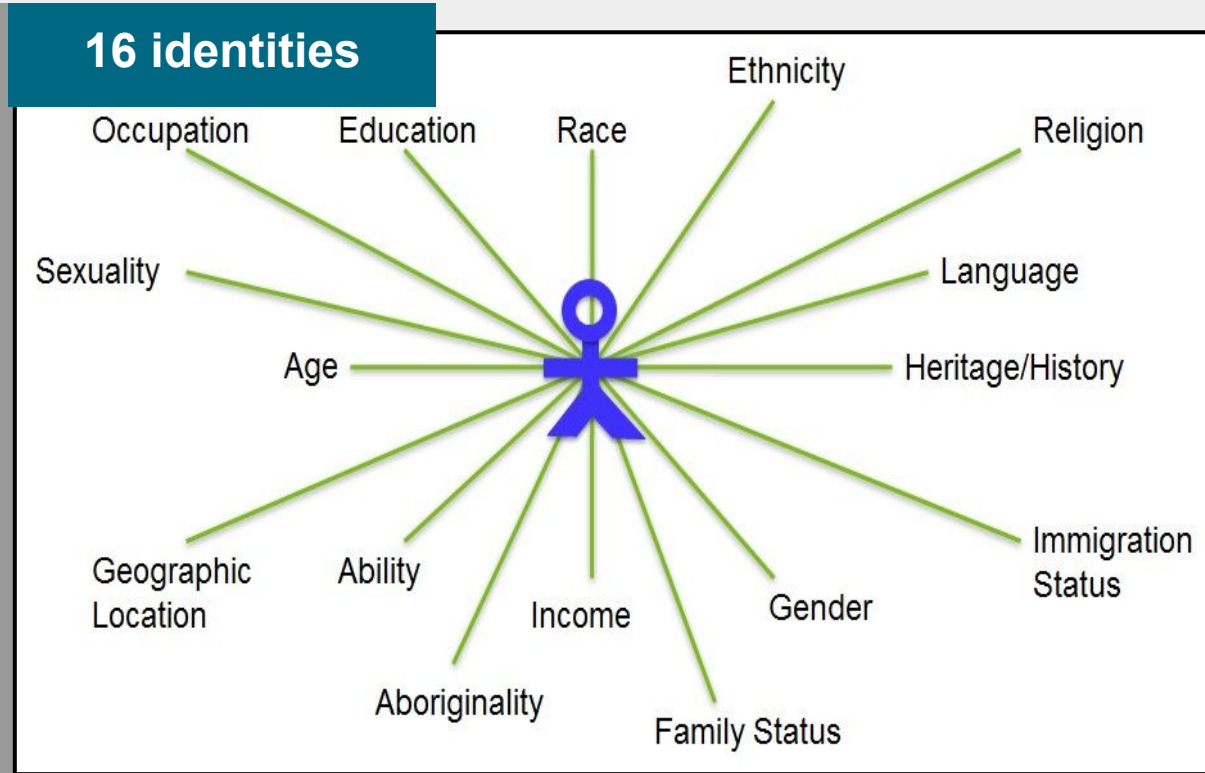(Feminist Freedom Warriors Project, Syracuse University)

**16 identities**



Figure 1. Intersectionality Perspective (Jackson in Global Health, 2014).

"The thing that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself.

~ Anna Quindlen

Acknowledge.
**Accept.**
Adapt.

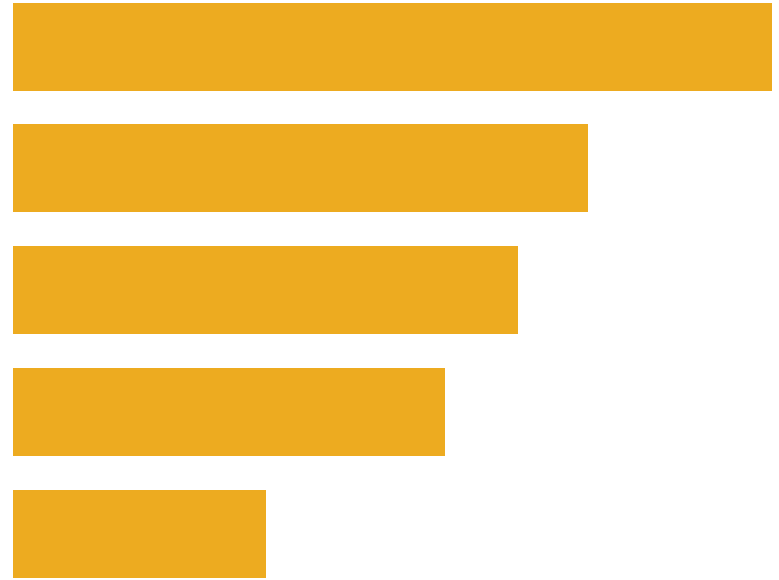# Top 5 Factors in Success Across More Than 200 Companies

- 🕐 **Timing**
- 👥 **Team/Execution**
- 💡 **Idea "Truth" Outlier**
- 📊 **Business Model**
- 💲 **Funding**

**SOURCE:** Adapted from "The single biggest reason why startups succeed, Bill Gross' TED Talk" by Idealab, 2015. Retrieved from: https://www.idealab.com/

# What's YOUR SMART Goal?



**2 MINDSETS**

**FIXED mindset:** intelligence is static.
This leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to...

CHALLENGES ...avoid challenges

OBSTACLES ...give up easily

EFFORT ...see effort as fruitless or worse

CRITICISM ...ignore useful negative feedback

SUCCESS OF OTHERS ...feel threatened by the success of others

As a result, they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.
All this confirms a deterministic view of the world.

**GROWTH mindset:** intelligence can be developed.
This leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to...

...embrace challenges

...persist in the face of setbacks

...see effort as the path to mastery

...learn from criticism

...find lessons and inspiration in the success of others

As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement.
All this gives them a greater sense of free will.
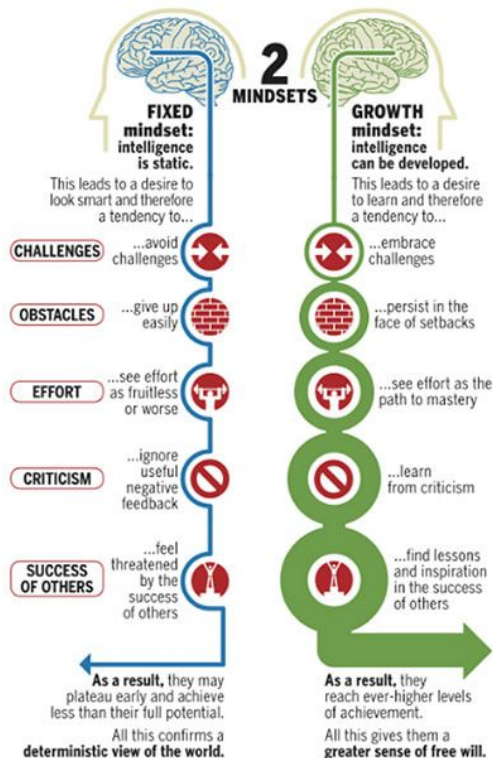
**STEP 2:** How do I let go?

Use SMART goals to help you take action on the idea you jotted down for Step 1. Want an example? Check out the AdvancED on Purpose Blog.

**S** BE SPECIFIC: I will check emails less frequently throughout my work day to reduce distraction and get more done within large chunks of time.

**M** WHAT WILL YOU MEASURE: I will add blocks of time to my calendar for work where I don't check emails or my phone.

**A** ACHIEVABLE BECAUSE: I rely on my calendar to dictate my day. Syncing to my phone, I'll get reminders to shut down email and put my phone in a different room if needed.

**R** RELEVANT TO: My strong desire to create work-life balance and focus on one thing at a time to work more effectively and efficiently.

**T** IDEAL TIMING: For October through December, then revisit for 2020!

**STEP 3: Repeat for your other goals.**

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# Acknowledge. Accept. ADAPT.

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Use SMART goals to help you take action on the idea you jotted down for Step 1. Want an example? Check out the AdvancED on Purpose Blog.

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- ❖ *Explore my intersectionalities*
- ❖ *Agendize the next meeting I lead incorporating Objectives & Roles*
- ❖ *Assign someone to agendize team meetings moving forward*
- ❖ *Complete the Gallup StrengthsFinder for myself*
- ❖ *Get the Gallup StrengthsFinder for my whole team*
- ❖ *Attend a DEI meeting*
- ❖ *Join a Commission or Board*

**www.advancedconsulting.org/blog/growth-mindset-and-smart-goals-for-professionals**
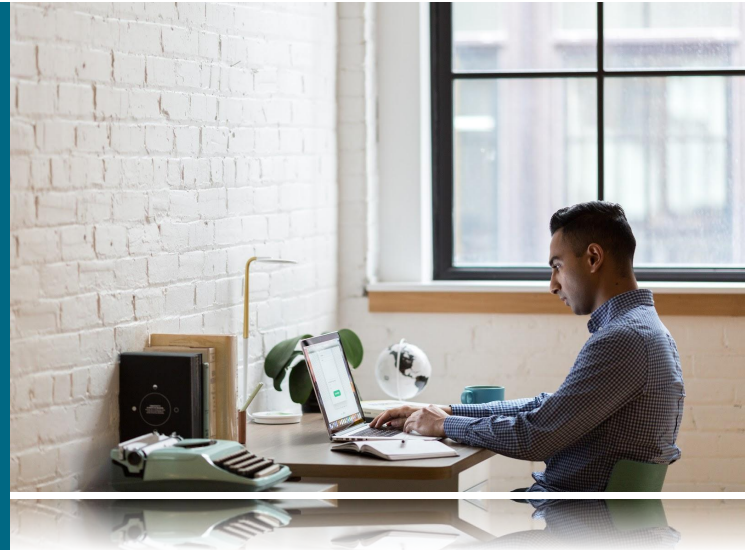
# Acknowledge. Accept. ADAPT.



- ❖ **S:** *Meditate regularly*
- ❖ **M:** *Sitting down for at least 10 minutes*
- ❖ **A:** *I have a quiet space ready and an app to help me meditate*
- ❖ **R:** *Will help me manage my emotions and tap into calm at work*
- ❖ **T:** *Every day for 2 weeks then try for 30 days, then set new goals*

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBoAquxhspA**

# Acknowledge. Accept. ADAPT.

## Mer's Top 3 Tips for Remote & Team Work

1. Practice **Mindfulness** to combat fear, shame, and ego.

2. Learn how to **Communicate** virtually with vulnerability.

3. Keep yourself more **Organized** than you've ever been before.

# Acknowledge. Accept. ADAPT.

## Mer's Top 3 Tips for Managing

1. Stay **connected** and not just by email.

2. Make your availability **visible** to others, and especially to yourself.

3. Make the work **transparent** to everyone.

Photo Source: #WOCinTech Chat at wocintechchat.com

# _Meditation:_ Naysayer vs Cheerleader

**"I am already doing well"**
_Language that taps into your growth mindset, reminds you that "good or bad" is not important, your effort is important, every minute of effort is progress._

**"Quitter"**
_Language that undermines your effort, your lessons, your effort._

**"I will never get this right"**
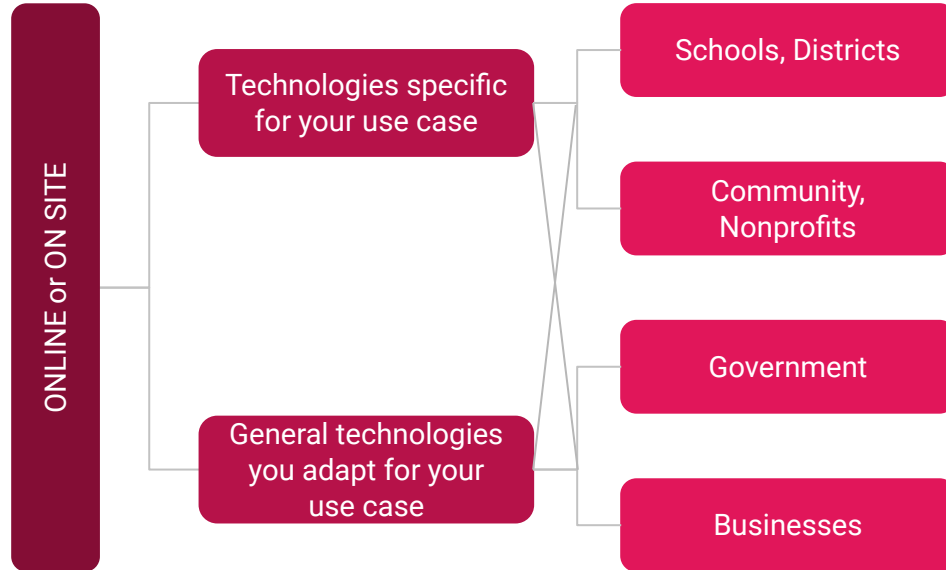_Language that keeps you in a fixed mindset._

**"Resilient"**
_Language that reminds you the best cheerleader in your life is YOURSELF. Reminds you that even when there's a break, you can keep going and try again._

**"Come back to your breath"**
_Language that encourages you to keep going and reminds you that this is a practice._

Mer Curry

**"Distracted"**
_Language that suggests you are doing something incorrectly or that your effort is not good enough._

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# The Present: Where do you *work?*

ONLINE or ON SITE

- Technologies specific for your use case
- General technologies you adapt for your use case

- Schools, Districts
- Community, Nonprofits
- Government
- Businesses

Source: Preparing to Take School Online? Here Are 10 Tips to Make It Work. (EdSurge, March 9, 2020)

# The Opportunity: Our Perspectives

*I can't hold workshops in person anymore, what should I do?*

*How do I keep my team engaged online?*

**Solo entrepreneur** does everything herself, but she may be used to managing projects, presentations, and teams in person

**Manager** may have his own experience with working virtually, but must also now manage a team virtually

*I've learned things along the way that can help my community, where do I start?*

**Professional** may have her own experience working virtually, but must also now manage up and laterally virtually

*How do I manage all these projects with different teams online, and report back to my stakeholders, without living in my email?*

**Virtual Professional** professional and/or manager who is pretty used to working remotely and managing up, down, and all around virtually

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# Mer's Top 3 Tips for Remote Work

1. Practice **Mindfulness** to combat fear, shame, and ego.

2. Learn how to **Communicate** virtually with vulnerability.

3. Keep yourself more **Organized** than you've ever been before.

**Coronavirus Viral Anxiety Management**

**Be Your Own First Responder**

1. If you have too much anxiety, stay away from the news and reading posts.
2. Read and surround yourself with information that is uplifting.
3. Find "grounders" amidst all the electric energy: person, place, object, activity, quote or mantra.
4. Think of what you have control over.
5. Create a temporary new routine/ritual to help you feel safe.
6. Continue to prioritize your physical, mental, social and emotional well-being through routines and practices.
7. Take deep belly breaths (in through nose 3 seconds and out through mouth 5-7). Longer outbreath stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system which are the brakes to slow down anxiety.
8. This too shall pass.
9. Remember that so many others may be suffering even more than you. How can you stay grounded so you can ground others and be a reducer, not a producer of the viral anxiety and panic?

*Think before you post or speak – will this create calm or chaos?*

**www.optimalbrainintegration.com**



Rule number one is, don't sweat the small stuff. Rule number two is, it's all small stuff.

— Robert Eliot

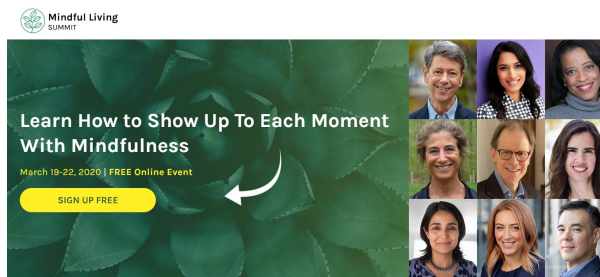#DAILYCALM

Calm

# Mer's #1 Tip for Remote Work - Mindfulness

★ Mindful, diaphragmatic breathing
  ○ Breathe past your FIXED mindset into a GROWTH mindset
★ Routines to practice mindfulness throughout the day
  ○ Meditate silently ~ 5 min
  ○ Mindfully walk ~ 10 min
  ○ Listen to music sitting/dancing ~ 15 min
★ Have a practice in the morning for mindfulness
  ○ Say a mantra to set your tone for the day
  ○ *What should I be but just what I am?* ~ Edna St. Vincent Millay

> *Instead of shaking each other's hands, we can look each other in the eye and send loving-kindness—wishing each other health, safety and peace.*

Source: How Mindfulness Can Help You Navigate the Coronavirus Panic (March 11, 2020, Mindful.org)

> *Simply seeing that we are panicking is a good step forward. After that we can use simple mindfulness practices, like taking a few conscious breaths or otherwise grounding ourselves in our direct experience.*

Source: Anxiety is Also Contagious. Here's How to Calm Down (March 15, 2020, Mindful.org)



Mindful Living SUMMIT

Learn How to Show Up To Each Moment With Mindfulness

March 19-22, 2020 | FREE Online Event

SIGN UP FREE

Source: Learn How to Show Up To Each Moment With Mindfulness. March 19-22, 2020 | FREE Online Event (MindfulLivingSummit.com)

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# What should we be mindful about?



**2- Covey's Priority Matrix**

| | Urgent | Not Urgent |
|---|---|---|
| **IMPORTANT** | Activities<br>Crisis<br>Pressing Problems<br>Deadline Projects<br>Sales Calls<br>Customer Issues<br>Safety<br><br>1 | Activities<br>Prevention<br>Capability activities<br>Relationship building<br>Recognizing new opportunities<br>Planning<br><br>2 |
| **NOT IMPORTANT** | Activities<br>Interruptions,<br>Calls?<br>Mail?<br>Reports?<br>Meetings?<br>Pressing Matters<br>Popular activities<br><br>3 | Activities<br>Trivia<br>Busy work<br>Some mail<br>Some calls<br>Time wasters<br>Pleasant activities<br><br>4 |

Source https://siliconvalley.score.org/

**SCORE.**
Counselors to America's Small Business

**What is important
right now?**

**What is important
today?**

**What is important
this week?**

# Mer's #2 Tip for Remote Work - Communication

## Mer's Tips for Over-Communicating!

- ★ **Use online tools** to communicate with video.
- ★ Set "**opt in" policies** for meetings, making it clear who is required and who is optional.
- ★ Schedule **the right amount of time** for meetings, have standards for 30- vs. 60-minute meetings.
- ★ Get everyone on your team a **working camera and mic**.
- ★ Get everyone on your team to update their account profile with **a recent photo**.
- ★ **Use video when you can**, otherwise show your photo. When your camera is on, show where you are (home office) or use a fun backdrop.
- ★ **Set new normals and boundaries** for how we "show up" at work. No make up? Why not!
- ★ Save the first 5 minutes at the beginning and the end for **human interaction**.
- ★ **Agendize** in advance and **collaborate** on notes.
- ★ **Record sessions** to the cloud and share to those who can't attend.
- ★ **Bring your true self to meetings**: the silly, the sass, the serious, bring it all!
- ★ **Communicate your availability** in your email signatures and with your apps (e.g. Slack).

# What should we communicate?

**Break Things Down**

**Who _OWNS_ this?**

*Do you have to be the Owner of this?*

**How _BIG_ is this?**

*Do you know how much effort this could take?*

**How _PRIORITY_ is this?**

*Does this need to be done sooner or later?*

# Mer's #3 Tip for Remote Work - Organization

★ Be transparent about your work schedule on your **calendar.** Block time in 1- to 2- hour chunks to plow through projects without distraction.

★ Develop **routines** in the morning before you start work, mid-day to give yourself a break, and in the afternoon/evening to give yourself a true "end" to the work day.

★ Craft **nurturing spaces** for yourself indoors and outdoors.

★ Find ways to **spend quality time with your squads** (work, life, family, friends) virtually.

★ Find an **Organization Buddy**. Become good friends.

**USE YOUR WEBCAM**

A consistent communication tool is the key to success for a remote worker. We love creating stronger connections through video meetings and instant messaging.

**DEVELOP A ROUTINE**

You may think remote workers sleep all day and watch TV, WRONG. As a remote worker, having a routine and set working hours increases productivity and reduces temptation.

**HAVE A WORKPLACE**

Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you can work from your bed. Having a designated working space will get your mind working and ready to tackle the day.

**VIRTUAL COFFEES**

Schedule time each week to connect and get to know your coworkers. Remote working may seem lonely, but with virtual coffees and "water-cooler" chat groups, employees stay connected

**WEEKLY CHECK-INS**

Company wide weekly check-ins or happy hours are great for connecting employees and getting to know one another without specifically talking about work.

**JOIN A COMMUNITY**

Having a healthy work life balance is extremely important for remote workers! We suggest joining a community outside of work like a book club, gym, or local hiking group.

# Mer's Top 3 Tips for Managing

1. Stay **connected** and not just by email.

2. Make your availability **visible** to others, and especially to yourself.

3. Make the work **transparent** to everyone.



Photo Source: #WOCinTech Chat at wocintechchat.com

# Mer's #1 Tip for Managing - Stay Connected

★ Make space for connection.

★ Find tools to make connection possible.

★ Be more strategic with your meetings.

    a. Use agendas that guide what will be discussed and who needs to be ready to discuss it.

    b. Let people see that agenda before meetings and type notes into it during meetings.

    c. Make tasks visible with tools like Google Sheets, Smartsheet, and Quip.

    d. Communicate progress with email, Salesforce Groups, or Slack.
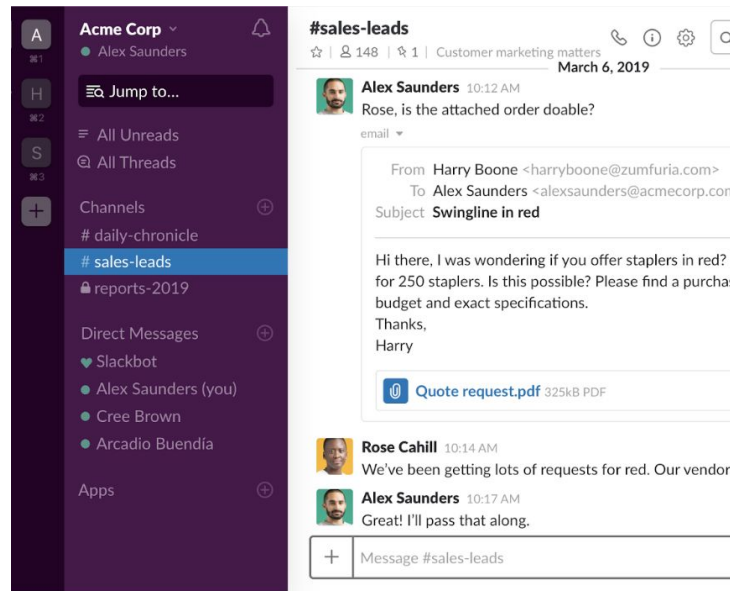


Source: Send emails to Slack

# Mer's #2 Tip for Managing - Be Visible

Routines you should develop and/or refine:

1. Updating your calendar on a regular basis with your work meetings, personal appointments, and project time.
2. Updating your calendar so it is up-to-date with what your team needs to see.
3. When scheduling meetings, checking the calendar proactively for your team's availability instead of asking them.
4. Using our team's tools to make it clear when I'm available and when I'm not.
   a. Slack: Away messages and statuses.
   b. Salesforce and Google Calendar: Office Hours.
   c. Email: Signature line with your schedule.
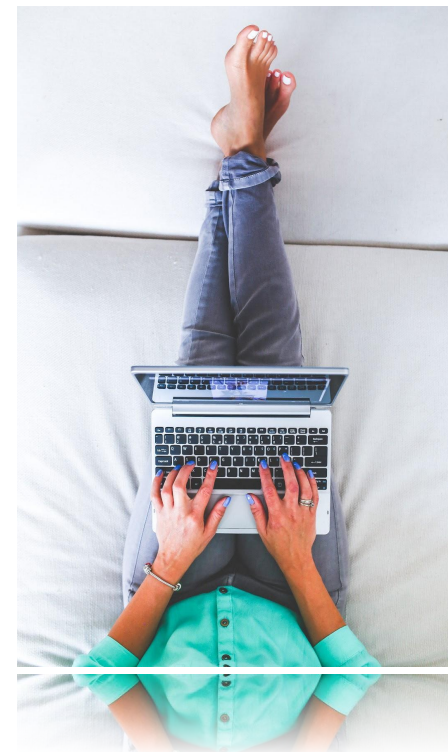
# Mer's #3 Tip for Managing - Be Transparent

*Mer's Tips for Over-Documenting!*

- ★ **PRO TIP:** Use a tool like Slack? Start a #Scrum channel and share out weekly!
- ★ **Use online tools** to document notes for yourself.
- ★ Develop a practice for writing your own notes, then **refining for external audiences**.
- ★ Learn to **code switch on paper** because everyone takes in information differently.
- ★ Practice **mindful documentation**. Be aware when you are documenting too much or too little. Don't spend so much of your time documenting you're not getting real work done!
- ★ Make your **team's tasks visible** so that everyone knows what everyone is up to.
- ★ Give your teams a way to track 1**) Ownership, 2) Effort, and 3) Priority**.
- ★ Help your teams **access the documents** they need when they need it.
- ★ Give your teams **training and resources** to get help when they need it.
- ★ Identify the **early tech adopters** and empower them to create How-To's for others.
- ★ Create a way to **submit issues** (e.g. cases or tickets) so that they can be triaged.

# Mer's Top 10 Favorite Apps

| Productivity | Collaboration & Communication | | Mindfulness |
|---|---|---|---|

# **CHECK for Understanding**

**What is one strategy, tactic, or lesson that has resonated with you?**

*Type it into the chat!*

*Mer's Example:*
Implement a #scrum channel in Slack so at the beginning of each week, our team will share 1) a success from last week and 2) the high level priorities for this week.

# MEANINGFUL MEETINGS MATTER

Preparing for *Before*, *During*, and *After* leads to more tangible outcomes because everyone knows WHY they are there, WHO they are addressing, WHAT they will contribute, HOW they will participate, and WHEN they will engage.

### TRACK THE TEAM'S NOTES

Start a notes document or Asana card. Share with the right folks.

### ASSIGN ROLES & POINTS

Match internal to external roles. Map talking points to roles.

### AGENDA WITH OBJECTIVES

Intros, topics, closing with time for flexibility and discussion.

### MOVE THINGS FORWARD

Communicate action items and goals. Check in with intention.

# Mer's Agendas

## Agenda Internal Team

1. Meeting objectives
2. Standing agenda
3. Report out by committee/team
4. Discussion: Shared challenge or project
5. Open Forum: What are the blockers
6. Closing and next steps:
   a. What are the action items,
   b. who are the leads,
   c. when are they do, and
   d. what will be shared at the next meeting

## Agenda w/ Partners

1. (Re)Introductions
2. Partnership objectives
3. Meeting objectives
4. Our report
5. Their report
6. Discussion: Progress towards our goals and tackling blockers
7. Closing and next steps:
   a. What are the action items,
   b. who are the leads,
   c. when are they do, and
   d. what will be shared at the next meeting

## Agenda with Board

1. Celebrations
2. Meeting objectives
3. Our report - high level
4. Our challenges - high level
5. Discussion: How to activate the board to support team and org goals
6. Open Forum: What are the opportunities and challenges the board sees
7. Closing and next steps:
   a. What are the action items,
   b. who are the leads,
   c. when are they do, and
   d. what will be shared at the next meeting

# What We Covered

## Objectives
★ Explore how our routines and the pandemic have informed our leadership style.
★ Discuss ways to work smarter remotely and in teams
★ Discuss management strategies that are heart-centered

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# WHAT'S NEXT?

**May 25 3:30-5 PM Agenda**
   I.    Introduction & Agenda
   II.   Recap of May 18 content
   III.  Open Forum
   IV.  Closing

**Please complete my Exit Ticket! _bit.ly/mer_eventsurvey_**

# What's Next? But wait, there's more!

Follow Me on LinkedIn!:

**www.linkedin.com/in/meredithdcurry**

Check out my resources like Salary Negotiation tools at:

**linktr.ee/advancedconsultingmer**

Check out my #EdEquity resources at:

**linktr.ee/norcalpromisecoalition**

"We found that just 15-minutes of meditation was associated with similar effects as a day of vacation on aspects of mindfulness."

(The Journal of Positive Psychology)

**SOURCE:** "Study: 15-minutes of meditation associated with similar effects as a day of vacation" by Eric Dolan, 2019. Retrieved from: https://www.psypost.org/2019/06/study-15-minutes-of-meditation-associated-with-similar-effects-as-a-day-of-vacation-53798

# Exploring Intersectionality

## In the Workplace

**May 18, 2022**
**Meredith "Mer" Curry Nuñez**
*Executive Director,*
*Northern California College Promise Coalition*