



Developing a Leadership Path and Plan for BEING and DOING

A leadership path consists of two integrated pieces – being and doing. Who you are being and what you are doing will take you someplace. A leader proactively moves towards a vision and brings followers along. By building the “being” part of leadership, the “doing” becomes easier.

Who you are will illuminate the path of leadership, and guide your actions, behaviors, and thoughts. Leaders who are clear on who they are (being) are able to move more efficiently and effectively towards their vision (doing). A leadership development plan must include skill building for both “doing” and “being.” Creating a leadership “being” path and plan means that you must explore who you are by reflecting upon your personal values, assumptions, and beliefs about leadership. Moving forward on the leadership “doing” path is the application of who you are as a leader integrated with what you do.

Values are qualities or characteristics that are important to you. If a value is strong enough, you would rather leave an organization or step down than violate it. Your values influence how you make choices and decisions. Values become more important in situations where there is uncertainty and the unknown. When your values are clear and you are aware of them, you create a solid foundation for leading. Making difficult choices becomes easier. Values are the boundaries of the path. Some examples of values are: Integrity, Trust, Fairness, Compassion, and Calm.

Assumptions and Judgments are ideas that are assumed or believed to be true. As a leader it is important to understand what fuels your leadership thinking. Often leaders are not aware of their own assumptions and judgments because they are operating from certain paradigms that obscure their ability to see them.

Beliefs are ideas that we hold to be true; they shape our realities. If one person’s belief is that speaking up is a sign of respect and another person believes that *not* speaking up is respectful, then conflicting beliefs are in play when these people interact. Beliefs influence how a leader treats others. Beliefs can be unconscious. They can be such a habitual way of thinking and acting that it doesn’t cross our minds that our beliefs may be creating blinders for us. Ethics is a part of our belief system. **Perspectives** are filters and lenses for how we or others see the world. Perspectives can be tried on and practiced and may lead to uncovering an existing belief, or creating a new one.

Personal Vision is the end state, the long-term condition or result we want to achieve; it’s what fulfills us and drives us. A vision statement is used to provide direction on your path and guide you towards desired outcomes. It includes forward-looking statements about things that haven’t been accomplished yet, but ones that you feel compelled to do and are passionate about. Goals and strategies are shorter-term steps in service to your vision. Goals and strategies should be aligned to vision. A personal vision, project vision, and company vision – when all aligned – can be very powerful.

Personal Brand is the external view of the leader. It is the ongoing process of establishing a prescribed image or impression in the minds of others.

“Who you are speaks so loudly, I can’t hear what you are saying,” Ralph Waldo Emerson once said.

Exercise 1: Identifying Your Leadership Values

From the list below, pick five core values that you feel describe and guide who you are as a leader. You may choose other values that are not on this list. Place them in the following chart and answer the questions in the matrix.

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------|
| Achievement | Balance | Creativity | Integrity |
| Activity | Challenge | Diverse perspectives | Justice |
| Advancement | Change | Duty | Love |
| Adventure | Collaboration | Economic security | Loyalty |
| Affiliation | Community | Family | Friendship |
| Personal Development | Affluence | Competency | Health |
| Authority | Competition | Humor | Respect |
| Autonomy | Courage | Harmony | Trust |
| Wisdom | | | |

What other values might you have?

Values – and your description of them	How do they show up today?	Additional ways for these values to show up	What is not aligned with these values today?

Exercise 2: Uncovering Your Leadership Beliefs

Answer the following questions about leadership. By reflecting on these questions, you can find more clarity about what is driving your leadership thinking.

- A. Write down two stories of leadership. One story should describe a positive experience you've had with leadership, and the second story should describe a time when you had a negative experience with leadership.

- B. Who do you admire as a leader? What do they do and say? What traits, values and beliefs do they have?

- C. Who in your workplace is a leader and what do you observe about them?

- D. What leadership beliefs, sayings, and metaphors are meaningful to you?

- E. How would people describe you as leader today? Your employees? Your peers?

- F. At the end of your life, what would you want people to say about you as a leader?

Exercise 3 - Strengths, Skills, Passions

- A. Describe a perfect day and week:

- B. What hobbies, activities, events or things do you enjoy most?

- C. What are you good at but don't enjoy doing?

- D. Where are you considered an expert and what do you feel and think about that?

- E. What would you do for free if money was not an issue?

- F. What interests you enough that you could do or talk about or explore it all the time?

- G. What are you most curious about (people, ideas, or things)?

- H. List your top strengths and skills:

- I. Ask five trusted people what they see as your top three strengths and skills and list them:

Exercise 4 – Leadership Definition and Beliefs

Sample Leader & Leadership Definitions:

- ✓ Organizing a group of people to achieve a common goal; an act or instance of leading; guidance
- ✓ NOT always a ROLE or TITLE
- ✓ A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal
- ✓ A person who can visualize the future and get others to follow them there
- ✓ Making a difference and making positive changes
- ✓ Being accountable to find potential in people and processes
- ✓ Creates energy, motivation, and action in a group of people who have mutual values and goals
- ✓ Creates good followers, not blind followers
- ✓ Sees around corners
- ✓ Changes things for the better
- ✓ Creates vision and influences others toward that vision

A. What's your definition of leadership?

B. Using your definition of leadership, write down how you first came to understand or realize your own definition of leadership.

C. Sample Leadership Beliefs:

I believe that leading must come from your strengths.

I believe that leaders are unique and must be authentic to be successful.

I believe that leadership is a journey that includes both leaders and followers.

I balance my work and personal success.

I always help people to find the best in themselves.

I spend time reflecting on my leadership and its implications on others.

I value integrity in personal and professional development.

I respect leadership from different perspectives and ways of knowing.

I listen with respect and gratitude to others.

I am a leader who _____

What do you believe to be true; what are your leadership beliefs?

When you are feeling powerful, what are you doing? What beliefs are at work?

Exercise 5 – Leadership Brand

In one or two sentences, reiterate and sum up the above in a way that you would present it to other people:

What one word or phrase do you want other people to say about you as a leader?

What behaviors and actions support your brand?

Exercise 6 – Alignment of Being to Doing: Planning a Path to Leadership

Goals/Vision/Passion -Job -Career -Personal	Actions I will take (skills, learning, doing, research, help needed)	Skills Needed	Values Applied	Beliefs needed to Support Actions
This Week				
This Month				
This Year				
2-5 Years				
10 Years				
Lifetime (Vision)				

Exercise Your Plan

Review and complete the exercises.

What long-term vision and goals are most important to you? How will you know if you have completed them?

- A. Who do you know who has already achieved that? What do you know about them?

- B. What one thing will you commit to doing every day/week/month/year in alignment with your leadership path?

- C. What do you need to do to improve your leadership brand?

- D. What do you always want to remind yourself about?

- E. What structures and processes do you need to set up to make progress?

- F. How will you be accountable to the path and plan, and to whom will you be accountable?

- G. When will you review, reflect, and update this document? (once a year is recommended)