Why Smart Leaders Still Self Sabotage

Identify and break the hidden patterns shaping your leadership, relationships, and results

Objectives for our time together

- Recognise one repeating pattern in your life and leadership
- Understand what that pattern protects
- Explore how others may experience it
- Begin creating a healthier internal agreement

CONNECTION. COMMUNITY. LEGACY
THE
COMPASSIONATE
LEADER PATHWAY

Who we are

Coaches and leaders with a vision

Piers Cross is an author, a filmmaker and a leadership coach specialising in the area of peak performance, and trauma, especially boarding school. He also runs a podcast around these themes, called An Evolving Man. He has produced and released a documentary ‘Boarding On Insanity’

Chris Braitch has a mission to move himself and the world around him towards connection and compassion. He works as an emotional health coach, leadership coach with Compassionate Leaders Global, and as a founding director of not-for-profit Seen & Heard

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Coaches and leaders with a vision

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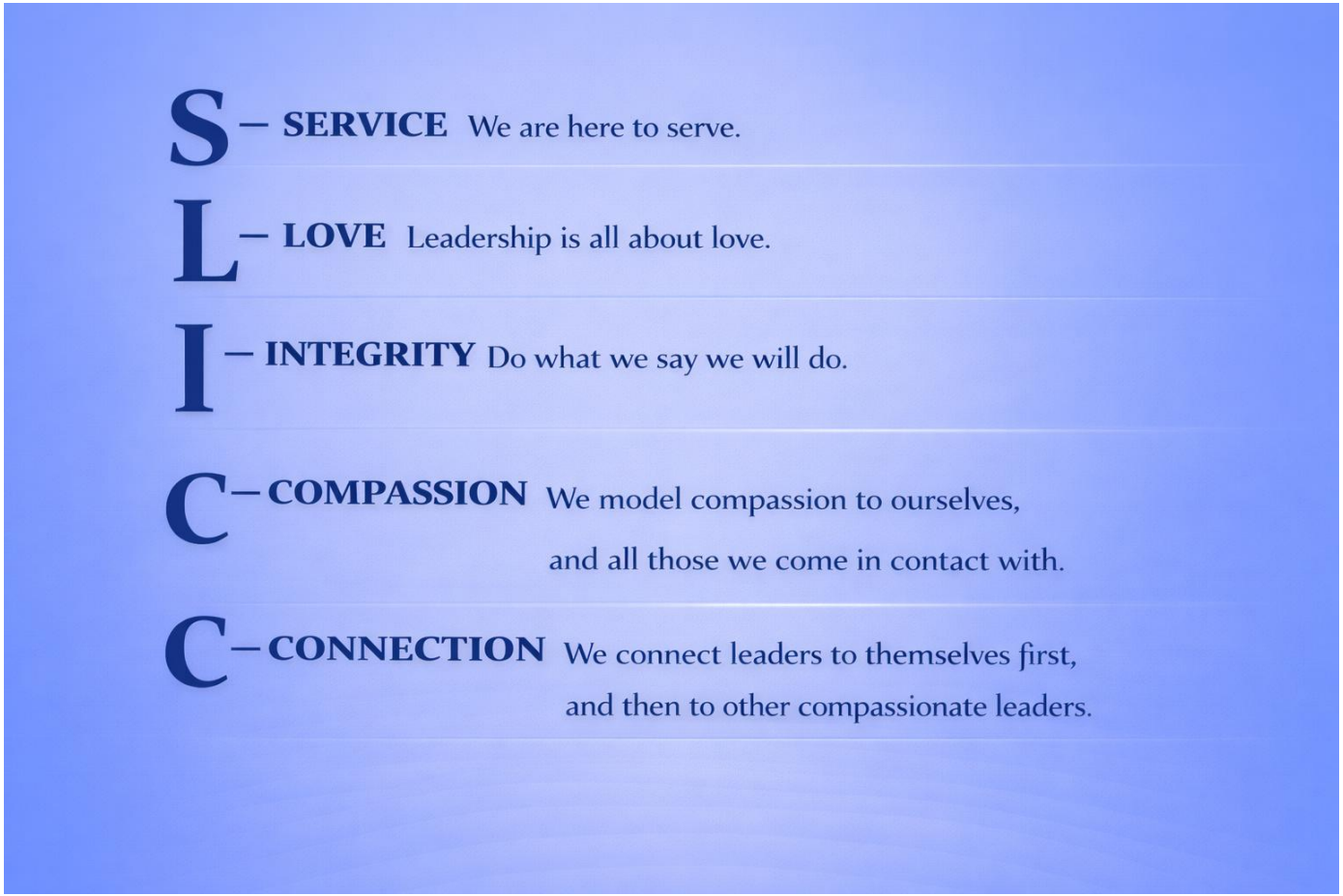
Coaches and leaders with a vision



Our time together today

- Some theory, keeping it light
- Some personal exercises to complete
- If you haven’t already please have the workbook ready
- Please add questions, ideas and experiences into the

https://compassionateleadersglobal.com/services/training-workshops-speaking/workshop-resources/

Let’s arrive together…

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The repeating loop

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Not signs of weakness, just signs of adaptation

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You're not stuck.
You're repeating.

Patterns repeat because at some point…they worked.

What was once a great solution, is now an issue. The old story has run it's course, and it's time for a new one

Exercise 1

The repeating loop

The repeating loop - Use your worksheet

Think about a pattern that keeps appearing in your life across leadership, relationships, family or friendships

Not just at work.

Across leadership, relationships, family or friendships.

Reflect:

(7 mins)

- What keeps happening?
- What role do I tend to play?
- What emotion sits underneath it?
- What outcome usually follows?

Different people. Different environments. Same emotional ending.

What similarities do you notice across these situations?

Same pattern. Different environments…

Why does this keep happening to me?

The Protective Strategy

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Self-sabotage is usually self-protection

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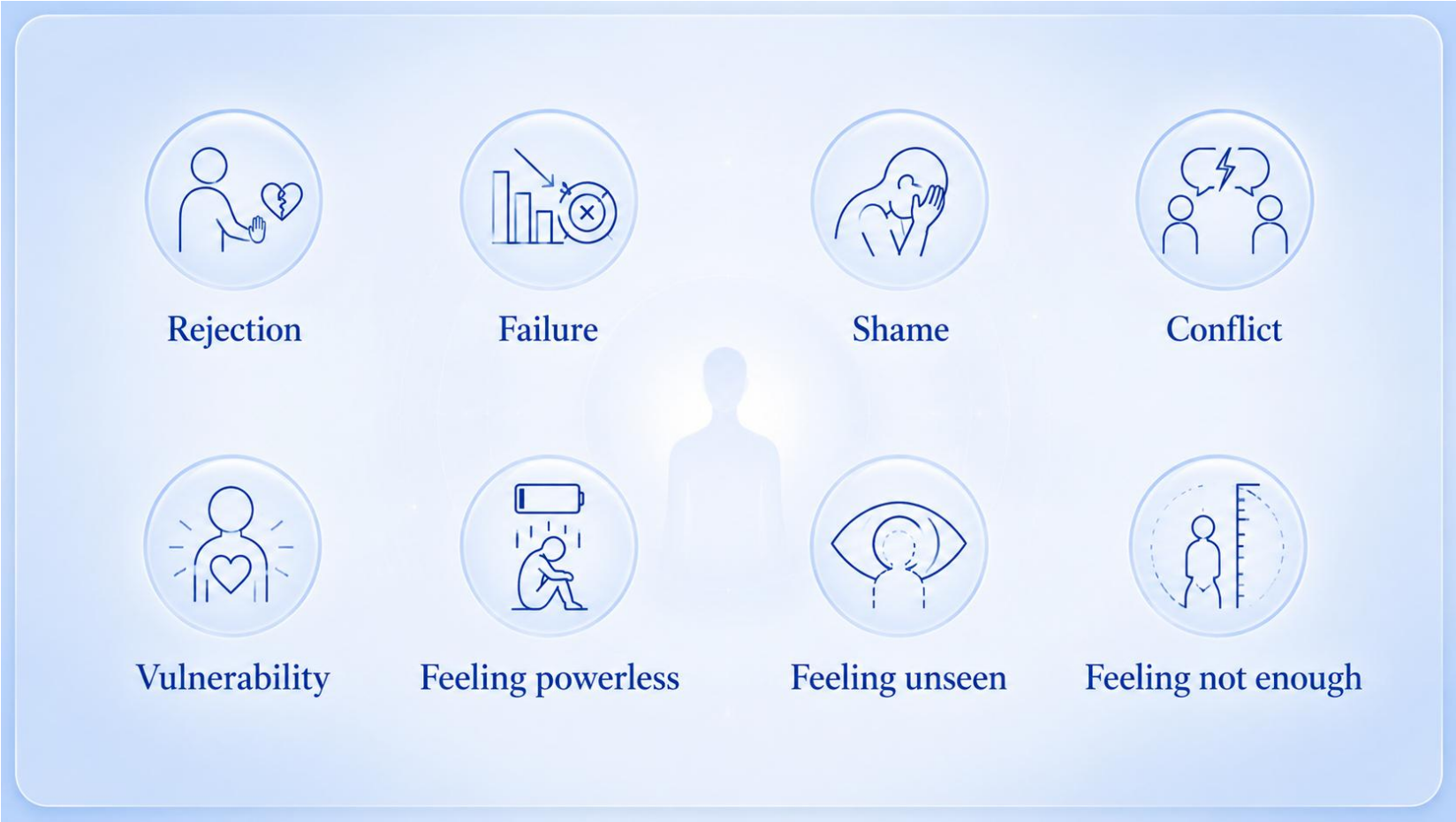
What are you protecting?



Exercise 2

The protection audit

The protection audit - Use your worksheet

Choose one repeating pattern - This is not about attacking yourself. It's about understanding yourself

Then ask:

What might this pattern be protecting me from?

What feels risky about letting it go?

What am I afraid people would see if I stopped performing this role?

(7 mins)

Finish this sentence:
"Without this pattern, I fear…"

The strategies that once protected us can later begin to isolate us.

Where might this be true in your life?

The strategies that once protected us….

….Can later begin to isolate us

The Leadership Mask

The version of me the world learned to reward

This is where adaptation becomes identity

What we call it

These are often socially rewarded protection strategies

"I'm just driven."

"I have high standards."

"I'm resilient."

"I'm independent."

"I'm calm under pressure."

"I care deeply."

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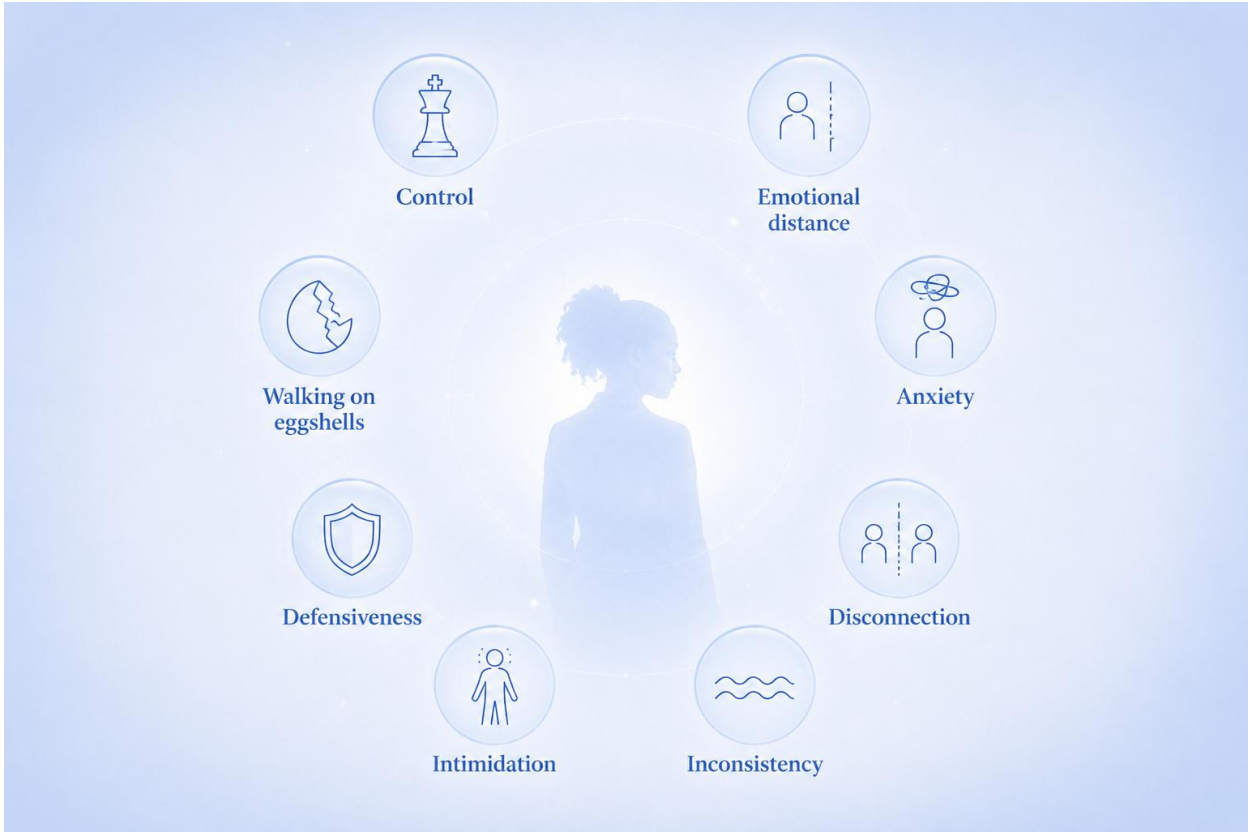
What others may experience

This is not about blame. It's about impact



Your team, family or community adapt around your patterns

- How honest can they be?
- What moods of yours to avoid?
- How safe disagreement feels to them?
- What version of themselves is accepted by you?

Exercise 3

The Mask And The Audit

The mask and the audit - Use your worksheet

Focus on the pattern or ‘mask’ from Exercise 2

Reflect:

What do I call this pattern or mask?

How might others experience it?

What would my team or partner say is difficult about me under stress?

What emotional atmosphere do I create around me?

(7 mins)

People adapt around patterns.

What do people learn around you?

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Where patterns come from

Adaptation is not the same as authenticity

Early Success Patterns

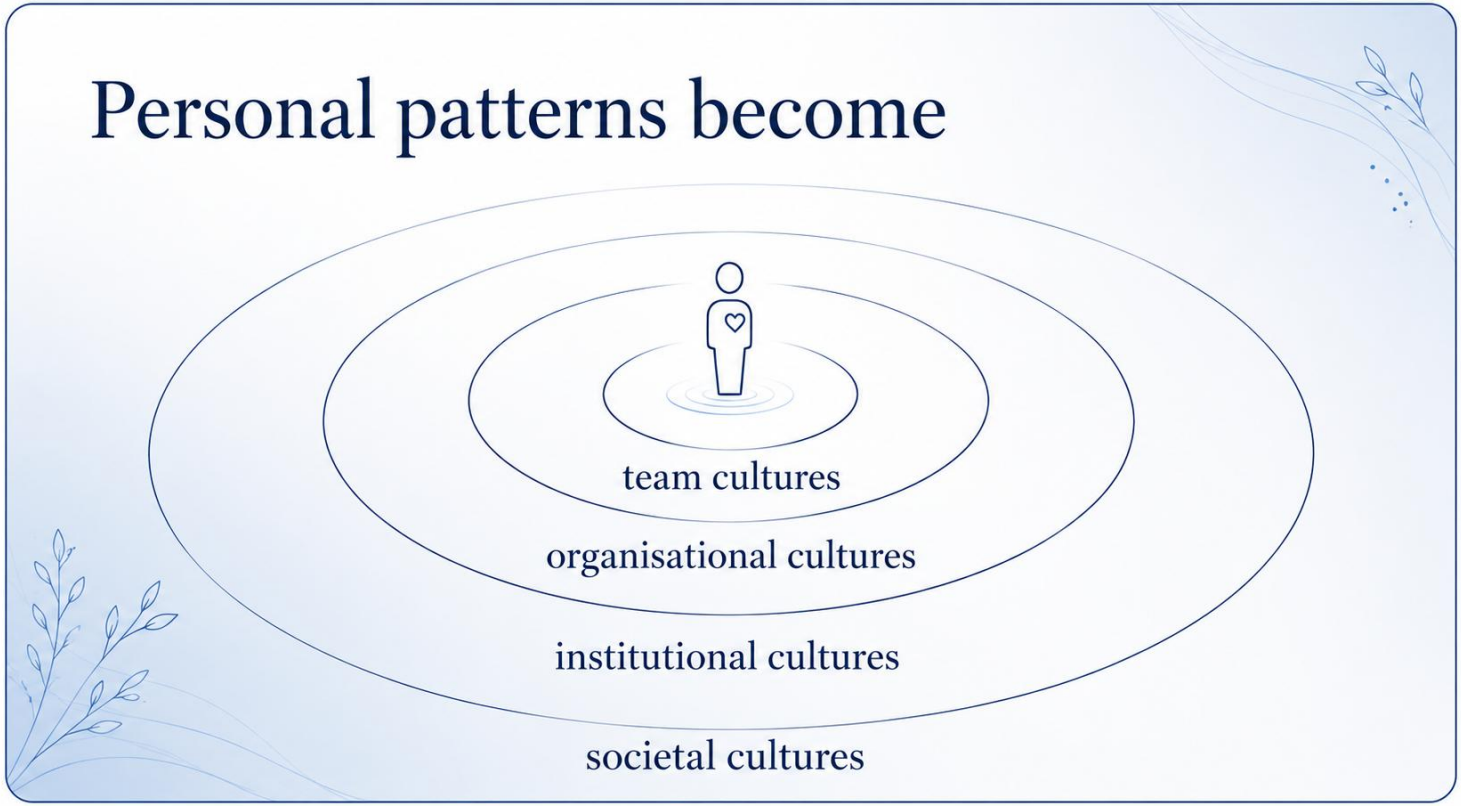
Early environments often reward adaptation more than emotional truth

The nervous system repeats what feels familiar

Leadership pressure often activates old survival strategies

Unexamined Fear Scales

What we refuse to examine personally…often becomes systemic



The New Agreement

Awareness creates choice

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The shift

Old Pattern

Protect → React → Repeat

New Pattern

Notice → Pause → Choose

Exercise 4

The New Agreement

The new agreement - Use your worksheet

Focus on the pattern or ‘mask’ from Exercise 2 and 3

Reflect:

What does this protective part of me actually need?

What healthier response could I practise instead?

What would leadership look like with less protection and more presence? **(7 mins)**

Finish this sentence:

“The new agreement I want to make with myself is…”

Guided Reflection

Imagine the next moment this pattern appears.
Notice:

The trigger
The emotional pull
The impulse to react

Then imagine:

Pausing
Staying present
Responding differently

What changes?

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Integration

If this pattern continued for another 5 years…
What would the cost be?

The good news!

Patterns are learned

Which means they can also be unlearned

Capacity can expand

Leadership can become more conscious

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If This Resonates…

The ongoing challange becomes:

How do you practice this consistently?

How can you notice when you're emotionally flooding and intervene?

How can you heal the wound that sits underneath the trigger?

If This Resonates…

The Compassionate Leader Pathway 12-week course

The Compassionate Leadership Quiz

1-2-1 Coaching

Organisational training, workshops and speaking

Blogs and newsletters

12 weeks - Online

Accountability buddies

Weekly Q&A and Check In Circles