



In A More AI-Centered World, Judgment And Emotional Intelligence Will Play Bigger Roles

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Jacqueline Arthur, Global Head of Human Capital Management at Goldman Sachs, shared bold insights with Adam Bryant and David Reimer. Key themes include strengthening human judgment as AI reshapes work, the traits that set apart top leaders, and how mobility and trust-based feedback fuel long-term growth.

Reimer: What issues are top of mind for you these days?

Arthur: AI is shaping so much of the HR conversation right now. We're at a real inflection point in shaping the future of leadership and work in an AI era. My focus is on how we strengthen, rather than dilute, the human layer and human elements to drive performance as we embrace this change.

So, the questions I keep returning to are: How do we implement AI? How do we train our people? How do we build confidence in the opportunities that AI presents? AI removes manual steps and creates capacity, but the opportunity is really around improving the quality of how we work and serve our clients.

It's not necessarily about speed; it's about how work gets done when you embed these tools thoughtfully in day-to-day workflows, and sometimes that requires redesigning the workflow you're tackling. The model we're focused on is one where AI accelerates insight, but people own the interpretation and decision-making.

That requires a different kind of training. We are spending a lot of time helping people think about how to challenge outputs, how to apply context, and how to recognize when something may not fully translate into a client or business situation. Alongside that, there's a real focus on judgment and emotional intelligence and the amplified role those qualities play in a more AI-centered world.

As the technology becomes more powerful, the differentiator for us will be how people apply it in context, how they assess the nuances and potential impact, to make sure decisions are not just efficient, but also appropriate and responsible.

It's an incredibly exciting time to be doing this job, because the future won't look like the past. In some ways, the technical skills of your past have never had less of a predictive impact on your ability to succeed in the future.

Bryant: What are the X factors that separate the best leaders these days?

Arthur: It's a combination that includes ambition, resilience, and an openness to growth. They are people who are constantly stretching themselves and helping the organization get better in the process.

The best performers don't think of themselves as finished products. They never stop growing, and that means they never stop asking questions. They're open to feedback, and they take it seriously. They try to understand not just what the work is, but how it gets done.

They also understand that relationship-building is essential, especially in our culture. They tend to accelerate faster at Goldman Sachs because they build trust and they're better able to collaborate across teams. AI adaptability is also becoming more critical.

Reimer: You clearly have a lot of drive and are drawn to big challenges. Where does that come from for you?

Arthur: I was raised by a single mother, and seeing her resilience was deeply inspiring to me. I grew up working multiple jobs after school and every summer to earn pocket money or to help pay for my education.

My resilience comes from a strong role model who went from being a stay-at-home mother with three children to becoming a single parent who ultimately rebuilt her career to be a school principal.

Bryant: You started your career as a lawyer, and you had a variety of operating roles at Goldman Sachs before your current role as global head of Human Capital Management. What is the throughline of your career path?

Arthur: Careers are built through experiences. It's not just about titles and roles, what you're actually doing is more important. I've taken on roles that might have been viewed as a step back at the time, but I was more interested in what I would learn from the experience and who I would be working for. Those were always key motivators for me in how I thought about assessing opportunities.

We place a strong emphasis on mobility at the firm, creating opportunities for people to get the breadth of experience that enables them to have that athleticism and ability to apply what they've learned in other contexts.

Ultimately, that's only possible when managers build strong relationships with their reports and have a commitment to providing ongoing feedback and support that makes it possible for people to take those leaps of faith. It's about teaching people how to think through the more challenging moments and giving feedback in a way that helps people grow.

That is an art, and to do it well requires a foundation of trust, with the person receiving feedback believing that you're trying to help them reach their full potential.

Reimer: Do you have a favorite question that you use when you're interviewing job candidates?

Arthur: I like questions that give me an insight into how someone thinks and how they've responded to adversity. So I might ask, what is the most difficult situation you've ever encountered, and how did you respond to that? I also ask questions that help me understand how they work with others. For example, what was a difficult situation you had with a colleague, and how did you resolve it? I think those qualities and skills often predict long-term success.

Bryant: What do you consider to be the hardest part of leadership?

Arthur: Creating the conditions for great people and great ideas to thrive. It's not only the hardest thing; it's also the biggest opportunity.