

Navigating AI with Purpose, Trust, and Human Connection

By Liew Meena

I was once rejected from multiple leadership positions simply because I was a mother of a 6 months old. People questioned whether I could fully commit, whether I could handle pressure, and whether family responsibilities would limit my capabilities. Those moments were painful and discouraging, but they never stopped me from believing in myself. Today, at the age of 28, I am proud to be one of the high-performing employees managing leadership responsibilities while also pursuing a double major master's degree, a journey strongly inspired and empowered by the rise of AI and digital transformation.

Artificial Intelligence is often described as the future. For me, however, AI became something far more personal ,it became a bridge between ambition and balance, between leadership and motherhood, between technology and humanity.

As a working woman in leadership, I have always carried multiple responsibilities at the same time. There are boardroom discussions, project deadlines, client expectations, staff management, and strategic decisions. Yet beyond the office, there is another equally important role waiting at home, being present for family, listening to loved ones, and trying to ensure that no matter how busy life becomes, human connection is never lost. My job never stopped at 6pm, it continues after 6 in another role as mother.

There was a time when I believed leadership meant sacrificing personal balance. I remember answering emails late into the night while simultaneously helping with family responsibilities. There were moments when I questioned whether I could truly excel in both worlds without burning out. The pressure was not always visible, but it was deeply felt.

Then AI slowly entered my professional life not as a replacement for human effort, but as a support system.

At first, it was simple tools: smart scheduling assistants, automated meeting summaries, AI-generated reports, and workflow management systems. What once took hours suddenly became manageable in minutes. I realized that AI was not taking away my role as a leader; it was giving me back something I had been losing over time mental space and emotional energy.

One particular moment remains very meaningful to me.

After an exhausting week managing multiple projects and meetings, I was preparing an important proposal late at night. Normally, this would have meant sacrificing sleep and another evening away from family conversations. Instead, with the help of AI tools assisting in drafting and organizing information, I completed the work much faster than expected.

For the first time in a long while, I closed my laptop early.

That evening, I sat with my family without thinking about unfinished reports or unread emails. It may sound like a small moment, but to me, it was powerful. AI did not replace my leadership; it allowed me to become more human again.

This experience changed my perspective on technology.

Today, many people fear AI because they see it as cold, disruptive, or even threatening. I understand those fears. We hear conversations about automation replacing jobs, machines making decisions, and human interaction becoming less personal. But I believe the real question is not whether AI is powerful, it is whether we choose to use it with purpose and trust.

Technology without trust creates distance. Technology with purpose creates empowerment.

As women, especially in leadership, we often lead with empathy, intuition, resilience, and emotional intelligence. These are qualities AI cannot replicate. AI can process information quickly, but it cannot understand the emotional weight behind a difficult decision, the compassion needed to support a struggling team member, or the human warmth behind genuine leadership.

That is why women's voices are so important in shaping the future of AI.

Women bring balance into technological conversations. We ask different questions:

- How can technology improve lives, not just productivity?
- How do we ensure innovation remains ethical and inclusive?
- How do we protect human trust in a rapidly digitalizing world?

These questions matter because the future of AI should not only be intelligent, it should also be responsible and human-centered.

In my professional journey, I have also witnessed how AI can empower organizations and communities. In engineering and technology environments, AI is helping businesses improve efficiency, predict maintenance issues, reduce energy waste, and create smarter systems. Yet the greatest value still comes from people working together with technology, not competing against it.

One lesson I continue to learn is that trust is built through transparency and human connection.

People may accept AI systems, but they will only truly trust them when leaders communicate openly, ethically, and compassionately. Employees do not fear technology

alone; they fear becoming invisible within it. Strong leadership means ensuring people still feel heard, valued, and included in the digital transformation journey.

As a woman leader, I have come to understand that embracing AI does not mean abandoning humanity. In fact, it reminds us how important humanity truly is.

AI can automate tasks, but only humans can inspire others.

AI can analyze data, but only humans can build trust.

AI can increase efficiency, but only human connection creates belonging.

The future will undoubtedly become more digital, automated, and interconnected. Yet I strongly believe the organizations and leaders who succeed will not be those who rely solely on technology. They will be the ones who combine innovation with empathy, intelligence with integrity, and progress with purpose.

For me, navigating AI is not simply about adopting new tools. It is about creating a future where technology supports people instead of overwhelming them. A future where women can lead confidently without sacrificing their wellbeing. A future where trust and human connection remain at the centre of innovation.

Because at the end of the day, the true power of AI is not measured by how advanced the technology becomes.

It is measured by how deeply it helps us remain human.