

Article 4 Resource: Embrace New Chapters

A Reflection Resource to Reclaim Sustainability
During Career Transition



Real Talk & Reflection

Damon Maassen, CPTD



There's something uniquely exhausting about doing equity and inclusion work in a time when so many are declaring it unnecessary. I've heard "DEI fatigue" used as a rationale for cutting budgets, scrapping roles, or shelving commitments, but the fatigue isn't from doing the work. It's from constantly justifying its existence.

Right. That language — "fatigue" — can feel so loaded, especially when used by those who can walk away from the work. For many of us, this work isn't a passing trend or a temporary initiative. It's inseparable from our identities, our communities, and our daily lives. We don't get to opt out even if and when our official titles go away. There's a huge emotional and psychological toll to holding that line day after day.

Dr. Sarah Trocchio



That toll builds over time — the weight of every unprocessed microaggression, every workshop delivered while masking exhaustion, every "thank you for your passion" used to keep the work at arm's length. And lately, that weight has only grown heavier as organizations scale back their equity and inclusion efforts, leaving the emotional and cultural labor to those already carrying too much.

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Real Talk & Reflection (Cont'd)

Dr. Sarah Trocchio

It's like you become both the messenger and the message. You're leading change while embodying it, and that's powerful, but it's also really vulnerable. I see so many people navigating this double bind: needing to speak truth to power while also protecting their own humanity.



Damon Maassen, CPTD



That's where I've had to shift. I used to believe that I had to be everything for everyone, that being "effective" meant being endlessly available, endlessly palatable. But that model isn't sustainable. Now, I'm learning to lead from a place of care, not just for others, but for myself. That's how I sustain this work: by setting boundaries, honoring my capacity, and choosing to do the work on my own terms.

And that's part of the evolution too. Sustainability is rooted in alignment. It's about reclaiming your boundaries, finding your people, and staying anchored in your "why." It's also about trusting that you don't need to prove your worth through overwork. Even in a season of resistance, we still get to choose how we show up and we still get to define what integrity looks like for us.



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Mini Practices for Daily Renewal

- **Daily grounding question:** What would it look like to lead with care today?
- **Micro-boundary practice:** Protect 30 minutes this week just for joy — no agenda. What are you doing with that time?
- **Visibility reframe:** Share one story (even a small one) of impact from your work. What does this story remind you about your values?
- **Disengagement ritual:** Light a candle, take a walk, close your laptop — mark the end of your workday with intention.
- **Text a co-dreamer:** “I see you. We’ve got this.” That’s it. That’s the practice.



Words of Encouragement (That Hold Complexity)



- It's okay to feel tired. And still be committed.
- There is no “right” way to stay in this work, only what's right for you right now.
- You don't have to be the one to fix it all. Focus on the spaces you can influence.
- Not all discomfort is a sign to stop. Sometimes it's a sign you're growing, healing, or shedding what no longer fits.
- Community care is just as vital as self-care. Reach for your people.

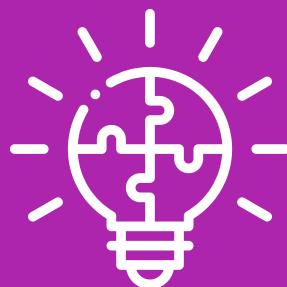
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Reflection Prompts

Use these questions for journaling, coaching, or quiet reflection:



- Where am I feeling the tension between my values and my current work context or the future opportunities I'm currently exploring?
- What parts of my identity have shaped my commitment to this work?
- What support systems do I need to feel more grounded and less isolated moving forward?
- When do I feel most aligned in my purpose and what helps me return to that space?
- What conversations or environments are depleting me? Which are replenishing?
- What's one boundary I can set to protect my energy this week?

Sustainable Practices



- **Revisit your “why.”** When resistance rises, reconnect with the reason you started. Keep it written down. Share it with trusted peers. Let it evolve.
- **Decenter urgency.** Systems of oppression often demand constant output. Pause. Rest. Discern. Urgency can be a distraction from strategy and care.
- **Build constellations, not silos.** You don't have to hold it all alone. Collaborate. Co-conspire. Your capacity expands in relationships.
- **Define your yes.** You don't owe everyone your energy. Align your actions with what's sustainable, not just what's expected.
- **Normalize the pivot.** It's okay to change roles, step back, or re-scope your work. That doesn't make your commitment less real — it makes it more human.

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Support from The Square Peg Club & Damon Maassen

Led by Dr. Sarah Trocchio, The Square Peg Club offers values-driven coaching for those navigating career transitions, pivots, and identity-aligned growth. Learn more at [The Square Peg Club](#).

Damon Maassen offers coaching and consulting to help people and teams rewrite their narratives during times of change. His work centers inclusion, belonging, and clarity as paths toward more human-centric workplaces and careers. Connect with Damon on [LinkedIn](#) to learn more.

Whether you're looking to pause, realign, or reignite your work with intention — we're here to support you.



Final Encouragement

You are not alone in this. For many of us, this work isn't a job, it's a calling. But even a calling needs care. It's okay to step back and still be in alignment. It's okay to feel tired and still be committed. You're not here to prove your worth — you already have it.

We hope this guide reminds you that your impact is not measured by how much you do, but by how deeply you stay rooted in who you are. As you move forward, may you do so with spaciousness, with clarity, and with companions who remind you of your brilliance when you forget.

If you're seeking a pause, a reframe, or a thought partner — know that you're not in this alone. We're walking this path too. And we believe in the future you're helping to build.

— Sarah & Damon