

# Find Your Feet

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A Starting Point for  
Middle & Emerging  
Leaders



KATRINA BOURKE



## Find Your Feet: A Starting Point for Middle and Emerging Leaders

Welcome to the *Find Your Feet* series, designed to help you lead with clarity, confidence, and purpose. Whether you're stepping into a leadership role for the first time or looking to strengthen your impact, this series offers a roadmap to steady yourself in the midst of challenges and opportunities.

Leadership can feel overwhelming, especially at the start of a new year. You might wonder:

*"Who am I to lead?"*

*"How do I handle all of this?"*

*"Am I really cut out for this?"*

It's easy to get caught in the whirlwind of to-do lists and expectations. That's why this series begins with a different approach: grounding yourself. By taking intentional steps to focus on what truly matters, you'll build a foundation to navigate your leadership journey with clarity, energy, and purpose.

This four-step series—**Decide, Explore, Honour, Lead**—is designed to guide you through actionable steps to clarify your vision, deepen self-awareness, prioritize your wellbeing, and inspire your team. Each step builds on the last, helping you craft a leadership approach that is authentic, sustainable, and impactful.

By the end of this series, you'll:

- Be clear about how you want to show up as a leader.
- Have tools to sustain your wellbeing while navigating leadership challenges.
- Feel confident in your ability to inspire and connect with others.
- Understand how to lead with purpose and focus.

*Now, let's get started!*

# Step 1

# *Decide*



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### Summary Step 1: Decide.

- Make the decision to step up and lead, even when it feels scary.
- Bring your unique style and wisdom to leadership.
- Envision how you want to show up for yourself and others.

### Journal prompts:

*Observe:* What stories of self-doubt tend to come up when you think about leadership? Write them down.

*Reflect:* What would change if you chose to reframe those stories into something supportive or encouraging?

*Act:* What is one step you can take this week to show up as the leader you aspire to be?



## **Thinksheet**

- Look: What will your leadership look like in action?
- Sound: What will your leadership sound like?
- Feel: What will your leadership feel like—for you and those around you?

<b>Looks Like</b>	
<b>Sounds Like</b>	<b>Feels Like</b>





## Find Your Feet

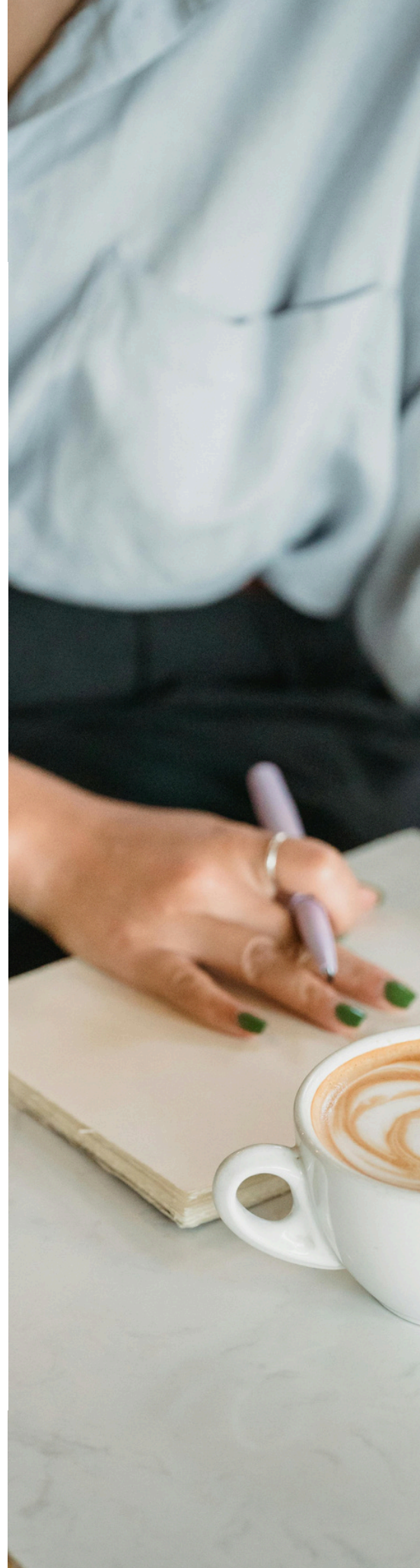
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### Final prompts:

- After completing the exercises, how do you feel about stepping up and leading?
- What mantra or reminder will you use to coach yourself when self-doubt creeps in?

### Want More?

- [Check out the \*Dare to Lead\* hub by Brene Brown for a terrific bank of resources to support and guide you throughout your leadership journey.](#)



# Step 2

# *Explore*



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### Summary Step 2: Explore

- Deepen your self-awareness and understanding of your emotional landscape.
- Recognize the unique human you are and how that shapes your leadership.
- Identify your strengths and the areas where you need support.

### Journal prompts:

*Observe:* What are three words that describe you at your best?

*Reflect:* What tends to trigger stress or frustration in you? How do you typically respond?

*Act:* How can you lean into your strengths more intentionally in your leadership?





# Thinksheet

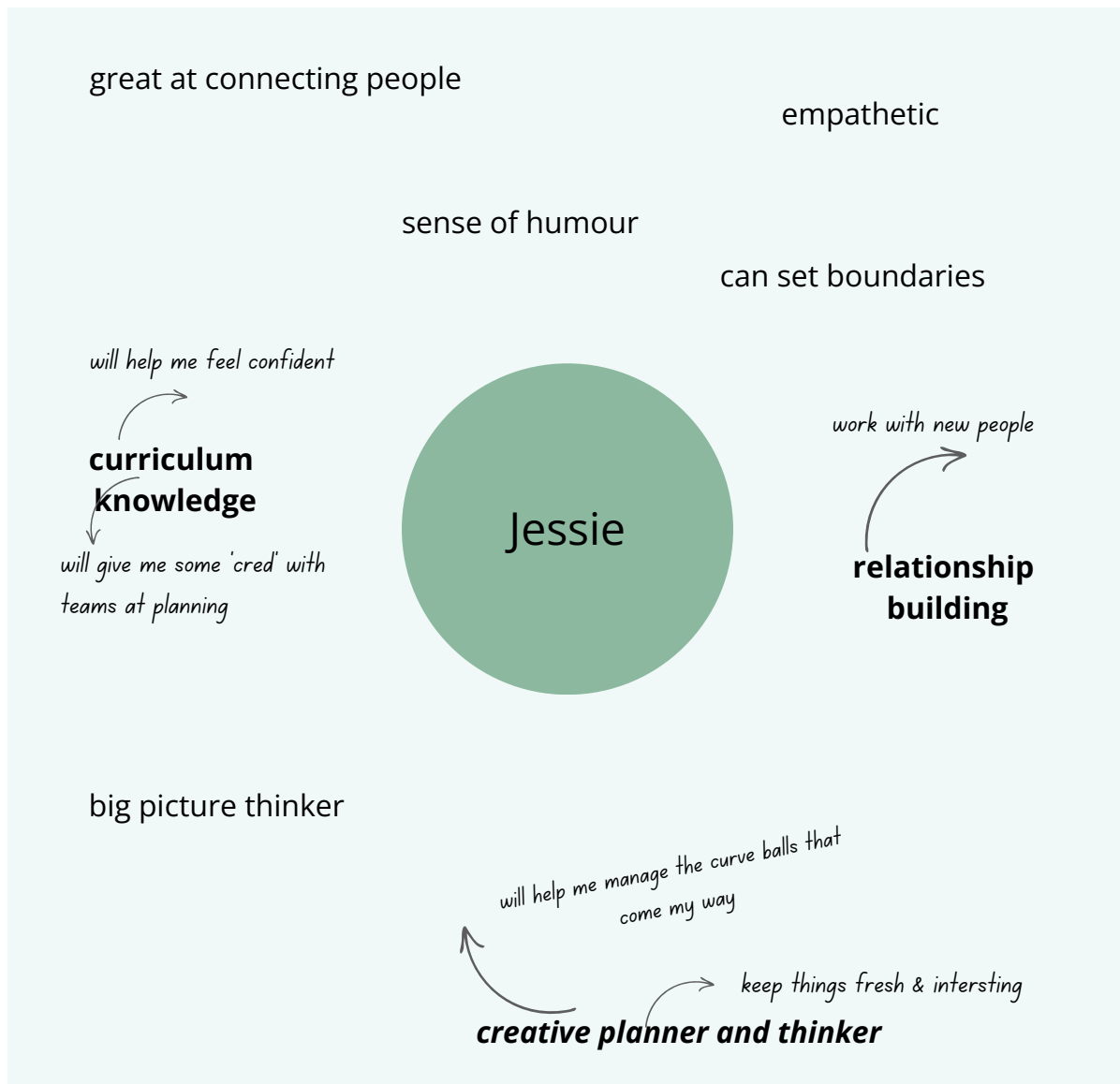
## Strengths Map.

Step 1: Draw a circle in the center of the page and write your name.

Step 2: Around the circle, write down your key strengths. Be specific—think about skills, qualities, and ways of working that make you uniquely effective.

Step 3: Consider how each strength supports your leadership. Write notes or draw lines connecting them to your leadership role.

### Example:



## Find Your Feet

A person wearing a light blue button-down shirt is sitting at a table. Their hands are visible, holding a purple pen over an open notebook. A white cup of coffee with latte art is also on the table. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

### Final prompts:

- What new insights did you gain about yourself through this exercise?
- What is one area where you'd like to grow this year, and what support do you need to do that?

### Want More?

- Take a free strengths assessment to discover your character strengths **[viacharacter.org](https://viacharacter.org)**

# Step 3

# *Honour*



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### Summary Step 3: Honour

- Recognize your wellbeing as a critical part of your leadership.
- Set boundaries that protect your energy and focus.
- Develop habits and practices that sustain you.

### Journal prompts:

*Observe:* What drains your energy the most in your role? How can you minimize these drains?

*Reflect:* What habits or routines currently support your wellbeing? What makes these effective for you? How will you protect and continue these habits as things get busy?

*Act:* What might be one boundary that you'll want to honour to protect your time and energy this year?



# Thinksheet

## Instructions:

1. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (needs attention) to 5 (thriving) for each of the six areas.
2. Identify one area you'd like to focus on this year.
3. Set a simple, actionable goal to support growth in that area this term.

*You may like to return to this self-assessment each term to check progress and reset.*

### Positive Emotion.

How often do you experience moments of joy, gratitude, or contentment in your leadership?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Engagement

How engaged do you feel with your daily work? Are there tasks or moments where you feel fully immersed?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Relationships

How supported do you feel by the people around you?  
Are you fostering positive, meaningful connections?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Meaning

How often do you feel a sense of purpose or significance in your leadership role?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Accomplishment

How satisfied are you with your progress and achievements?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Health

How well are you taking care of your physical and mental wellbeing?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*\*Adapted from the work of McQuaid and Kern*



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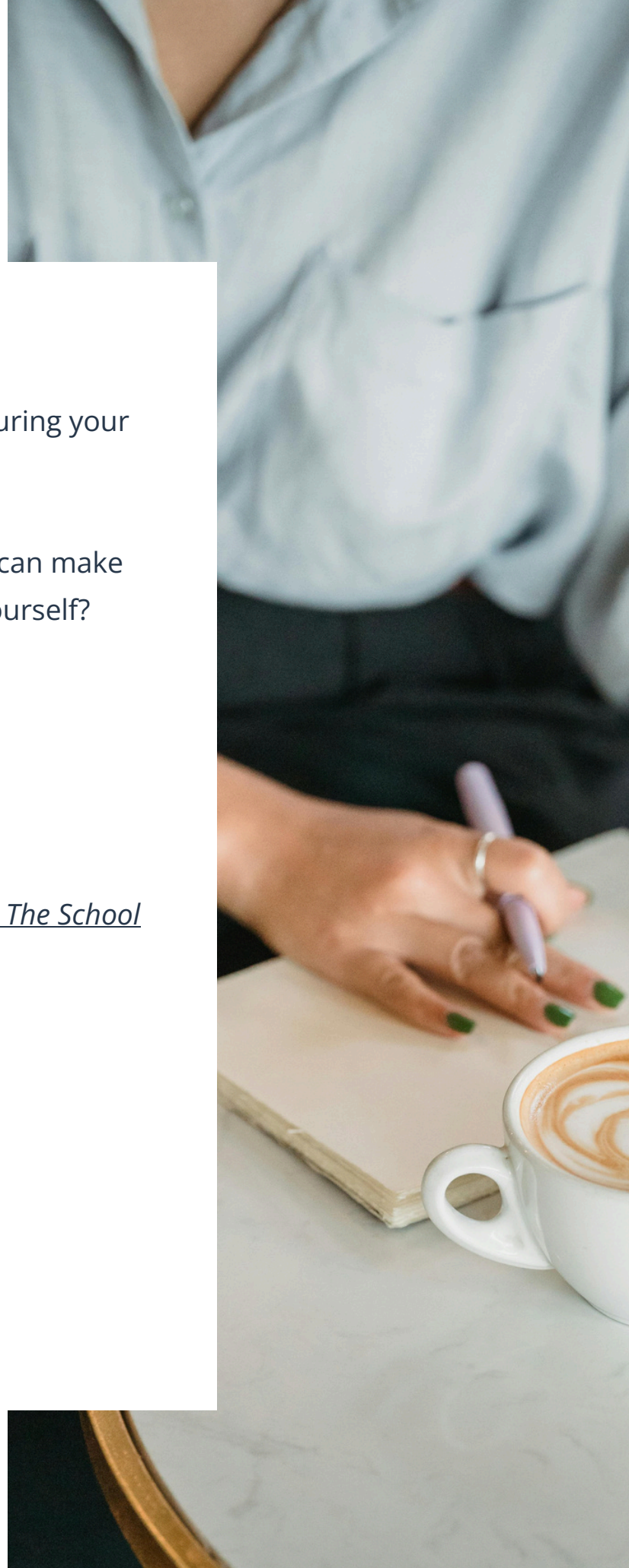
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### Final prompts:

- How will you commit to honouring your wellbeing this year?
- What's one small change you can make this week to better care for yourself?

### Want More?

- [Check out Meg Durham's brilliant \*The School of Wellbeing\* podcast.](#)



# Step 4

# *Lead*



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### Summary Step 1: Lead

- Communicate your vision clearly and authentically.
- Build trust and foster collaboration.
- Empower others to take ownership and thrive.

### Journal prompts:

*Observe:* What is the vision you want to communicate to your team this year?

*Reflect:* How do you want people to feel when they work with you?

*Act:* What steps can you take to build trust with your team?





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### Communication Planner

Use this as you get set up, and return to it whenever you need a bit of help and clarity around communicating with others.

Define  
Your Key  
Message

What do you want your team to know, feel, and do?

Tailor Your  
Approach

How can you communicate this message in a way that resonates with your team's needs and your style?

Plan for  
Feedback

How will you invite input and create space for dialogue?



## Get Grounded

A person wearing a light blue button-down shirt is sitting at a desk. Their hands are visible, holding a purple pen over an open notebook. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee with a latte art design. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the person's shirt and the desk surface.

### Final prompts:

- How will you measure success in leading others this year?
- What's one specific action you can take early on to inspire your team?

### Want More?

- [Check out the \*Dare to Lead\* hub by Brené Brown for a terrific bank of resources to support and guide you throughout your leadership journey.](#)

## Find Your Feet

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### Thank you

Thank you for taking the first step in your leadership journey with the *Find Your Feet* series. Your commitment to showing up for yourself and those you lead is inspiring.

I believe our education system and the world need more self-aware, intentional, and compassionate leaders. Taking part in this series surely makes you one of those!

Go well, lead well

*Katrina*

