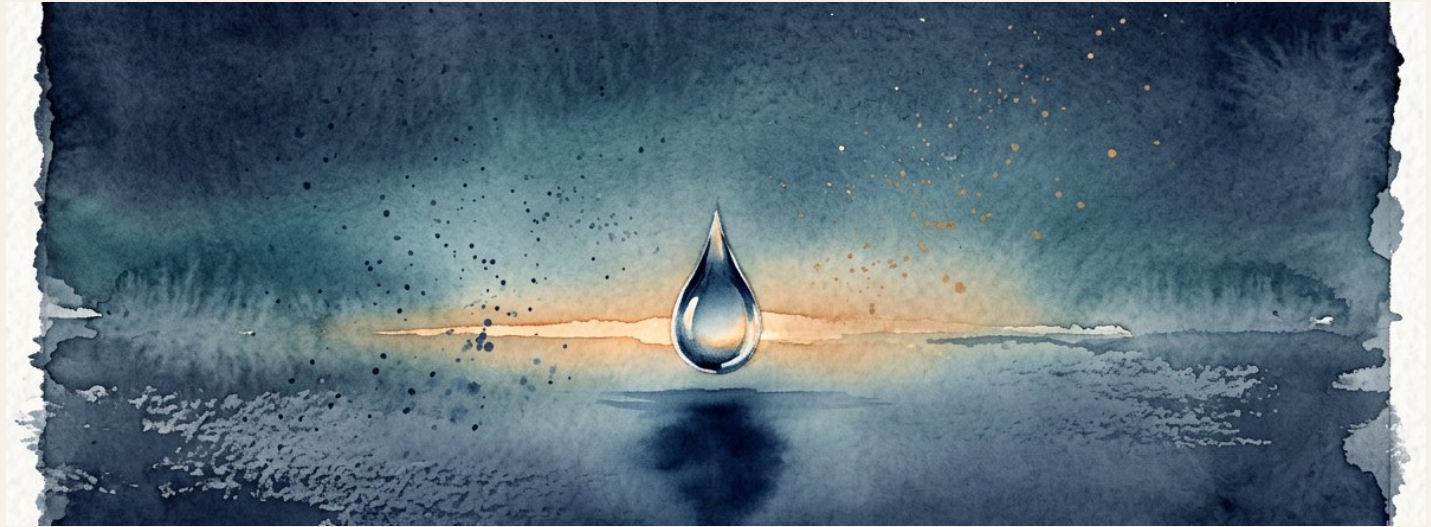


The Pace of Trust: A New Approach to Leadership

Fifteen seconds before a high-stakes meeting, one breath before the reply you could fire off right now. That's where trust actually gets built.

By Bryce Thomason · October 1, 2025 · 4 min read



Leadership today moves at a punishing speed. Deadlines tighten. Pressures accumulate. People look to us for answers before we've had a chance to breathe. The velocity of expectations can feel like a current pulling us off center, and too often, we try to outpace it. We push harder. Work faster. Think quicker. Perform better. But in this relentless pursuit of speed, we risk sacrificing the very essence of leadership: trust. We risk alienating our teams, making hasty decisions, and losing sight of the bigger picture.

But urgency creates its own gravity. And in that gravity, clarity becomes the first casualty.

Across organizational life, social impact work, and now coaching, I've learned that clarity rarely emerges from speed. Insight doesn't bloom under pressure. And trust, the foundation of any meaningful leadership, can't be rushed. It has a different rhythm. A different cadence. It moves at what I've come to call the pace of trust.

Learning to work at that pace gave me back something urgency kept taking: the ability to trust my own judgment in the moment.

The Problem With Urgency-Based Leadership

Leaders often become fluent in urgency without ever realizing it.

It shows up subtly:

- Replying too quickly to alleviate tension

- Taking on tasks because delegation feels slower
- Making decisions from adrenaline instead of awareness
- Managing optics instead of relationships
- Stepping in to rescue because it feels easier than holding the boundary

Urgency masquerades as competence. But it is rarely synonymous with wisdom.

When we lead from urgency, three things happen:

- We lose our ground. Our nervous system contracts, and our choices narrow.
- We constrict others. Urgency creates reactivity, and reactivity spreads.
- We cut ourselves off from more profound knowing. Insight requires slow thinking. Slow thinking involves space.

Urgency is fast, but it is not intelligent. Trust is slower, but far more intelligent.

What Is the Pace of Trust?

The pace of trust is not passive. It's not inaction. It's not "waiting things out." Trust is a leadership stance, a way of moving that is grounded, relational, and clear.

The pace of trust honors the truth that:

- Clarity emerges when we stop forcing answers
- People open when they stop feeling pushed
- Teams perform when they feel safe
- Good decisions come from presence, not pressure
- Trust is built in the spaces of urgency that collapse

The pace of trust is the tempo at which relationships strengthen, truth becomes speakable, and solutions become visible. It is the opposite of "react now." It is the practice of "respond from the center."

Leading at the Pace of Trust (What It Looks Like in Real Life)

I see leaders step into the pace of trust when:

- They pause for 15 seconds before a high-stakes meeting
- They sit with a difficult decision until they can feel the right one
- They ask a clarifying question instead of rushing to solve
- They hold a boundary cleanly instead of rescuing
- They give a team member room to wobble instead of stepping in
- They take a breath before sending the email
- They allow discomfort to teach instead of trying to outrun it

Trust is built in these micro-moments, not through grand gestures but through a steady, embodied presence that others can feel.

When a leader shifts from urgency to trust, everything downstream shifts too:

- meetings soften
- conversations deepen
- conflict becomes more honest
- decisions become more aligned
- people start showing up braver
- culture starts breathing again

A Simple Practice

Here is a small practice that can make a meaningful difference this week:

The Breath Between

- Before you respond to the next request, question, or moment of pressure, stop.
- Take one slow inhale.
- Feel your feet or your seat.
- Ask yourself: "What is the pace of trust here?"
- Then respond.

This alone rewires leadership.

Not because it slows you down artificially, but because it reconnects you to the place where wisdom, presence, and purpose live.

Why the Pace of Trust Matters Now More Than Ever

Leaders are exhausted. Not because they're doing too little, but because they're doing too much from a place of reactivity. The world is hungry for leaders who can slow the temperature of the room, who can hold steady in complexity, who can model clarity even when answers aren't immediate.

Leading at the pace of trust doesn't make leadership easier. It makes it truer, and it brings a sense of relief. It grows the kind of leadership that doesn't fracture under pressure, because it isn't built on urgency, but on presence, purpose, and relational strength.

If you are finding yourself stretched thin or pulled in too many directions, consider this a gentle invitation: You don't need to speed up to lead well. You should slow down.

And sometimes, the most courageous act of leadership is to slow down enough to hear yourself again.