

15 THINGS

WE LEARNED

in **15** YEARS




Rockwood

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Since 2000, nearly 5,000 nonprofit, philanthropic and social change leaders from across the globe have gone through Rockwood's transformational leadership development trainings.

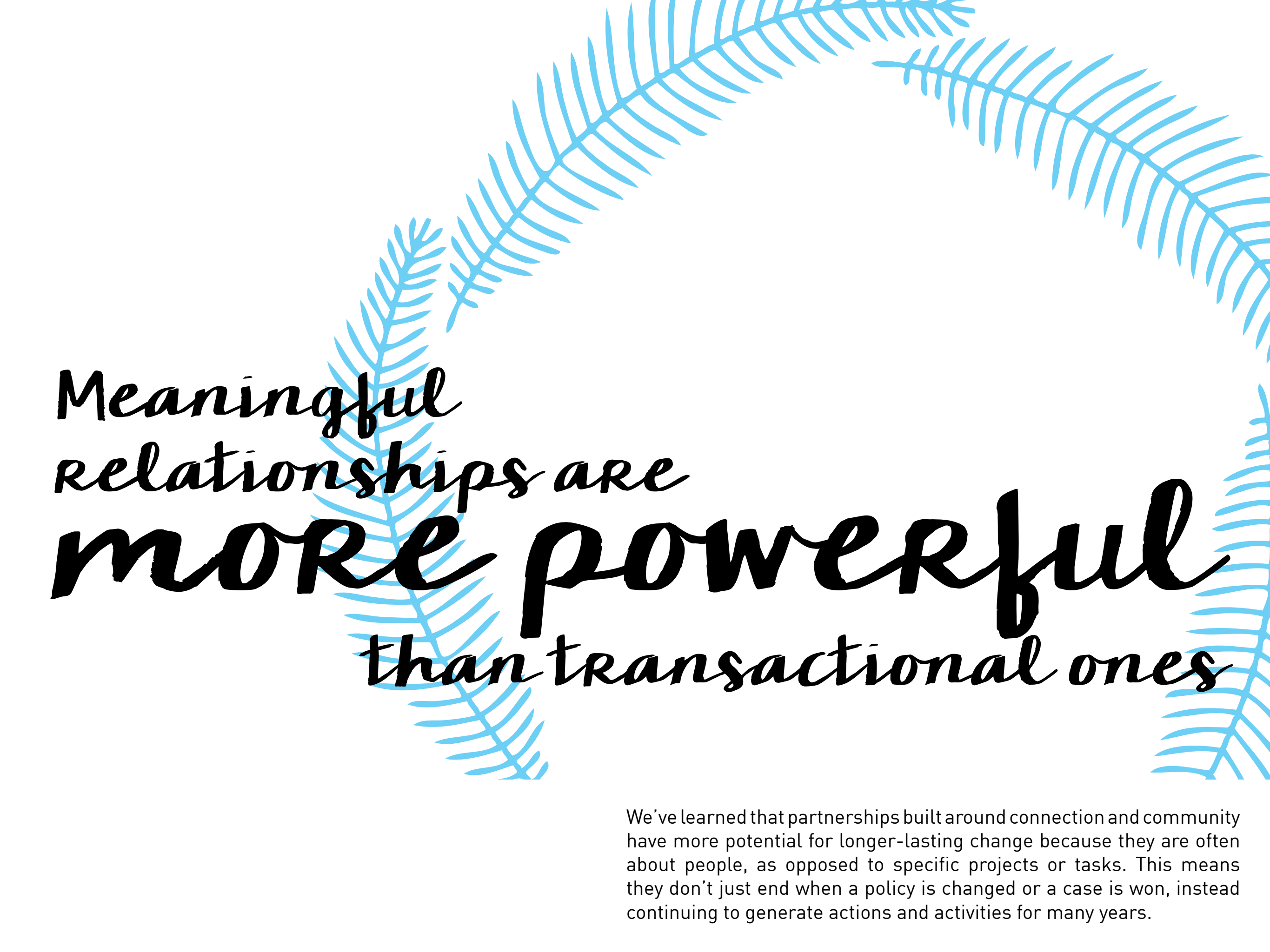
We believe that transforming ourselves, our organizations and our movements will change the way change is done, and transform our world.

We offer a range of programs to help individuals and organizations transform their leadership using a rigorously tested and highly effective approach.

The background is a solid red color with a subtle, repeating pattern of stylized floral and leaf motifs in a slightly darker shade of red. The text is centered and written in a black, cursive script font.

Life outside of
work is not only
possible, it's
essential

One of the main causes of burnout is working endless hours – staying late, skipping weekends, trying to squeeze email time into vacations. At Rockwood, we encourage our staff to get plenty of rest, relaxation, and time with family and friends, which helps alleviate stress and has actually made us more efficient.



Meaningful
relationships are
MORE powerful
than transactional ones

We've learned that partnerships built around connection and community have more potential for longer-lasting change because they are often about people, as opposed to specific projects or tasks. This means they don't just end when a policy is changed or a case is won, instead continuing to generate actions and activities for many years.



*Healthy, sustainable
organizations are
inclusive*

At Rockwood, we are thoughtful and intentional about who is on our staff, board, and trainer team – in terms of race, gender, and movement (to name a few). This approach has made us more welcoming to participants, which in turn has expanded our network and helped us create stronger programs for current and future leaders.



Embrace adaptive capacity

We're creative and flexible when it comes to decision-making and problem-solving, making us a resilient organization and staff. This has helped us weather tough financial moments, and get better at what we do by learning from failures.

Authenticity
makes leadership
universal

Sharing ourselves – putting our personal stories into our leadership, and being open and honest with our colleagues – helps us, as leaders, to connect with more people, no matter what “leadership style” they may work with best. This strengthens our external partnerships and our internal relationships, and helps us get more done.

*Working harder
is not better -*



less is more

Social change movements seem to prop up busy, overworked leaders as a good thing, but we've learned that being "busy" without a vision to guide you can create a lot unnecessary work, while also increasing stress. Rockwood's staff uses tools to stay aligned with our vision and make sure that our work is advancing that vision.



There's value in
COURAGEOUS
conversations

Difficult conversations are just that: difficult. They make us want to avoid them, but at Rockwood, we've learned that they make us better partners and collaborators, and more productive in our work.



Feedback

is crucial

Not only do we learn from feedback (even when it's positive!), but giving clear, direct, and regular feedback across teams reinforces our culture of commitment to each other. Knowing that Rockwood welcomes honest and kind feedback means that there is always space to ask questions, offer suggestions, and grow closer as colleagues.



Connect the
PERSONAL
to the work.

Leadership starts at the core of who we are, with the unique gifts we each bring to the table. When we know what that is, we can make clearer, stronger choices about our life and work so that we stay challenged, fulfilled, and motivated.

*Intentional
partnering
across sectors
increases
impact*



It's so easy to get stuck in our silos and find value only in our own sectors or issues, but we've seen amazing things happen when people partner across sectors. Our alums who created unlikely partnerships have done incredible things and created long-lasting change.

A decorative pattern of dark green leaves and stems is positioned at the top of the page, extending across the width of the image. The leaves are stylized and appear to be part of a larger plant or branch.

*No one
leads
alone,
and no one ever has*

There are many people who influence, shape, and support each of us as leaders. The people we surround ourselves with – co-workers, mentors, friends, and family – form an important, nourishing network that we rely on to create powerful change.



*Sharing power
is more satisfying*

for the whole

“Teamwork makes the dream work” counts for Executive Directors and Presidents, too, even though those positions often feel like they can’t (or shouldn’t) need help. The entire staff of Rockwood is called upon at various times to share their expertise and experience, and that trust keeps us all motivated. It also frees up our CEO to focus on the tasks only she can do as head of this organization.

The background is a vibrant pink color with a pattern of stylized, overlapping leaves in a slightly darker shade of pink. The leaves are elongated and pointed, creating a sense of movement and growth.

It's important
to take risks &
leaps of faith

We've never been in this time before, and what got us here may not work in the future. We stay ready and willing to try new things to create change, no matter how scary that may be.



Leadership
is a skill anyone
can learn

Many people think of “leadership” as something that comes after years of experience in a management or supervisory role, overseeing a staff and a budget, something tied to positional power. Our view of leadership at Rockwood is more open; we believe it’s a skill – like painting, running a marathon, typing – and can be practiced and exercised by anyone, in any role, at any moment it’s being called for.



*Leadership can be
joyous and
satisfying*

Getting something done well, with those you care about, and with clarity and meaning – that's the essence of leadership.



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