



From the host of the
Behavioral
Economics in
Marketing Podcast

HUMAN

The Impact

FIRST.

of Empathy

GROWTH

in Leadership

OBSESSED.



BY SANDRA
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Introduction: Leading with Insight, Growing with Impact

"People first. Growth always. Lead both, and everything else follows." I've spent two decades proving that sentence is true, sometimes the hard way.

I've built eight brands from scratch simultaneously, driven nine-figure revenue swings, and turned around companies on the brink. I've also stood barefoot in the snow days after Christmas and watched my house, and a thousand others, burn to the ground. I've been laid off after generating more than a hundred times my salary in new revenue and answered with a single calm word. I've sat in a classroom as the oldest student in the room and chosen to follow first because I still had something to learn.

Every trial taught me the same thing: empathy without ambition gets you liked. Ambition without empathy gets you results for a while. Marry the two, and you get teams that run through walls and still sleep at night.

That marriage is rare. Most leaders are forced to pick a lane. I'm writing this book because I refused to choose, and the results, personal and professional, have been undeniable. I've seen overlooked customer-service managers become executive vice presidents. I've watched remote,

multi-continent teams ship impossible projects because someone finally paused long enough to see them. I've rebuilt from ashes and discovered that fires, literal and otherwise, can be converted into fuel.

These aren't just theories. And they aren't borrowed ideas. Every principle in this book was paid for in real fires, real layoffs, and real wins.

And I'm the right person to write it because I've lived close enough to every character in these stories to know exactly how they felt:

- I've been the overlooked Employee A who was never asked.
- I've reported to the ego-driven boss.
- I've been the leader who almost reacted too fast.
- I've been the student who had to learn to follow again.

And I've been the one standing in the smoke deciding what was worth saving when everything was on fire. I didn't just witness these moments. I felt them in my bones, then turned around and helped the people living them find a better way through.

You don't have to choose between caring deeply and getting big things done. Do both, and you become the leader people will walk through fire for. This book shows you how.

Here's exactly what you'll carry out of these pages:

What this book will give you:

- **A Human First Lens** – see hidden ambition and quiet hurt before they become problems.
- **A Growth Obsessed Mindset** – say yes, experiment boldly, and create opportunity from uncertainty.
- **The Bridge Between Theory and Practice** – how to fuse empathy and ambition so your team sprints toward impossible goals and still sleeps at night.
- **Behavioral Insights in Action** – Expectancy, Equity, Reciprocity, Social Proof, and more, applied in real crises and real wins.
- **Immediate Playbooks** – questions, rituals, and 48-hour actions you can use tomorrow.

By the time you finish this book, you'll see leadership differently. You'll recognize that understanding people isn't just a nice-to-have. It's a competitive advantage. And you'll know that growth

isn't just about hitting targets. It's about aligning ambition with purpose, insight, and action.

Human First keeps you grounded. Growth Obsessed keeps you unstoppable.

Welcome to the intersection.

Let's go.

~ Sandra