

FRICTION

INTERPERSONAL
Show Love

The Experiment #1: For Leaders Who Already Believe and Want to Deepen the Practice

Duration: 30 days

Time required: 10 minutes per week upfront, plus small daily micro-acts

Goal: You already know care matters. The question this experiment asks is: *How specifically and intentionally are you demonstrating it?*

Week One: The Knowledge Audit

For each person on your team, write down what you know about them as a human being. Not their performance, not their role, but them. What do they care about outside of work? What motivates them? What are they proud of? What are they working through?

Then ask honestly: Where are the gaps? Who do you know well, and who remains, for all practical purposes, a stranger? The gaps are your map.

Weeks Two Through Four: Intentional Acts of Care

Each week, choose two people from your gap list and do one small, specific thing that demonstrates you see them. This does not need to be dramatic. It might be:

- Asking a genuine follow-up question about something they mentioned last week
- Noticing and naming something they did that went unrecognized
- Sending a brief, specific note of appreciation
- Asking “What do you need from me right now?” and staying quiet long enough to hear the answer

At the end of thirty days, return to your knowledge audit. What changed? What do you now know that you did not before? Who showed up differently, or did you?

The Experiment #2: For Leaders Who Are Skeptical, Start Smaller Than You Think

Duration: Two weeks

Time required: 5 minutes per day

Goal: If the idea of “showing love” at work makes you uncomfortable, that is useful information. It is not a reason to stop reading, but a reason to start carefully. This experiment does not ask you to change your personality, share your feelings, or become someone you are not. It asks only for curiosity.

Step One: The Practice

For two weeks, once per day, ask one person on your team a question. It does not have to be personal. It does not have to go anywhere. Try to find a question you are genuinely curious to hear the answer to.

Some examples:

- “How was your weekend?”—and then listen.
- “What are you working on that you’re excited about?”
- “Is there anything getting in your way right now that I could help remove?”

That is the entire experiment. One question. One genuine moment of attention per day.

Step Two: The Reflection

At the end of two weeks, notice three things:

1. Did anything surprise you about what you learned?

2. Did any of your working relationships feel, even slightly, different?

3. What did it cost you (e.g., time, discomfort, energy, etc.) to do this?

The goal of this experiment is not conversion. It is data. Most skeptical leaders who run it honestly discover two things: The cost was lower than they expected, and the return, in trust, in information, in team responsiveness, was higher. Care, it turns out, is a performance variable, and you do not have to feel it warmly to practice it well.