



What Type of Leader Are You? The Importance of Self-Leadership

Prepared by:
Jeremy Couch
Couch Leadership Company



December 2015

©2015 Lorman Education Services. All Rights Reserved.

Prepared by: Jeremy Couch

What Type of Leader Are You? The Importance of Self-Leadership, Copyright ©, All Rights Reserved.

INTRODUCING

Lorman's New Approach to Continuing Education

ALL-ACCESS PASS

The All-Access Pass grants you **UNLIMITED** access to Lorman's ever-growing library of training resources:

- ☑ Unlimited Live Webinars - 60-90 live webinars added every month
- ☑ Unlimited OnDemand and MP3 Downloads - Over 1,000 courses available
- ☑ Videos - Just released
- ☑ Slide Decks - More than 700 available
- ☑ White Papers
- ☑ Reports
- ☑ Articles
- ☑ ... and much more!

Join the thousands of other pass-holders that have already trusted us for their professional development by choosing the All-Access Pass.



Get Your All-Access Pass Today!

SAVE 20%

Learn more: www.lorman.com/pass/?s=special20

Use Discount Code Q7014393 and Priority Code 18536 to receive the 20% AAP discount.

*Discount cannot be combined with any other discounts.

I. What type of leader are you? The importance of self-leadership.

This session will provide any leader or manager with an overview what steps need to be taken in order to become a better self-leader. Leadership is not something that just happens—leaders must be intentional about growing and developing if they want to get better and see their team improve. Improving your leadership skills starts with having self-awareness about your current level of leadership and then taking intentional steps to enhance your knowledge, skills, and abilities.

A. Assessing your approach to leadership.

If you want to be an effective leader of other people, you must first be an effective leader of yourself. This requires a leader to take consistent action to improve his/her leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities on a regular basis. It also requires introspection and a willingness to examine the current leadership style that a person exhibits toward others. Oftentimes leaders or managers are not aware of the ways in which they act toward the employees that they lead and manage. As a result, their ability to effectively lead others is diminished and their leadership suffers. Therefore, the first step in becoming a better self-leader is to assess your current style of leadership.

While there are a variety of different approaches to how a person leads others, there have traditionally been three broad categories of leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership (Northouse, 2012). Most leaders predominantly exhibit one of these styles, but depending on the situation they could exhibit each of them at one point or another. Authoritarian leadership emphasizes control and direction of employees. Democratic leadership is opposite of authoritarian leadership, instead focusing on a participative approach from employees and guiding instead of controlling. Laissez-faire leadership is often referred to as “non-leadership” because this approach neither controls or guides, and it does not seek to influence followers in any way (Northouse, 2012).

Which style of leadership best characterizes your approach to leading others?

B. Examining leadership styles that emphasize the organization and employees over the leader.

The three categories of leadership styles provide a basis for the majority of approaches to leadership, but there are a number of other approaches that have emerged throughout the years. Three of these include transformational leadership, servant leadership, and Level 5 leadership. Each of these styles have a distinctive quality—they are focused on the needs of the organization and others first and foremost.

Transformational leadership

This model was originally founded with the work of Burns back in 1978 and was expanded by Bass in 1985. Transformational leadership emphasizes a commitment to organizational goals above everything else. Transformational leaders empower and inspire followers to accomplish a vision that is bigger than them. They embody four qualities: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Servant Leadership

This model originated with the work of Robert Greenleaf back in the 1960's and 70's. Servant leadership focuses on service to others before self by putting the needs and welfare of people first and foremost. The desire to serve others surpasses the desire to achieve organizational objectives and results. Servant leaders believe that organizational goals will be achieved by followers and therefore focus on serving the needs of followers before anything else.

Level 5 Leadership

This model was developed by Jim Collins in his book *Good to Great*. The essence of Level 5 leadership is the rare combination of extreme personal humility and an intense professional will. This type of leader focuses on putting the needs of the organization first and foremost, and their primary goal is to see

the organization be successful. Level 5 leaders are not concerned with self-promotion because their entire focus is on the success of the organization.

C. Completing a personal SWOT analysis.

Organizations often use a planning tool called a SWOT analysis to help clarify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Conducting this analysis can assist organizational leaders gain a better understanding of the areas where their organization excels, as well as those where they need to improve. External opportunities for growth and potential threats to growth are also examined. Completing a SWOT analysis does not take a very long time, and the insights that can be gleaned from this analysis can be very helpful to the organization's decision-making process.

While the SWOT analysis has traditionally been a tool for organizations to utilize for strategic planning purposes, it is also a tool that leaders can apply to their own lives. Completing a personal SWOT analysis can help leaders examine their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external opportunities and threats that can have an impact on their ability to lead effectively. The sample worksheet on the next page can be used to complete a personal SWOT analysis.

Personal SWOT Analysis Worksheet

Strengths (internal):

- In what areas do you excel?
- What are the unique talents you bring to the table that others do not?
- What areas do other people view as your strengths?

Weaknesses (internal):

- In what areas are you lacking skill and ability?
- What are some tasks that you do not enjoy or feel incapable of doing?
- What areas do other people view as your weaknesses?

Opportunities (external):

- What outside assistance could help you improve your leadership?
- What kind of feedback do you need from employees?

Threats (external):

- Are there obstacles that might stand in the way of your growth?
- What time constraints or demands could distract your development plan?

D. Creating a leadership action plan for improvement.

Having gained a better understanding of your own leadership style, examined additional leadership styles that can be transformative to the organization and employees, and completed a personal SWOT analysis, you can now focus on creating an action plan to improve your leadership capabilities through specific action steps. In order to get better, a leader must be intentional about getting better. This requires a daily commitment to take the steps necessary for improving the level of leadership they deliver to those that they lead.

A leadership action, or development, plan can take on many forms. Regardless of which format you use, the plan should be specific, measurable, and challenging. The growth process for a leader should be something that stretches you and causes you to get outside of your comfort zone. Following are the key characteristics of a good leadership action plan:

- Personal purpose, vision, mission, and core values.
- Strengths and weaknesses inventory.
- Goal-setting.
- Specific action steps.
- Potential obstacles.
- Follow-up and evaluation of progress.

The template below can provide you with a guide for developing your own leadership action plan. Again, the key to an effective plan is to actually have a plan, not necessarily a perfect one. Start somewhere—you can always improve your plan as you progress.

Leadership Action Plan Sample

Core Ideology:

Purpose (why) –
Vision (where) –
Mission (what) –
Values (how) –

SWOT Analysis:

One-Year Goals:

Short-term Objectives:

Action Steps:

Potential Obstacles:

Evaluation of Progress:

E. Implementing your leadership approach with your team.

Now that you have completed a leadership action plan, it is time to implement your plan at work. This can often be the most challenging and daunting part of becoming a better self-leader because it requires a certain amount of transparency and openness on the part of the leader. This makes some leaders uncomfortable, but it is necessary for leadership growth. Great leaders are willing to let their employees and team members know that they do not have all of the answers and that they are trying to improve. This level of vulnerability will more often than not result in an increased level of trust and respect for the leader. Followers can appreciate someone who is genuine enough to admit their weaknesses and desire to improve.

A great way to implement your new and improved approach to leadership is to conduct something called a 360-degree assessment. This is a tool often used by human resources departments to provide feedback to an employee from all of the team members that interact with that person. After implementing the new leadership approach with your team, it would be a great idea to conduct a 360 degree feedback assessment, and then conduct another one a year later to see what kind of impact your new focus on being a better leader has had on those that you lead at work. If there is not much of a

difference, then it probably means that you are not making significant changes in how you lead and manage employees. Enlisting the help of a leadership coach or mentor would help you focus better on implementing high-impact strategies for improving your leadership. Following is a list of suggested readings and resources for enhancing your leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities.

