



# LEADERSHIP insights

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## Upcoming "Virtual Only" Leadership Workshops

[April 6 & 7 – Growing in Change  
Leadership Through Self-  
Awareness and Innovation](#)

[April 22– Connecting the Dots  
through Emotional Intelligence  
\(4-hour\)](#)

[May 12– Hand in Hand Skills:  
Project Management and Team  
Facilitation](#)

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# Zoom In



We're still on a learning curve of live-to-virtual meetings. Does your leadership competence and warmth transfer virtually to engage your audience? Try these tips to ensure that it does and to reduce your virtual participants' temptation to check out. (*Thanks RWHC workshop participants for the honest feedback!*)

### ✓ Check in on what your face is saying.

You are communicating with your face all the time. Is it sending the message you want it to? Put effort into making your facial expression genuinely warm. Take a random screenshot of the faces in your next meeting and look at your own. You may be surprised!

### ✓ Pay attention to what shows in your square.

Is your background distracting? Annoying? Inviting? It matters, especially in a long meeting. Make your background a choice that conveys warmth, not a default.

### ✓ Inform people that video is requested as a condition of participation

unless it is not available on their computer. Off camera is too easily off to something else.

### ✓ Open ended questions just don't work the same virtually as they do in person.

Humans do not like the talk jumble when everyone talks at once so they often hold back. Don't be discouraged. Instead -

### ✓ Tell people you will be calling on them

in a moment to respond, e.g. "Cella and Erin, I'm going to talk about coaching models, so in a minute I'm going to be asking you to talk about the ones you use." This gives them time to think about their answer and a cue that they need to be paying attention. You can also -

### ✓ Use breakout groups.

Similarly to in-person, people can't hide if you put them into a group with one assigned as the spokesperson upon return. If you don't know how to create breakout groups on your platform, it's well worth the half hour to learn and practice it. Ask for help from someone who knows the technology.

### ✓ Share the leadership.

We could do better with this in person too, but in virtual, sharing the varied tasks of leading a meeting breaks up the voices people hear and increases interest and engagement. Give out assignments at the beginning for individuals to take notes, lead the discussion on different agenda topics, monitor the chat for questions that need to be addressed in the moment, take roll, etc.

✓ **Use writing.** Start with a question that you ask people to write about silently for a couple minutes. For example, if your meeting is on ideas to fix a process, ask everyone to write down two things they think are good about the current process and two things that could be better. This primes the engagement in the topic and shows you care about their ideas.

### ✓ Practice going in and out of your slides and use PowerPoint off and on.

Death by PowerPoint is painful in person, but continually over-filled slides in a virtual meeting screams multi-task invitation. Show a slide for visual interest, and then go back to the view where you can see participants, returning to the slides when relevant. Seeing other participants connects people, and the switch-up aids in keeping people's brains awake.

### ✓ Don't read to people or just talk at them.

If you must have the microphone for an extended time, make sure you break it up every 10 minutes or so with a relevant poll, question for response on the white board feature, a participant's example, or a review of the chat.

### ✓ Be ok with pauses.

Brains need time to process. You are more likely to lose someone during a run-on talk rather than a quiet pause where they can think about what you are saying.

### ✓ Scale back what you "cover."

Less may be more. What really matters? Get clear on your bottom-line purpose for gathering, and focus on how to meet that purpose, even if some of the "nice-to-haves" get cut. This will leave time to -

### ✓ Take a five minute bio break every hour,

time well spent in keeping an engaged audience.

### ✓ We all need a mix of auditory, visual and kinesthetic input to make learning stick.

Auditory, the primary format (especially without a camera), is the preferred style for a minority of people so don't over-rely on it. Think, "engage vs. tell."

### ✓ Provide handouts without the information.

Engage kinesthetically by offering a "skeleton" handout with places for people to write down your key points rather than handouts with the information on them. This simple practice engages the body and the mind.