

Leading Well: Sustainable Self-Care & Wellness for Education Leaders



Building resilience to lead with clarity, compassion, and strength.

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Session Norms

- Engage at your comfort level
- Protect confidentiality
- No guilt, no judgment
- Progress over perfection
- Honor your needs



Opening Reflection



What is one sign you notice when you are approaching burnout or overwhelm?

Why Leader Wellness Matters

- Impacts decision quality
- Influences school climate
- Models organizational norms
- Sustains long-term effectiveness

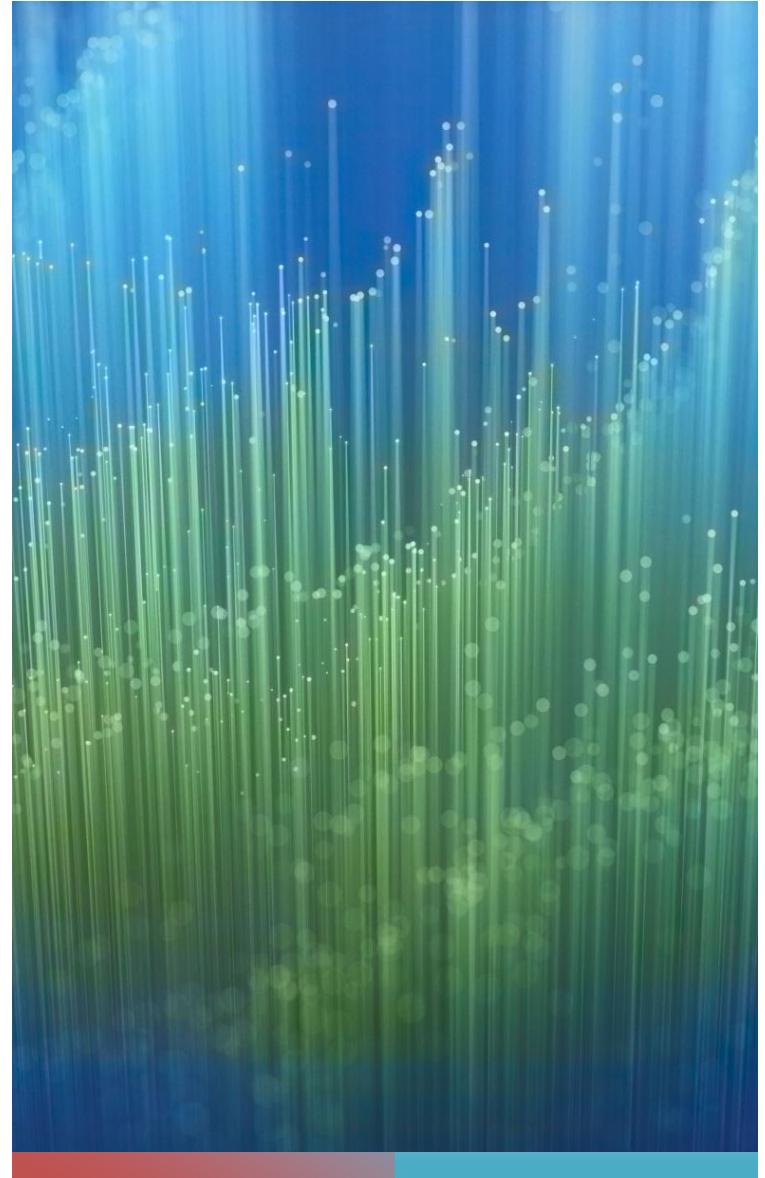


Stress vs. Burnout

Stress: Short-term, situational

Burnout: Chronic, unmanaged stress

- Emotional exhaustion
- Detachment
- Reduced accomplishment



Signs of Burnout in Leaders

- Irritability

- Decision fatigue

- Loss of purpose

- Sleep disruption

- Emotional numbness

Self-Care Myths

- Self-care is selfish

- Leaders must be available 24/7

- Rest equals weakness

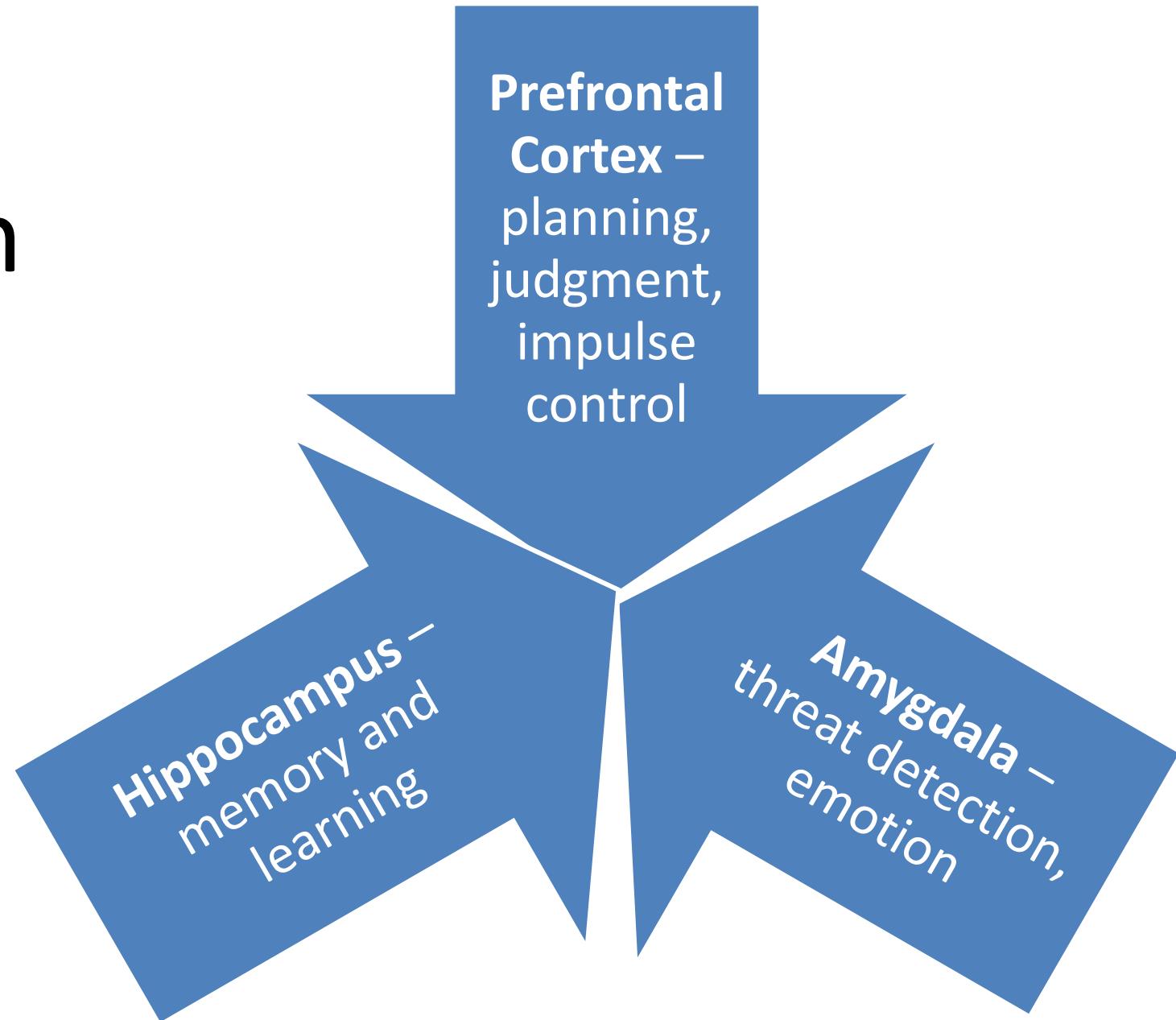
The Leader Brain Under Stress

**The brain prioritizes
survival before
reasoning**

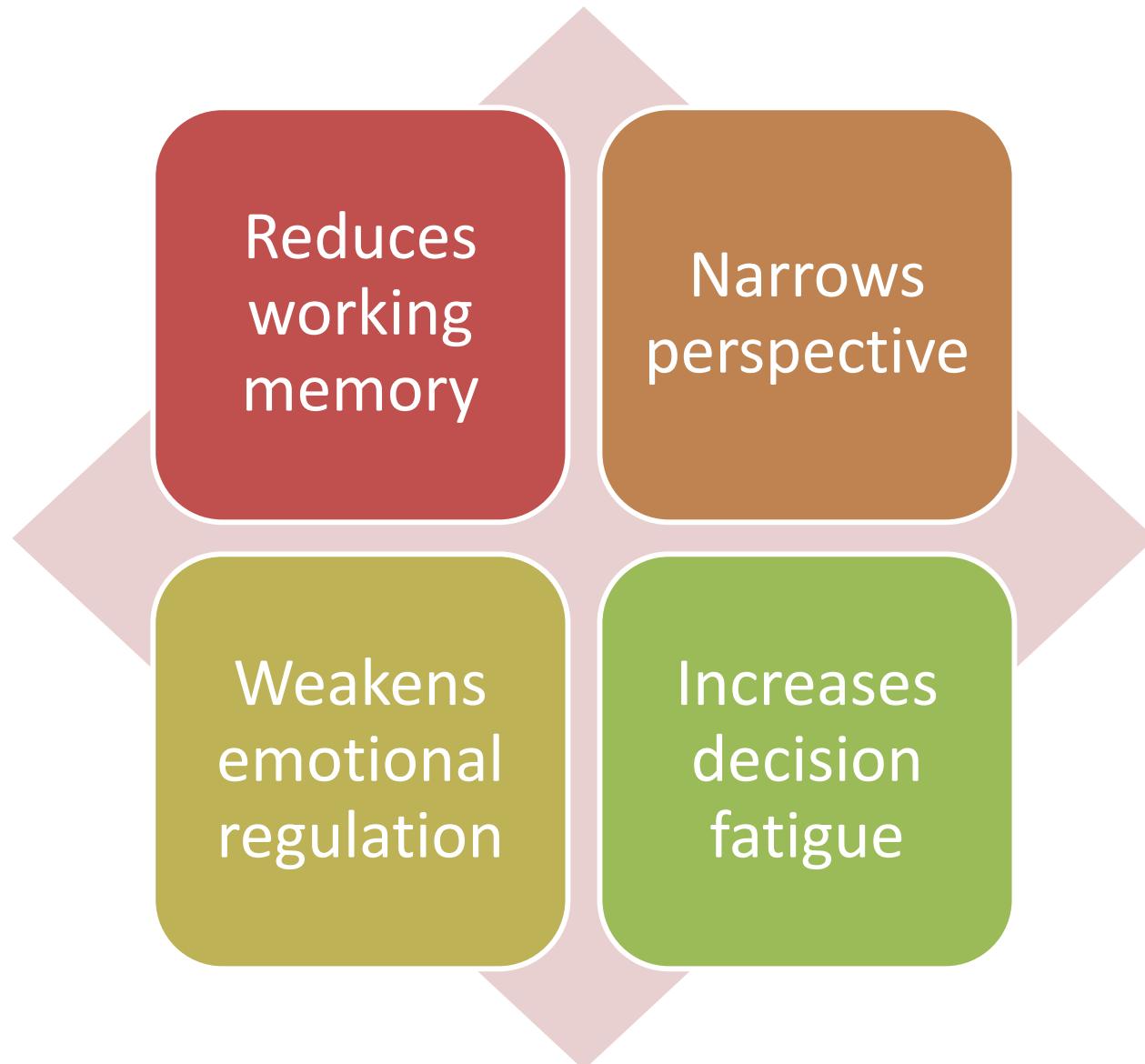
Stress shifts control away
from the thinking brain

Reactivity increases as
capacity decreases

Key Brain Systems Leaders Use



What Chronic Stress Does to the Brain



Why Rest is a Leadership Strategy

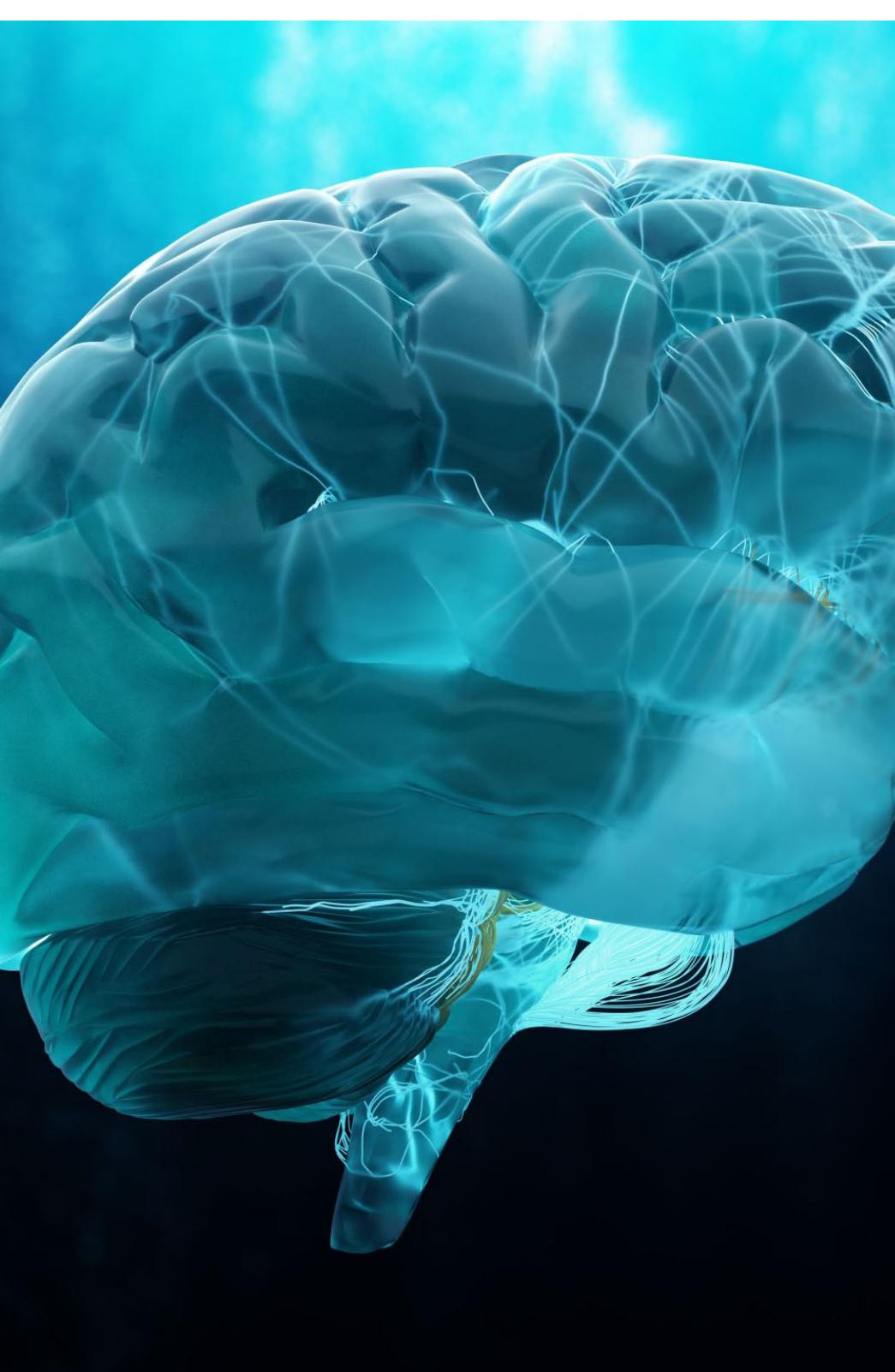
- Rest calms the amygdala
- Sleep consolidates learning
- Pauses restore cognitive flexibility
- Downtime improves problem-solving





60-Second Brain Reset

- Inhale deeply
- Name 3 things you see
- Drop your shoulders
- Exhale slowly



Cognitive Load & Leadership

- Too many decisions exhaust the brain
- Systems reduce mental load
- Clarity protects energy



Brain-Smart Leadership Culture

- Predictability reduces stress
- Psychological safety improves learning
- Calm leaders create calm systems

Four Dimensions of Wellness

- Physical
- Emotional
- Mental
- Purpose/Spiritual

Quick Wins for Daily Practice

- Walking meetings

- No-meeting zones

- 5-minute breathing resets

- Lunch away from desk

- Transition rituals

Wellness Tools

- Journaling
- Meditation
- Affirmations
- Deep Breathing
- Support Systems
- Relaxation
- Leisure Activities
- Exercise



Guided Reset

Try box
breathing:

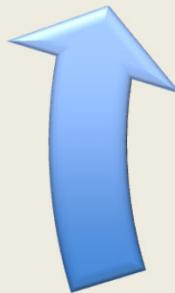
Inhale 4 – Hold 4
Exhale 4 – Hold 4

Leading by Example

Celebrate
sustainability

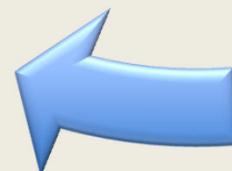


Take time
off visibly



Normalize
rest

Model
boundaries



Systems that Support Wellness

- Workload audits
- Clear communication norms
- Protected planning time
- Realistic initiative pacing





Culture Reflection

- What practices in your organization drain energy?
- What practices restore energy?



Personal Wellness Inventory

Rate yourself (1–5):

- Sleep
- Boundaries
- Reflection
- Movement
- Purpose

Create Your Personal Wellness Plan

- 2 non-negotiables
- Boundaries needed
- Support systems
- Weekly restoration practice



Commitment

Write down:

- One habit to begin

- One boundary to protect

- One system change to advocate for

Call to Action

Take the Lead:

Commit to one wellness practice this week.

Share your action with a colleague, and encourage your team to do the same.

Together, let's build a culture of sustainable leadership and wellbeing!

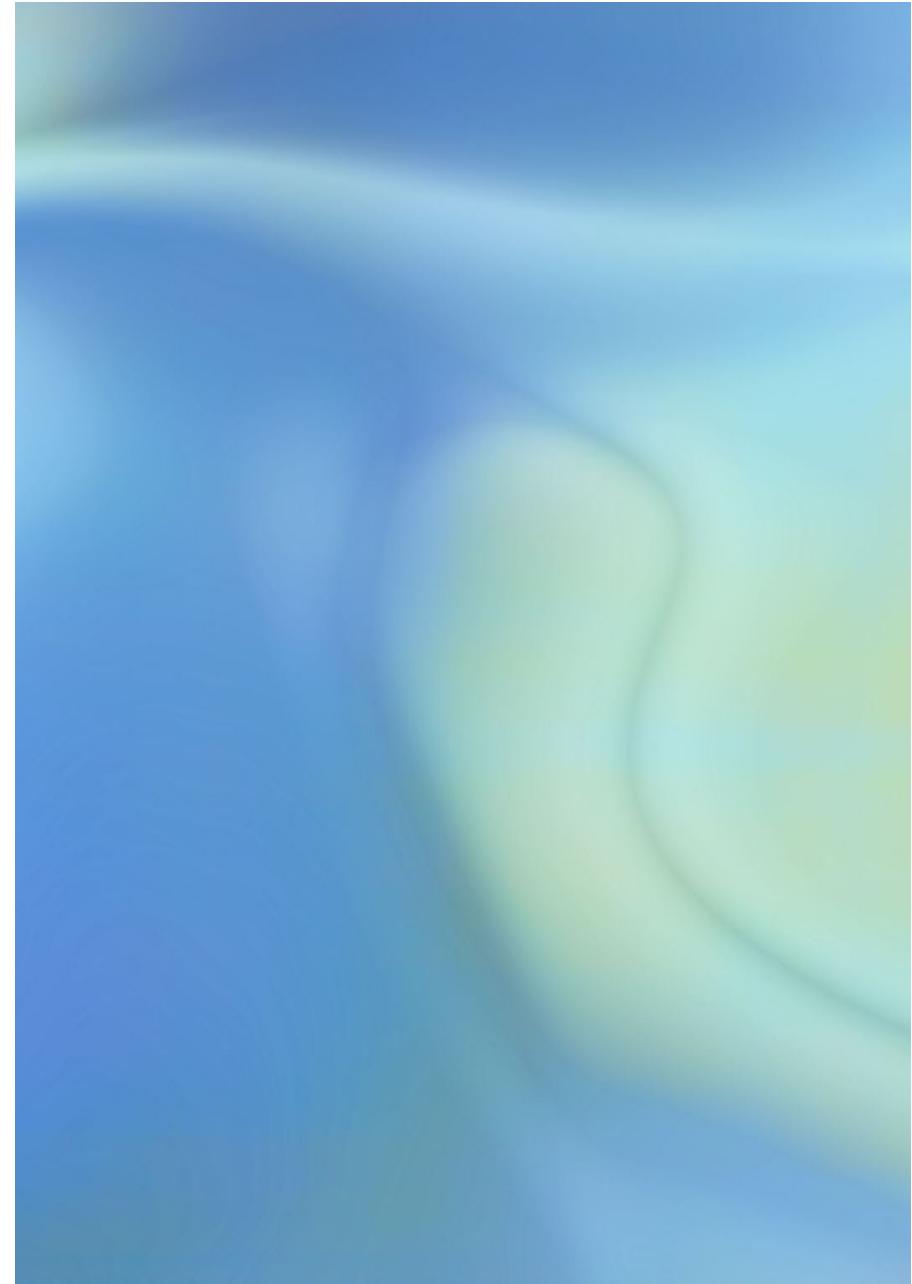




Closing Reflection

You cannot pour from an empty cup.

Leading well begins with caring for yourself.



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**CES +
LEDR**