



Schachter Monthly

By Ephraim Schachter • May 05, 2026

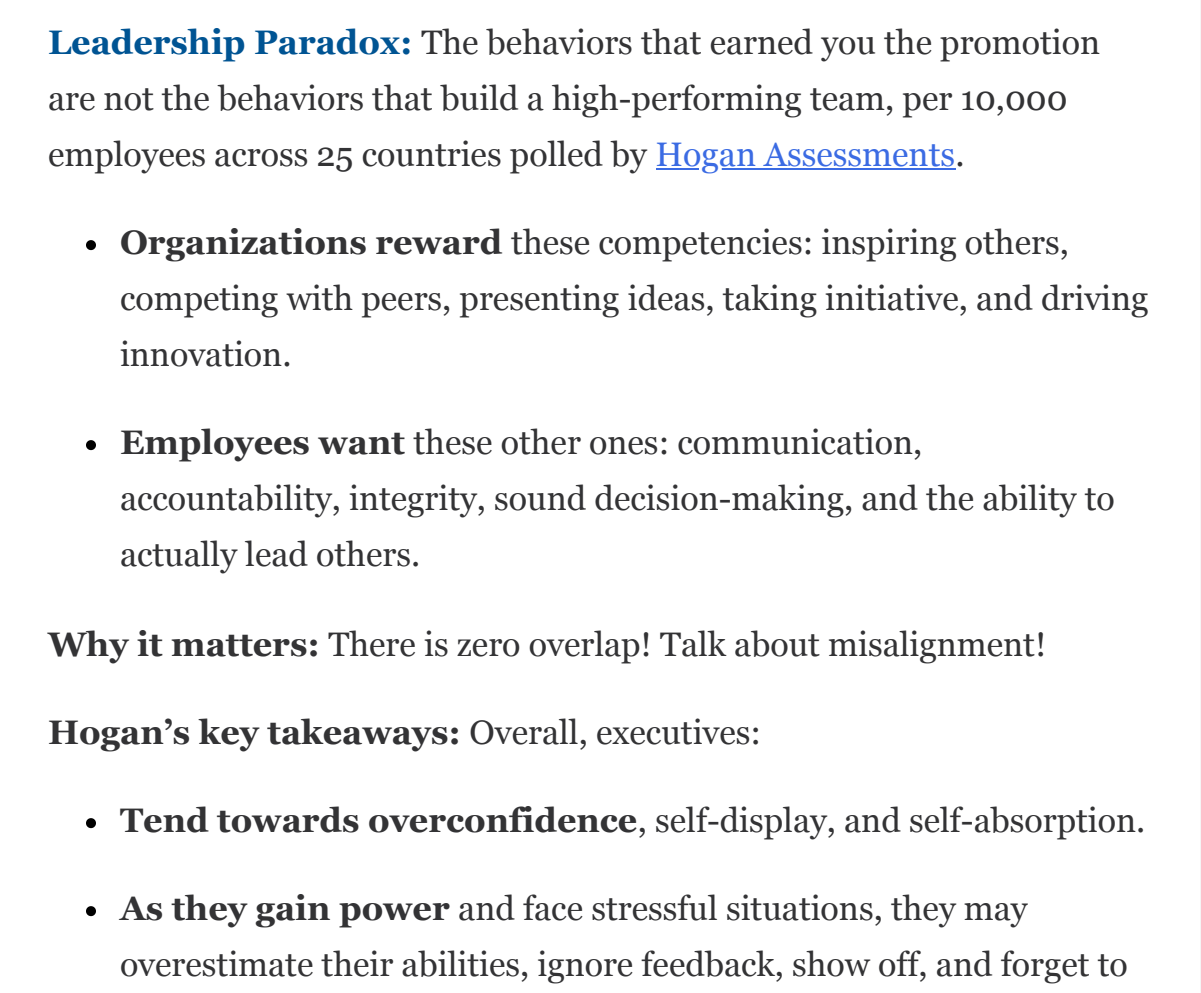
Smart Brevity® count: 5 mins...1269 words

🌻 **May is here.** It's time to bloom!

🏆 **Let's be great leaders!** Here are some straightforward insights and actionable tools & tips.

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1 big thing: The leader paradox challenging executive success



Leadership Paradox: The behaviors that earned you the promotion are not the behaviors that build a high-performing team, per 10,000 employees across 25 countries polled by [Hogan Assessments](#).

- **Organizations reward** these competencies: inspiring others, competing with peers, presenting ideas, taking initiative, and driving innovation.
- **Employees want** these other ones: communication, accountability, integrity, sound decision-making, and the ability to actually lead others.

Why it matters: There is zero overlap! Talk about misalignment!

Hogan's key takeaways: Overall, executives:

- **Tend towards overconfidence**, self-display, and self-absorption.
- **As they gain power** and face stressful situations, they may overestimate their abilities, ignore feedback, show off, and forget to build alliances or gain buy-in from team members.

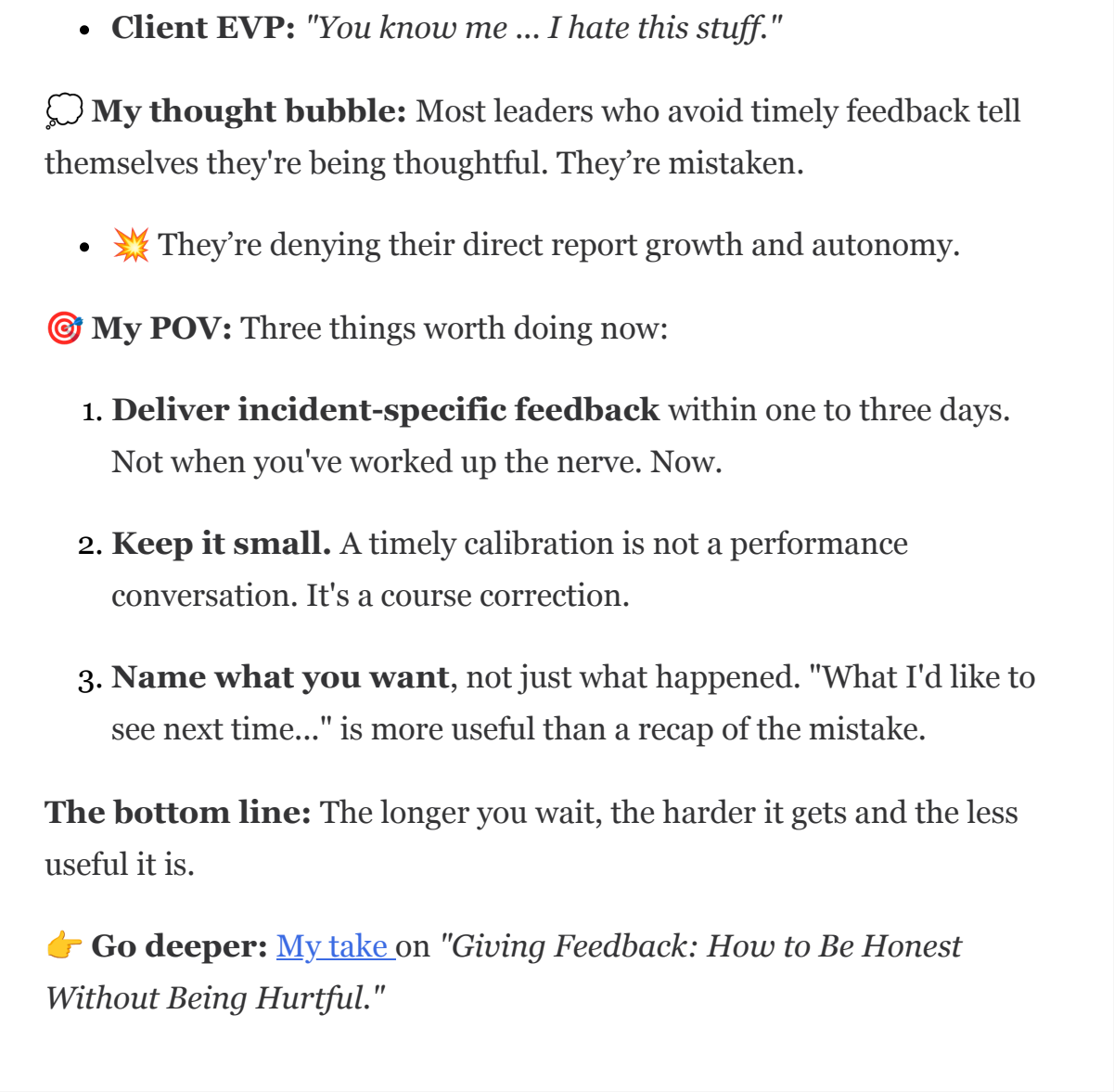
💬 **My thought bubble:** Your executive opportunity is to recognize that, as Marshall Goldsmith wrote, "What got you here won't get you there," and shift your leadership approach to bring your team along.

🎯 **My POV:** Three shifts worth making:

1. **From competing to collaborating.** You were promoted for outpacing your peers and now your job is to make your team do the same.
2. **From presenting to listening.** Employees don't want a leader who broadcasts. They want one who communicates *with* them. Close your deck. Open the floor.
3. **From taking initiative to building accountability.** Stop owning what isn't yours. Create the conditions for them to step up, and then get out of the way.

The bottom line: The traits that got you promoted are not always the ones that make you worth following.

2. The short shelf-life of manager feedback



💡 **A useful feedback opportunity** has a shelf life before it expires and loses its worth.

- **Why it matters:** That window, about one to three days, is when feedback lands with the most clarity and impact.

In my office last week, a client asked for my take on her written prep of a feedback statement. She wanted to refine it prior to sharing with her direct report who dropped the ball on something significant.

- **Ephraim:** "When did it happen?"
- **Client EVP:** "About three weeks ago."
- **Ephraim:** "Is there a reason you haven't addressed it yet?"
- **Client EVP:** "You know me ... I hate this stuff."

💬 **My thought bubble:** Most leaders who avoid timely feedback tell themselves they're being thoughtful. They're mistaken.

- 🌟 They're denying their direct report growth and autonomy.

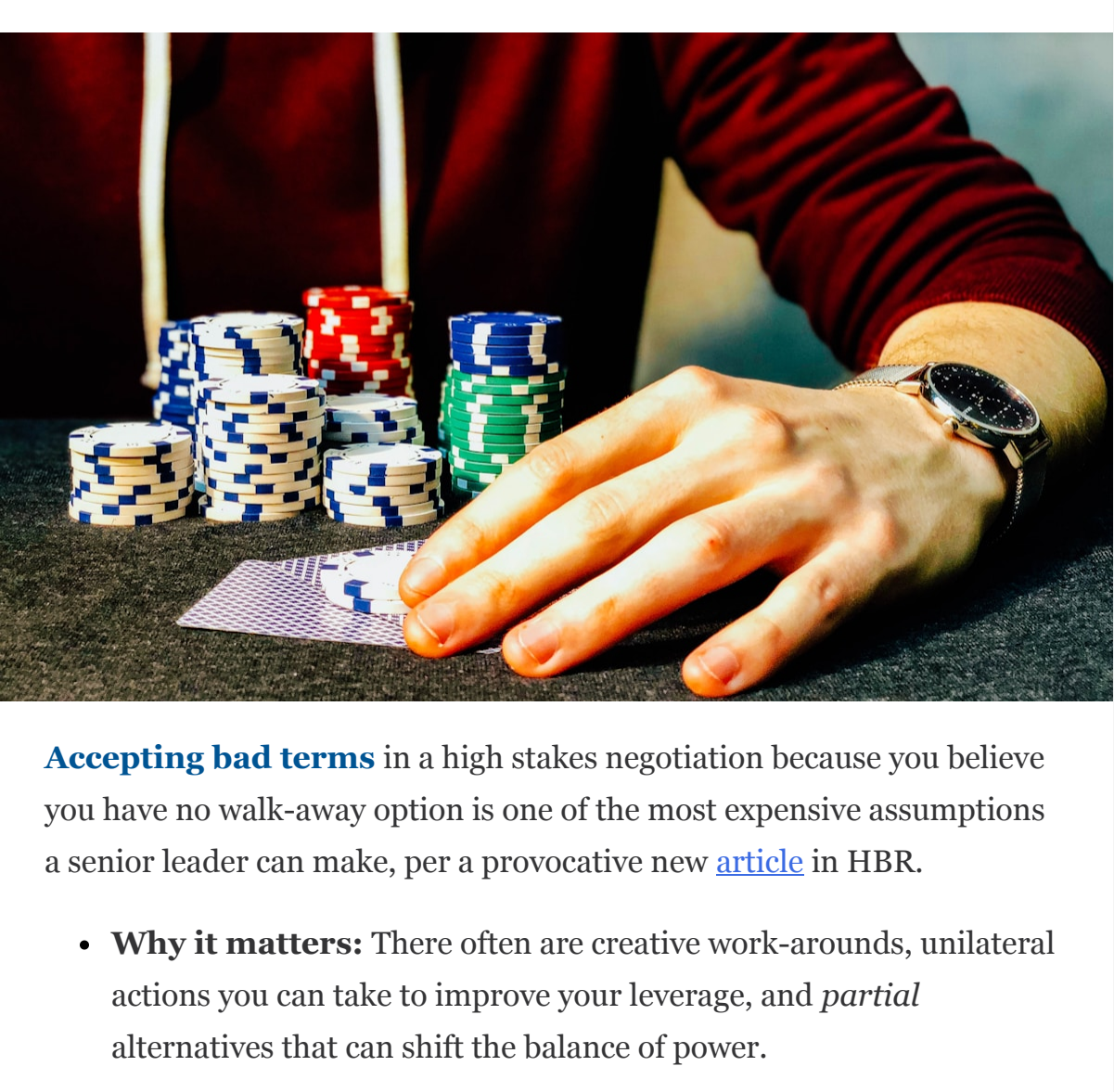
🎯 **My POV:** Three things worth doing now:

1. **Deliver incident-specific feedback** within one to three days. Not when you've worked up the nerve. Now.
2. **Keep it small.** A timely calibration is not a performance conversation. It's a course correction.
3. **Name what you want**, not just what happened. "What I'd like to see next time..." is more useful than a recap of the mistake.

The bottom line: The longer you wait, the harder it gets and the less useful it is.

👉 **Go deeper:** [My take](#) on "Giving Feedback: How to Be Honest Without Being Hurtful."

3. CEOs want their CHROs to embrace AI



CEOs have identified what their CHRO needs to develop to better support the business, per SHRM's [2025 C-Suite study](#).

📊 **By the numbers**, their top two opportunities:

- **75%** said technology and digital transformation, including AI
- **61%** said financial acumen

Why it matters: 40% of CEOs named AI adoption as their single top organizational priority. They're looking to their CHRO to help lead that charge.

- **Yes, but:** Most CHROs aren't positioned to do it yet.

💬 **My thought bubble:** I work with CHROs who are exceptional at the human side and genuinely uncertain about the technology conversation. They worry that leaning into AI takes them out of their SME sweet spot.

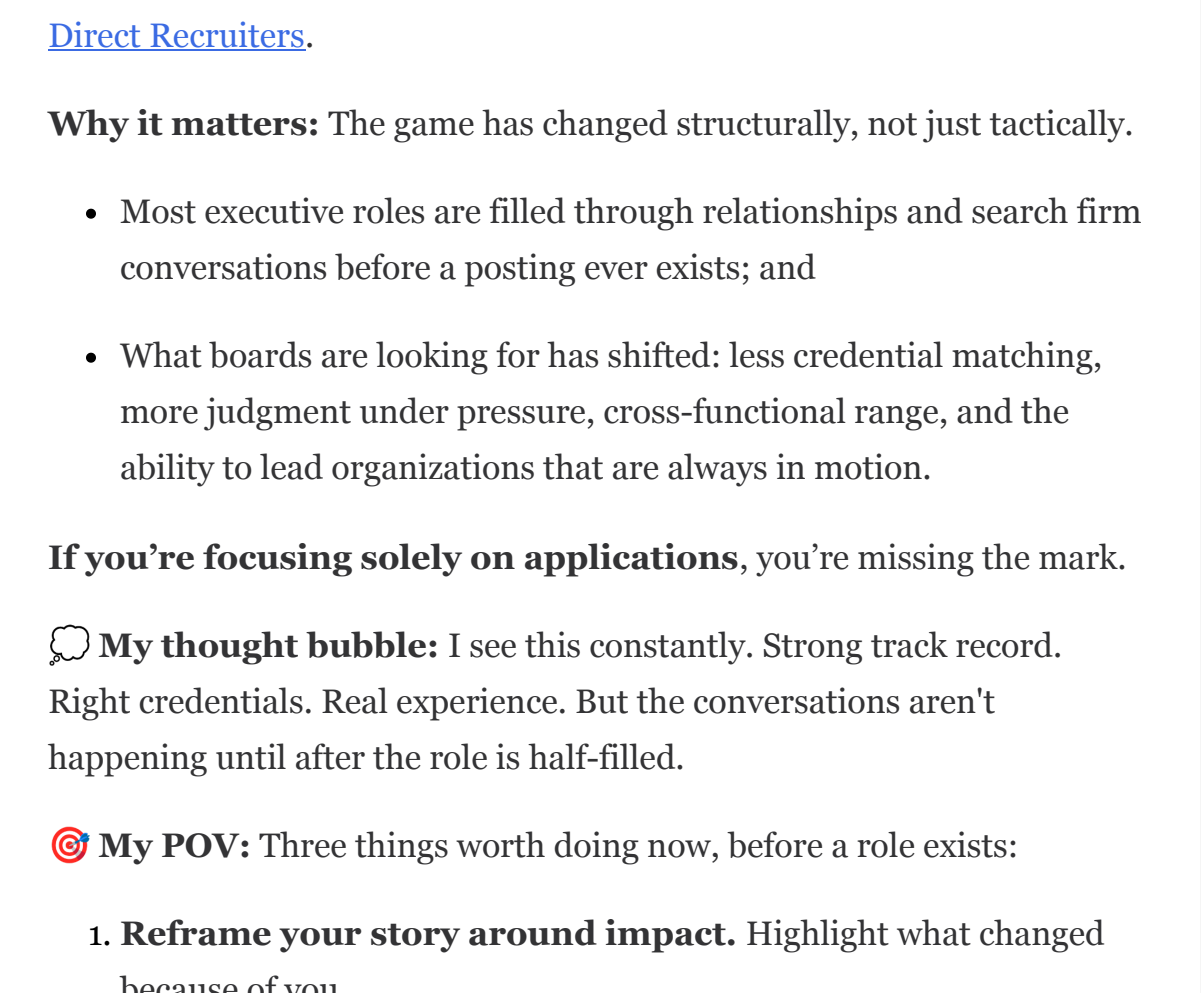
- It doesn't. It means expanding it. The rare CHRO who connects workforce strategy to AI adoption and work design is a valuable partner.

🎯 **My POV:** Two moves worth making now:

1. **Get fluent, not expert.** You don't need to be a technologist. Ask better questions and understand the workforce implications of the answers.
2. **Own the AI and people intersection.** Who is thinking about how AI changes roles, skills, and work design in your organization? If it's not you, it should be.

The bottom line: As always, CEOs are looking for smart partners to think with them through their key concerns. Don't get relegated outside of this conversation.

4. May pro tip: You have more leverage than you think



Accepting bad terms in a high stakes negotiation because you believe you have no walk-away option is one of the most expensive assumptions a senior leader can make, per a provocative new [article](#) in HBR.

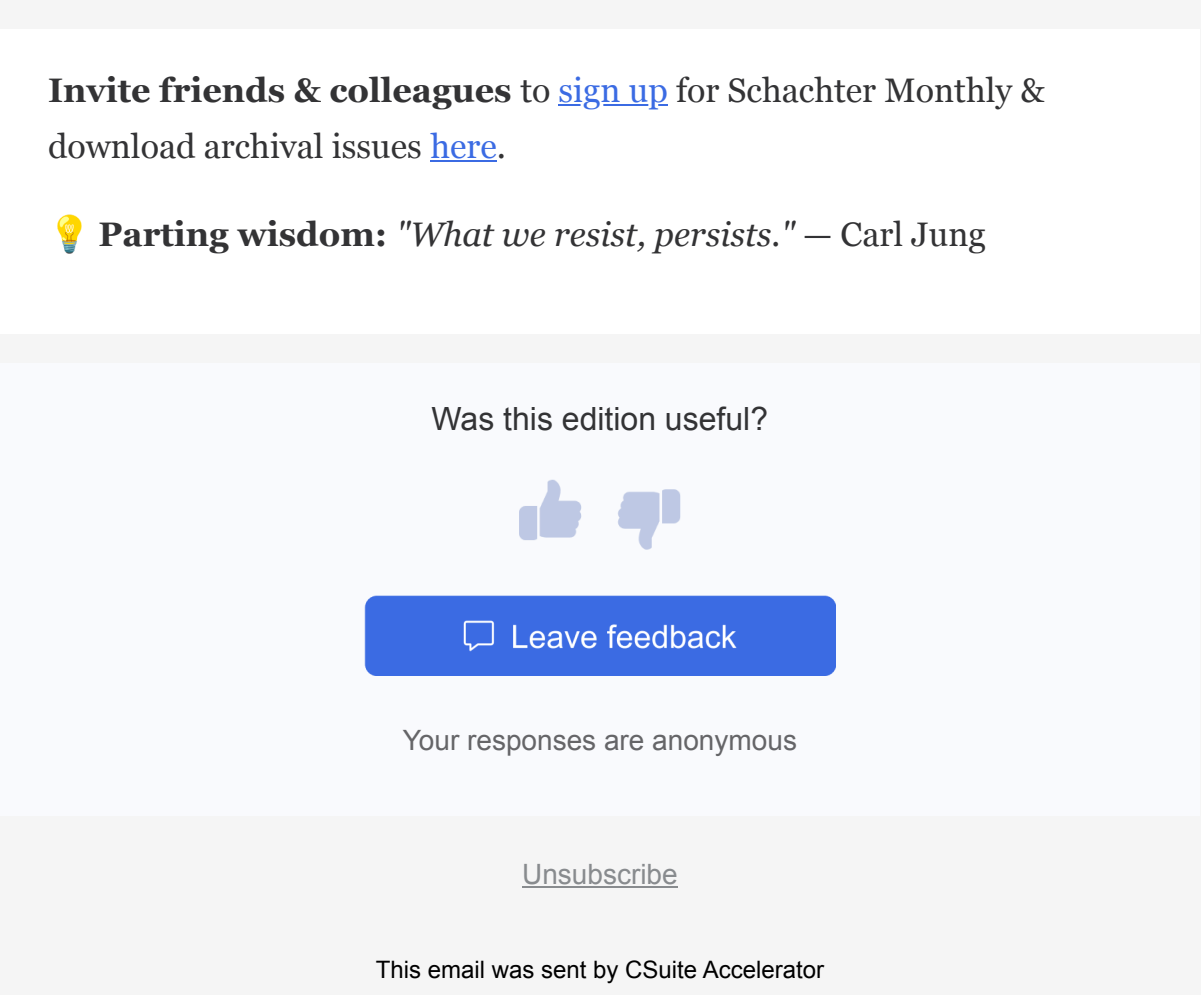
- **Why it matters:** There often are creative work-arounds, unilateral actions you can take to improve your leverage, and *partial* alternatives that can shift the balance of power.

Five interesting recommendations from authors Hughes & Ray:

- 1) **Don't negotiate from fear:** it leads to over-concessions.
- 2) **You're rarely** as weak as you feel:
 - When you think "we need this deal more," you overlook the other side's dependence.
 - Suppliers/customers often have hidden costs to losing you, such as fixed costs and revenue gaps.
- 3) **Stop thinking** in all-or-nothing BATNAs:
 - Most negotiators seek complete alternatives, but even partial ones covering 20-30% of needs can shift leverage significantly.
- 4) **Frame walk-away as a warning**, not a threat:
 - Threats escalate conflict, while warnings signal reality without provoking ego.
 - This approach keeps negotiations collaborative.
- 5) **Shift the conversation from power to fairness**, which is a surprisingly compelling human motivator.
 - Research shows that people will sometimes make concessions when forced to acknowledge that they're treating the other party unfairly.

🛒 **Bottom line:** Try out these tacks the next time you think your back is against the wall, sometimes a shift in direction is all you need. New tools for your executive toolbox.

5. Career Corner: Your next role isn't posted yet



👛 **If you wait for the perfect job posting**, you might already be late. That's because organizations are hiring for roles that have fundamentally changed, but their job descriptions haven't caught up, per [N2Growth](#) and [Direct Recruiters](#).

Why it matters: The game has changed structurally, not just tactically.

- Most executive roles are filled through relationships and search firm conversations before a posting ever exists; and
- What boards are looking for has shifted: less credential matching, more judgment under pressure, cross-functional range, and the ability to lead organizations that are always in motion.

If you're focusing solely on applications, you're missing the mark.

💬 **My thought bubble:** I see this constantly. Strong track record. Right credentials. Real experience. But the conversations aren't happening until after the role is half-filled.

🎯 **My POV:** Three things worth doing now, before a role exists:

1. **Reframe your story around impact.** Highlight what changed because of you.
2. **Build a broad skill set.** Cross-functional work, especially in tech, talent, and strategy, is key.
3. **Engage early.** Connect with search firms and networks before roles are defined.

The bottom line: Opportunities arise through connections, not postings. Invest in relationships.

6. More from Ephraim

Ephraim Schachter is an award-winning C-Suite Coach and Leadership Strategist. For the past 25 years, he has helped organizations excel by developing their leaders' capabilities to accelerate trust, navigate obstacles and communicate influentially.

- **Invite** Ephraim to [keynote](#) your next event.
- **Bring in** Ephraim to [work with](#) your organization's top leaders.
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💡 **Parting wisdom:** "What we resist, persists." — Carl Jung

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