

Center for Liberated Leadership

Supporting leaders to lead transformative change
from a place of authenticity, purpose and joy



Leading with Joy in Uncertain Times: Wellness, Boundaries and Bold Leadership

← Take the quiz!

myliberatedleadership.com

About Us



Monique Taylor, Provost and
Chief Academic Officer,
Champlain College



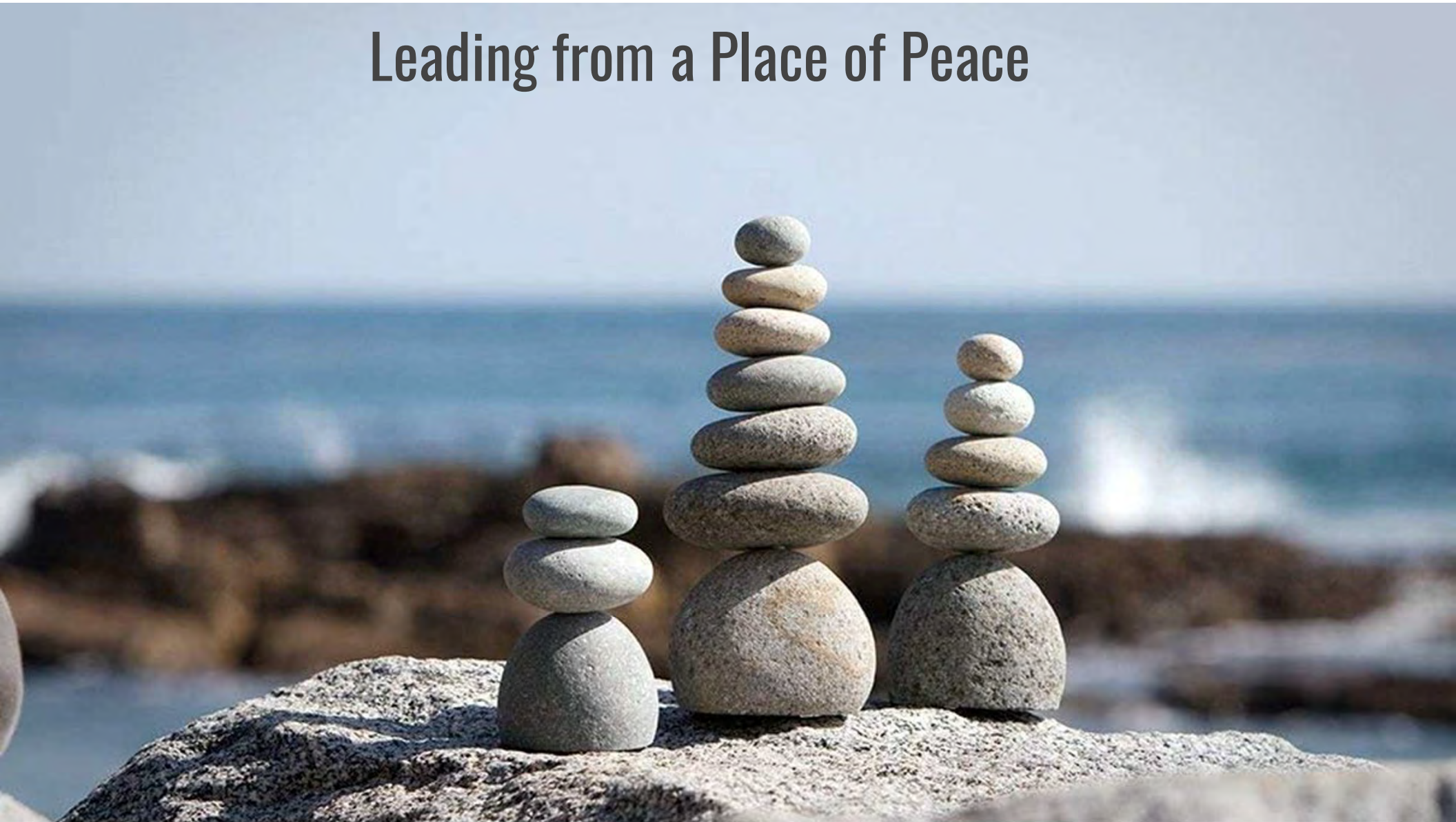
Chinyere Oparah, CEO, Center for
Liberated Leadership and
founder, NeuroSpicy Leaders



Center
for
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Leadership

Executive coaching
Group coaching
Leadership assessments
Workshops
FocusCafé
Thought-leadership
Blog

Leading from a Place of Peace



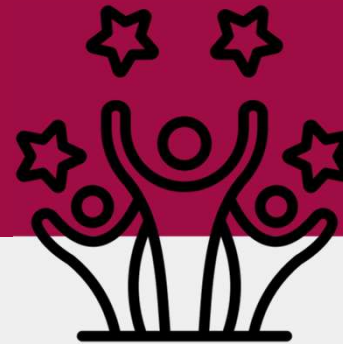
Today's Objectives: Why are YOU here?



**Protect time and
energy through
strategic boundaries**



**Cultivate grounded
joy amidst
uncertainty**



**Empower teams to
reduce dependency
and burnout**



**Lead boldly and with
vision in scary times**

Wellness, Care & Leadership: Shifting the Frame

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Emotional, mental, and physical well-being **treated as personal responsibilities**—separate from “real” leadership.

Based on gendered norms → male senior leaders had partners managing their emotional and physical needs behind the scenes.

As a result, leadership norms:

- Privatize wellness and emotional labor
- Ignore the cumulative toll of race- and gender-based health disparities
- Frame “self-management” as productivity tool, not holistic care

This paradigm is collapsing under the weight of a **crisis in higher ed leadership**.



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From Burnout to Breakdown: What We're Seeing

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“Leaders [...] step away because our institutions are not well-equipped to counter the damaging effects of burnout. The relentless pace of managing crises, budget cuts, fluctuating enrollments, and persistent scrutiny on top of managing daily operations results in the feelings of chronic stress.”



“Leaders also step away to take care of their own health or simply to recapture the joy that has been relegated to the basement due to the primacy of professional demands.”

- **Psychological:** Anxiety, panic attacks, social isolation, depression, sleep issues
- **Physical:** hypertension, headaches, body pain, stress-related illness.
- **Productivity:** decreased productivity, focus issues, overwhelm, buried in weeds, brain “won’t switch off”, turnover.
- **Relationships:** taking work stress home, impact of overwork, guilt.
 - *Exited: Terminated from Higher Ed*
 - *National Center for Institutional Diversity Survey of CDOs*

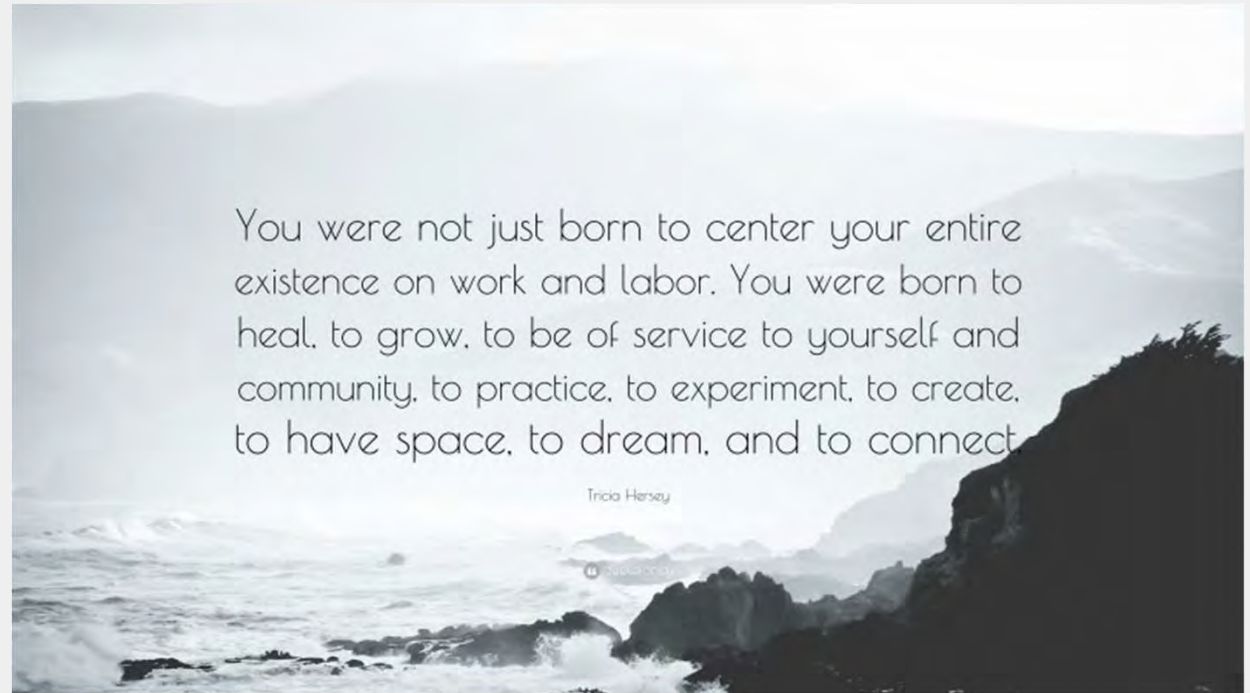
Naming the Weight

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Journaling prompt

What weight are you carrying right now as a leader?

Where is it showing up in your mind, your body, your emotions or your relationships?



Joy, Purpose + Boundaries



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"Never give from the
depths of your well, but
from your overflow."

Rumi

Small group share:

- **1 thing that brings you joy and makes you feel encouraged.**
- **1 work habit that undermines your sustainability.**
- **1 boundary you could try out next week to create space for your joy, wellness and what really matters.**

Practicing joy is not “dismissing or creating an ‘alternate’ [Black] narrative that ignores the realities of our collective pain; rather, it is about holding the pain and injustice [...] in tension with the joy we experience. It’s about using that joy as an entry into understanding the oppressive forces we navigate through, as a means to imagine and create a world free of them.” – Kleaver Cruz, Founder, The Black Joy Project

From Over-Functioning to Empowering Staff & Faculty

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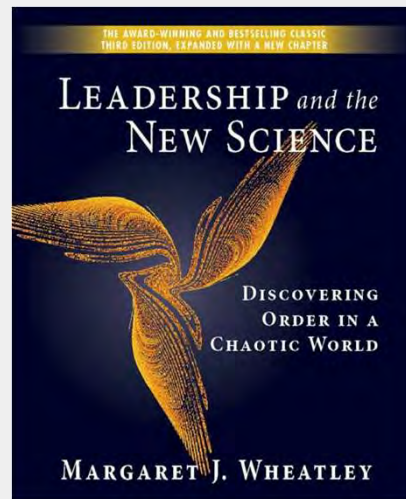
Pair share:

What patterns of overwork or self-sacrifice do you notice in your own leadership?

How do these patterns impact your team/ institution in the long run?

What would be different if you resisted the pressure to be a heroic leader who “fixes things”, and insisted on wellness and presence?

What fears or resistance do you have to this shift?



“Our heroic impulses most often are born from the best of intentions. We want to help, we want to solve, we want to fix. Yet this is the illusion of specialness, that we’re the only ones who can offer help, service, skills. If we don’t do it, nobody will. This hero’s path has only one guaranteed destination—we end up feeling lonely, exhausted and unappreciated.”

—Margaret Wheatley with Debbie Frieze, Leadership in the Age of Complexity:

Leading Boldly in Scary Times

Solo reflection:

Where do I feel pulled to shrink my voice and impact in the current moment?”

What are 1–2 ways I can choose courage and align my leadership with my core values in this moment?

**“We tell our stories in order to live”
– Joan Didion**



What are your leadership superpowers?



**Take the
Liberated
Leadership
Quiz!**



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What's YOUR Leadership Style?

The Replenisher

"Your care is a form of
resistance."

The Visionary

"Your imagination is
liberation."

The Disruptor

"Your courage changes
systems."

The Celebrator

"Your joy is
revolutionary."

The Superhero

"You are the glue that
holds it all together."



Continue the Conversation!

- Answer the Leadership Toolkit reflection prompts
- Invite your team to take the quiz and discuss 1-2 moves you can make to strengthen joy, wellness & courageous leadership
- Sign up for C4LL updates
- Read & Submit writing to the Free2Lead Blog
- What's your next step?...



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About the Center for Liberated Leadership

C4LL connects, resources and develops leaders who are driving change in their organizations and communities so that they can infuse their work lives with wellness, purpose and passion.

We do this by providing transformative individual and group executive coaching, workshops and facilitation that leverage our expertise in leadership development, inclusive excellence and change management.

Our foundational principle is that meaningful change happens when transformational leaders are liberated from isolation, limiting beliefs, and toxic stress.



What if you
were free to
do your best
work?

Q&A



The Council of
Independent Colleges

2025 Institute for Chief Academics Officers with
Chief Student Affairs Officers and Chief Student Success Officers



Building Places of Promise:
Unlocking Student Success

Thank you for attending this session!

