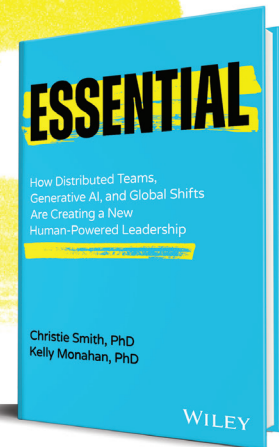


Essential Discussion Guide



***Essential: How Distributed Teams, Generative AI, and Global Shifts Are Creating a New Human-Powered Leadership* by Christie Smith and Kelly Monahan offers a radical and necessary perspective on management transformation, emphasizing the importance of human-centered leadership in meeting the full potential of the technology age. Use the questions below to spark deep and engaging conversations that focus on the intersection of leadership, technology, and humanity.**

1. In what ways do you see generative AI and digital tools reshaping leadership responsibilities today?
2. The authors assert that “humans must be at the center of organizations for society and the global economy to flourish.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. *Essential* cites the pandemic as an accelerator of workforce trends. What lessons do you think organizations should carry forward post-pandemic?
4. The authors outline four human needs: purpose, agency, connection, and wellness. Which of these do you think is most neglected in today’s workplace, and why?
5. How does fostering purpose in employees contribute to organizational success?
6. The book argues that soft skills are the “new power skills.” Which soft skills do you think are most critical for leaders to develop today?
7. The authors discuss the productivity paradox in relation to technology. How can leaders address this paradox to maximize both human and AI potential?
8. What actions can leaders take to ensure that technological advances amplify rather than replace human intelligence?
9. How might generative AI impact workplace culture and employee expectations in the next decade?
10. The book ends with a call for leaders to embrace a paradigm shift. What is one actionable takeaway from the book that you would prioritize as a leader?