

The humanKIND Lexicon

The words we use in this work, and what we mean by them.

A reference for the language and concepts of Source Work. Each term is given twice: in brief, for quick orientation, and in full, for the meaning it carries inside a coaching engagement.

01 The ground

Source

IN BRIEF

Source is the most honest and grounded expression of who you are as a leader. It's the ground the whole map is built on. You don't build it. You remember it, and the work is learning to lead from there, rather than from the role you've been performing.

IN FULL

Everything in this work orients toward Source. It isn't a goal to reach or a better version to construct. It's who you already are underneath the performance, the conditioning, and the noise: the most honest and grounded expression of you as a leader. The reason the work begins here is simple. Everything you build, your decisions, your relationships, the culture around you, is finally an expression of who you are at source. When that source is clear, leadership stops costing what it used to cost. You don't become Source. You return to it.

Being, Knowing, Doing

IN BRIEF

Being, Knowing, and Doing are the three dimensions this work moves through. Being is who you are beneath the performance. Knowing is what truly fulfils you, and why. Doing is action that reflects what you know to be true. They aren't a sequence to move through or a model to master. They're an orientation, and all three are drawn toward the same place: Source.

IN FULL

Most leadership models push toward extremes. Relentless execution without reflection, or endless reflection without action. Head or heart. Strength or care. Being, Knowing, and Doing name a different architecture, one that was always there. Being is the foundation: who you are beneath the role, and which of the patterns you built to succeed are now costing you clarity, energy, or integrity. Knowing is the compass: what actually matters to you, and what kind of leadership is genuinely sustainable. Doing is the movement: insight turned into cleaner decisions and aligned action.

They move together, because that's what they have always done. What gets in the way isn't absence. It's substitution: the performance the world taught us to call Being, the adopted preference it taught us to call Knowing, the prescribed action it taught us to call Doing. Clear the substitutes and what remains isn't something new. Being, Knowing, and Doing aren't what we install in a leader. They're what gets remembered when the programming releases.

02 The discipline

Human-Centred Design Process

IN BRIEF

The human-centred design process is the methodology humanKIND brings to leadership coaching: the same discipline used to understand complex human systems in design, turned toward the leader rather than the product or the organization. It starts with who the leader actually is, not what the role requires.

IN FULL

Human-centred design begins with the person at the centre of the system, their actual experience, their actual needs, their actual truth, before it builds anything. humanKIND applies that same orientation to leadership. Rather than starting with what a role requires and shaping the leader toward it, the work starts with the leader's own source: who they actually are, what they actually know, what is actually theirs to build. This is the inside-out discipline James brought from a long career in brand strategy, getting to what is true about a person or an organization before deciding what to build. Turned toward the interior of the leader rather than an organization, it becomes Source Work.

Human-Centred Leadership

IN BRIEF

Human-centred leadership is the kind of leadership that becomes available when a leader stops fragmenting themselves to meet the role and starts leading from their whole humanity. It's distinct from the design process above: that's the method, this is the leadership it produces. Not the opposite of high performance, but the condition that makes high performance sustainable.

IN FULL

Human-centred leadership is a practice of leading in which the full humanity of the leader — their values, interior life, capacity for care, and genuine self-awareness — is the foundation of how they think, decide, and act. It is not the opposite of high performance. It is the condition that makes high performance sustainable. Human-centred leaders do not fragment themselves to meet their roles. They integrate who they are with how they lead — and in doing so, produce the qualities that organizations most need and technology cannot replicate: trust, honest judgment, genuine connection, and the courage to lead with integrity when it is hard. Human-centred leadership is not a style or a methodology. It is an orientation — a continuous practice of closing the gap between the leader one performs and the leader one actually is.

03 The problem

Programming

IN BRIEF

Programming is humanKIND's term for the accumulated conditioning most leaders inherit from the cultural, organizational, and social systems they grew up inside. Over time, it teaches leaders to outsource pieces of being human: their worth, their agency, their responsibility, and their permission to lead as who they actually are.

IN FULL

We use the word programming deliberately, because it names what happened. The systems most leaders moved through, families, schools, organizations, industries, were not neutral. They had structures of reward and consequence that shaped behaviour, belief, and identity over time. The effect was cumulative. Programming taught leaders to outsource their worth, to measure themselves by what external systems granted rather than what was already true. It taught them to outsource their agency, to defer to gatekeepers and wait for permission. It taught them to outsource their responsibility, to the role, the organization, the expectations of others. And it taught them to outsource their permission, the quiet but costly belief that they need someone else's authorization to lead as who they are. Programming isn't a judgement. It's a description of what happens when a person is shaped by systems with their own agenda for who they should be. And it can be unlearned.

Deprogramming / Remembering

IN BRIEF

Deprogramming is the work of recognizing what has been programmed, and releasing it. humanKIND uses remembering alongside it, because what remains when the programming releases isn't something new. It's something that was always there.

IN FULL

Most leadership development frames the work as adding: new skills, new frameworks, new capabilities. humanKIND frames it as clearing. The work isn't to build a better version of yourself. It's to recognize what has been layered over the version that was always there, the one that existed before the conditions were laid down, before the gatekeepers were introduced, before you were taught to manage your worth as a variable. Deprogramming is the loosening of what accumulated. Remembering is what follows: the quiet, steady return of someone who was always there. The two words name the same movement from different angles. Deprogramming names what's released, remembering names what's recovered.

Gatekeepers

IN BRIEF

Gatekeepers are the people, systems, and structures a leader has learned to defer to for their worth, their direction, and their permission to lead. The programming that teaches leaders to outsource their authority almost always runs through gatekeepers, real or internalized.

IN FULL

A gatekeeper, in the humanKIND sense, is any person, institution, or internalized belief a leader has unconsciously granted authority over their worth, their choices, or their right to lead as who they are. Gatekeepers are often real: a parent, a manager, an industry, a culture. But the most powerful ones are internalized: the voice that says the room hasn't granted you permission yet, the belief that your worth is a question rather than a fact, the habit of calibrating your leadership to an imagined audience. Source Work doesn't eliminate the external gatekeepers. It helps a leader see which ones they've been granting authority they were never owed, and what becomes possible when that authority is reclaimed.

04 The practice

Source Work

IN BRIEF

Source Work is the name humankind gives to coaching that begins with the leader's own source: who they actually are, what they actually know, and what is actually theirs to build. It's the work of separating a leader from the programming and static that surround them, so they can stop performing leadership and start leading as who they've always been.

IN FULL

Most leadership development starts with the role and works inward: what the role requires, what skills it demands, what behaviours it rewards. Source Work starts the other way around. It begins with the leader as a whole person and asks what becomes available when they lead from that ground rather than from the version the role has been asking them to perform. The programming is real. The static is real. Left unexamined, both run the show, narrowing choices and producing leadership that's technically functional but quietly exhausting. Source Work makes both visible, separates the leader from what has accumulated around them, and returns them to the clearer operating system that was always underneath. The name comes from a simple recognition: everything a leader builds is finally an expression of who they are at source. When that source is clear, leadership stops costing what it used to cost.

humanKIND Source Map

IN BRIEF

The humanKIND Source Map is the personalized leadership operating system at the centre of the engagement: the governing documents and the strategic plan for how you lead from the inside out. It isn't a personality profile or a report. It's a living document built specifically for you, across the work, and it stays yours.

IN FULL

Every humanKIND engagement produces a Source Map, built specifically for the leader in front of us from the material that surfaces across the work. Think of it as both the governing documents and the strategic plan for how a leader leads from the inside out. Just as an organization's foundational documents define who it is, and its strategic plan defines where it's going, a leader's Source Map does both at once, for the person holding the role. It takes shape across five sections in one movement, who you are, what clouds it, and how you live it: Source and your Board of Directors, your values, where you're headed, the static that clouds it, and how you integrate it into action. It isn't set in stone. It's a living document that grows as you do, always catching up to the person while the person is shaped by what the map has made clear. The Source Map is the primary deliverable of the engagement. It's yours when the work is done, a reference for the decisions ahead grounded in who you actually are, not who you've been performing.

05 The engagement

Designed Coaching Alliance

IN BRIEF

The Designed Coaching Alliance is the explicit, shared agreement for how you and your coach will work together, co-created at the start of the engagement. If your Source Map is the operating system for how you lead, the alliance is the operating manual for how the two of you work on it. It's a living document, revisited as the partnership grows.

IN FULL

Borrowed from the Co-Active tradition and used as humanKIND uses it, the Designed Coaching Alliance is the relational layer beneath the binding terms you've already signed. The engagement agreement covers confidentiality, logistics, and payment. The alliance covers the posture, the permissions, and the way of working: how you and your coach speak to each other, what's in scope and what isn't, how the difficulty gets held when it arrives, what each of you brings and won't compromise. You co-create the first version together in your first Integration & Action Session, before the Foundational Source Mapping Session, and you bring it back to the table as the partnership grows and you do. Revisiting it is the work going well, not a sign anything's off.

Foundational Source Mapping Session

IN BRIEF

The Foundational Source Mapping Session is the 90-minute session where your Source Map begins: the first deep mapping conversation, longer than the sessions that follow, where the architecture of who you actually are starts to surface.

IN FULL

The Foundational Source Mapping Session is 90 minutes, longer than the sessions that follow, because it does a specific kind of work. It isn't an intake or an assessment. It's the first deep conversation of the mapping work, the one where you begin to put language to what's been living underneath the performance. This is where the earliest outlines of the Source Map take form. Your vision starts to surface. Your values begin to emerge, not as words on a wall but as lived convictions. Your Leader Within begins to show up. And the first shape of the territory this work will move through becomes visible. Most leaders describe leaving this session both more seen and more honest with themselves than they've been in a long time.

Source Map Deepening Sessions

IN BRIEF

Source Map Deepening Sessions are three focused 45-minute conversations that build on the Foundational session, taking what surfaced and going deeper. This is where your values become a usable framework, your Board of Directors comes into focus, and a plan takes shape for clearing the static around your leadership.

IN FULL

Three Source Map Deepening Sessions follow the Foundational session, each 45 minutes, each working specific territory in the emerging map. This is concentrated, precise work. Your values move from named to usable, translated from concept into a framework you can lead from. Your Board of Directors comes into clearer focus: the faces of self you can intentionally call on for clarity, courage, connection, and creativity. Your protectors are identified and examined, not as enemies to defeat but as parts that made sense once and have overstayed their welcome. And the static surrounding your goals and intentions begins to be named and planned against. By the end of the three, the Source Map has its shape.

Integration & Action Sessions

IN BRIEF

Integration & Action Sessions are where the full power of a leader gets remembered, as they move toward their vision and lead from who they actually are. The first one opens the engagement and co-creates the Designed Coaching Alliance. The rest, after the mapping work, are where the Source Map meets real life: cleaner decisions, clearer boundaries, action that comes from who you are.

IN FULL

A typical engagement includes fifteen Integration & Action Sessions. The first comes before the mapping work: the session where you and your coach co-create the Designed Coaching Alliance and set how the partnership will run. The rest follow the Source Mapping work and are the sustained, ongoing practice of bringing the Source Map to bear on everything you're actually navigating. They're less about excavation and more about momentum. This is where the full power of a leader gets remembered, not as a concept but as a lived reality. The vision you articulated becomes the thing you're moving toward. The values you clarified become the lens you decide through. In these sessions you stop asking whether the person you've always been is enough. That answer has already landed. What you're doing now is building from that ground, forward, with the specific courage that comes from leading from what's true.

06 Inside the map

Parts

IN BRIEF

Parts is a way of naming something most leaders already sense: on the inside, you are not a single, uniform voice. You are made up of parts, distinct inner characters, each with its own feeling, its own history, and its own intention. None of them is a flaw. Each one took on a job, often long ago, and most are still trying to help.

IN FULL

The idea of parts comes from Internal Family Systems, a model humanKIND draws on because it matches what leaders actually experience: an inner world that is plural, not singular. One part drives hard. Another holds back. One wants to be seen, another wants to stay safe. These aren't moods to manage or inconsistencies to iron out. They're parts, each one a kind of inner character that took on a role at some point, usually for a good reason, and has been carrying it ever since.

humanKIND holds parts the way it holds everything in this work. Nothing here is broken, and nothing needs fixing or removing. A part that gets in the way now is almost always a part that once kept something safe. Your protectors are parts of exactly this kind. And the Leader Within is not another part. It's the one underneath all of them: the steady, grounded centre that can finally listen to each part, understand what it has been protecting, and lead the room. The work isn't to silence your parts. It's to know them well enough that they no longer have to run the show.

Leader Within / Board of Directors

IN BRIEF

The Leader Within is the most honest, integrated version of you, beneath the performing and the static: the seat at the head of the table, holding the vision and leading toward the good of all of it. The Board of Directors is the internal ensemble that gathers around that seat, the faces of self a leader can intentionally call on for the clarity, courage, connection, and creativity that leadership asks for. These are faces of self, not parts: expressions of the one integrated you, rather than the separate inner characters above.

IN FULL

The Leader Within is the one with the clearest view of all of it: the most honest, integrated version of you, beneath the performing and the conditioning. Not a future self to aspire to, but a present reality to return to. It holds the seat at the head of the table, carrying the vision and leading the whole room toward the good of all of it.

The Board of Directors is the internal ensemble that gathers around that seat. It's worth being precise here: these are faces of self, not parts. Where your parts are separate inner characters that once took on protective jobs, the faces of self are expressions of the one integrated you, the resourced aspects of who you already are. A leader learns to call on them intentionally for the clarity, courage, connection, and creativity that real leadership asks for. Source Work is largely the work of helping the Leader Within take its seat and call the rest of the room into service, and of recognizing it was always qualified for it.

Values

IN BRIEF

Your values are your convictions at their most honest, the handful that actually drive your decisions, named and put to work. They aren't aspirational words on a wall. Fulfillment here isn't a reward; it's a lens for deciding what truly matters and letting go of expectations that were never yours.

IN FULL

Values, in this work, are the convictions you actually lead from, surfaced not by choosing from a list but through your own history: the peak moments and the ruptures that show what you were really standing on. The work is to name the core handful honestly and make them usable, a framework you can decide through rather than a poster on a wall. When two values pull against each other, one tends to break the tie. Knowing which one does is worth a great deal, because it tells you how you actually choose under pressure. Clarified this way, fulfillment stops being a reward you chase and becomes a lens: what genuinely matters to you, and what kind of leadership is sustainable for the person you actually are.

Static

IN BRIEF

Static is all the noise that clouds who you really are. It isn't a character flaw. It's the predictable residue of being shaped by systems that rewarded performance over truth. Once static is clearly seen for what it is, you get to decide what you keep and what you set down. It can cloud how you see yourself, but it never reaches who you actually are.

IN FULL

Static surrounds your clearest thinking and most honest action. Source stays clear and available underneath it, always; static just makes it harder to hear. It shows up in two directions, internal and external, named below.

Protectors

Internal static is the interference that comes from within: the parts of you that step in to manage, protect, or pre-empt, and the patterns they run. Chief among these are your protectors.

Protectors are the parts that took on the job of keeping you safe. They're the internal voices that say you're not enough, that you'll be found out, that it's safer to stay small. None of this arrived randomly. It was learned, often as a genuine act of self-protection, in an environment where something needed protecting. What makes a protector a problem now isn't that it exists, but that it has outlasted the environment that created it. The work isn't to fight it. Fighting it gives it more power. The work is to understand what it was protecting, honour that, and let its grip ease.

External static

External static is the interference that comes from the lived world: what you've been putting up with, where your time actually goes against where you'd choose to invest it, and what you let in, the feeds and inputs shaping your attention and mood, mostly by default. None of it is neutral, and most of it has never been audited. Source Work makes static visible. And what becomes visible can be cleared.

A note on this work

The terms here have been shaped by years of practice, by the leaders who've done this work, and by the coaching traditions that inform it. Some are proprietary to humanKIND. Others are drawn from broader practice and used here with the specific meaning they carry in Source Work. All of them are offered in the same spirit: to make the work clearer, and to help leaders find their way home.

The work is not to build a better version of yourself. It is to return to the version that was always there.

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