






Dr. Becky Kennedy's 5 lessons from parenthood for stronger teams

What HR leaders can learn from the hardest job we don't train for

Parenthood might be the most rigorous leadership bootcamp around—and as Dr. Becky Kennedy, founder and CEO of Good Inside, made clear in a conversation with Fortune Well's Jennifer Fields, it offers powerful, practical lessons for today's leaders. In a world defined by uncertainty, burnout, and fast-changing expectations, the core skills we hone as caregivers—empathy, boundary-setting, emotional regulation—are exactly what the modern workplace needs.

5 key takeaways for HR and business leaders

1. Real connection starts with honest boundaries	2. Uncertainty doesn't require answers—it requires presence	3. Repair is more powerful than perfection
<p>Great leaders—like great parents—don't have to choose between empathy and self-respect. The goal is not to please everyone but to balance understanding others with staying grounded in your own needs and values.</p>	<p>In a crisis, leaders often wait until they have certainty before speaking up. But what teams need is connection, not certainty.</p>	<p>We will mess up as leaders. That's inevitable. What matters most is how we follow up. Dr. Becky calls repair “the single most important relationship strategy.”</p>
<p> TRY THIS</p>	<p> TRY THIS SCRIPT FROM DR. BECKY</p>	<p> TRY THIS</p>
<p>Practice setting small boundaries while acknowledging others' feelings. “I need time to think before responding” can be powerful and human.</p>	<p>“Here's what I know. Here's what I don't know. Here's what I believe about us.” Naming the unknowns builds trust—and so does showing up honestly.</p>	<p>Normalize saying, “I'm sorry I interrupted you. I want to hear the rest of your thought.” It's not weakness—it's modeling growth.</p>

4. Empathy isn't fixing—it's staying	5. Growth starts where frustration begins
<p>You don't have to solve everyone's problems to be a great leader. In fact, doing so might rob people of a chance to grow.</p>	<p>Frustration is the gateway to learning. As Dr. Becky says, "It's how we're <i>supposed</i> to feel when we're learning."</p>
<p> TRY THIS</p>	<p> TRY THIS</p>
<p>Sit with a teammate in frustration without jumping to solutions. Say, "That sounds tough—and I believe you're capable of figuring it out. I'm here to support."</p>	<p>Instead of stepping in, affirm the discomfort. "This is hard—and that's part of the process." It helps others build resilience and self-trust.</p>

For HR leaders: bring these lessons home to your team

You don't need to be a parent to lead with the kind of clarity, compassion, and courage Dr. Becky champions. Here's how to bring it into your workplace:

- ✔ **Model emotional honesty.** Create a culture of trust by naming uncertainty, owning mistakes, and showing that vulnerability is strength
- ✔ **Train for relational leadership.** Go beyond performance management—invest in coaching that builds human skills like empathy, repair, and boundary-setting.
- ✔ **Treat feedback as connection.** Invite perspectives. Say, "What's one thing I could do to better support you this week?" And mean it.
- ✔ **Encourage discomfort as part of growth.** Frustration isn't failure—it's a sign that learning is happening.

You don't need to fix everything. You just need to stay in it—and stay human.

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Nothing builds a relationship like a good repair. And you can't repair unless you mess up. So really, a mistake is just the first step in connection.

—Dr. Becky Kennedy

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